

The writing on the top.

PAGE 1

The marble lions.

19

The bedroom floor.

17

The double honey-comb.

25

The man under the seat.

33

The placard behind the platform.

41

The people that laughed.

49

The vow of revenge.

54

Thy brother Jacob.

65

The wilderness, the land.

79

The grace of God.

94

The beginning of the gospel.

108

The secret of blessedness.

123

Lukewarm.

138

Devotedness,

153

Reality.

169

The peculiarity of our calling.

183

Our politics.

198

.....

# The Writing at the Top.

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**“H**OW ever could he have got up there! ”

The exclamation of surprise burst from the lips of one of our party, as we stood near the summit of Table Mountain, in front of a huge, perpendicular slab of rock.

The face of the rock was well-nigh covered with inscriptions. From time immemorial people have found delight, when visiting places of note, in leaving a record of their visit, in the shape of their name or their initials, carved upon some tree or post, or cut upon the surface of some suitable object.

The rock before which we stood had scores of such inscriptions upon it. But one, many feet higher than any of the others, had attracted the notice of my friend, and led him to exclaim in astonishment :—

“ How ever could he have got up there! ”

The question was certainly a difficult one to answer. There was no ledge on the face of the rock upon which a man could stand to inscribe his name in that position. There was no crack or fissure into which he could insert his foot. There was absolutely no foothold of any kind.

The fact remained, however, that some individual, determined to write his name at the very top, high above all the others, had overcome every difficulty, and had succeeded in doing it. The mystery had yet to be explained; but it was evident that there must be some explanation. The apparently impossible had been done.

Reader, I have a question for you. Weigh it well before you answer it, for it has a deeper significance than might at first appear.

Is YOUR name written at the top?

As I scan the records of twentieth-century life, I see some names written very low down. I find them upon the conviction-sheet of the police-court, and in the newspaper reports of trials for murder, for theft, and for forgery. These are the names of *notorious sinners*.

But I see other names higher up than these. They are inscribed upon the pages of the merchant's ledger. I see them painted over the entrances to well-stocked shops, and upon brass plates on the gates of pretty villas. These are the names of *respectable people*. Honourable in their business dealings, esteemed by a wide circle of acquaintances, their names stand high in the regard of all who know them.

Others there are who have placed their names yet higher. They are to be found upon the church-

membership roll, and upon the subscription lists of the philanthropic and missionary societies. Sometimes one even sees their names upon the list of church officers, local preachers, and Sunday-school teachers. These are the names of *religious people*.

But, reader, you need to have your name written much higher up than that! If you are ever to get to heaven you must get your name written *there*. It must be at the very top. Nothing short of that will do.

In the day of judgment the great question will be, not what sort of a character you have borne on earth, not whether you have paid your way and made a profession of religion, but whether your name is in the book of life.

When John was spending his long years of exile in the lonely island of Patmos he was permitted to see wonderful visions of future events. On one occasion a sight of the dread judgment day was vouchsafed to him. And, amongst other things, he saw that "*whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*" (Rev. xx. 15.)

Is *your* name written in the book of life? Clement could have answered that question with a hearty "Yes." He and his friends are described as men "*whose names are in the book of life.*" (Phil. iv. 3.)

Would to God that every reader of these lines might awake to the immense importance of getting his name written there!

A great hue and cry was raised some months ago in America because certain people discovered that their family records were lost. The pages containing them had been cut out from an old Bible that had been brought from Holland in the year 1660 by a man named Haughwout.

The records were of great importance, as affording evidence of title to certain property. Advertisements were therefore inserted in the newspapers, and a large reward offered for the recovery of the missing pages.

Are you as anxious that your name should be duly recorded as that American family was? With you the issue involved is not that of a mere earthly inheritance; your whole future welfare is at stake. It is of the utmost importance to you that your name should be duly inscribed in heaven.

Now one thing is very evident. It is impossible for you to *write your own name there*.

You may succeed in placing your name considerably higher in the eyes of your fellow-men than the names of others. Your name may be one that commands the respect of hundreds; but, try as hard as you can, and persevere as long as you please; you will never be able to write your name *at the top*.

You may climb the heights of religion and morality, you may reach a pinnacle far above the level of those around you; but, I repeat, you cannot reach high enough to write your name *at the top*.

In this respect all are alike. They come short of *the top*. God looks down from heaven upon men, and declares that "there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. iii. 23.)

The man whose name is worth millions, and the man whose name is not worth a penny. The man whose name is recorded on the honour-list of fame, and the man whose name appears in the annals of crime. The man whose name wins applause from the world, and the man whose name excites a storm of hisses. There is no difference. All have come short. All are powerless to reach high enough to write their names *at the top*.

How then can a man get his name written at the top?

How was it, do you think, that the man whose name was inscribed at the top of the rock on Table Mountain managed to place it there?

I will tell you. While we stood gazing at it, and wondering how anyone could have got up so high, we noticed something that had hitherto escaped our observation. *The name at the top was written upside down!*

At once it became clear how the man whose name it was had succeeded in writing it there. He had climbed up the rock by a path at the back. Then, leaning over the top of the flat surface, he had written his name, and, naturally enough, had written it upside down.

The mystery was explained. The name at the top had been written *from the top*. In no other way could it have been written.

In just the same way, if *your* name is to be written at the top it must be written *from the top*. That is, it must be written by One who is already at the top. It must be written by God Himself.

And who are they whose names God writes in heaven? Not the names of those who are "trying to do their best." Not the names of those who are *striving* to win His favour. Not the names of those who are seeking by vows, and promises, and prayers, and efforts, to make their peace with Him.

Who, then, are the happy people whose names God inscribes in the book of life?

They are those who have discovered and owned their sinfulness, and who have bowed in true repentance before Him, putting all their faith in Christ and in His finished work of atonement.

All around you you may see men and women who have taken this step, and whose names are written in heaven. Once they were sinners on the road to hell, even as others. But their eyes were opened. They perceived their danger, and fled to Christ for refuge. Their only plea was His precious blood. They were welcomed, pardoned, saved. They "passed from death unto life." No longer "dead in trespasses and sins," they now *live* in the true sense of the word.

They are “alive unto God.” Their names are in the book of *life*.

Happy people! To such the Lord has said, “Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

Reader, what about you? Has God written your name in His book? If so, you may be sure that no power in heaven, earth, or hell can blot it out. “Whosoever *God* doeth, it shall be for ever.” (Ecc. iii. 14.)

It is not enough to be a mere professor of religion. There are those who have a name to live, but are really “dead.” They are but shams and counterfeits. They may attempt, as it were, to write their own names in the book of life. All such names God will assuredly blot out. But when *He* writes a name there, that name stands for ever.

In order that, first of all, *your name* might be written at the top, and that, ultimately, you yourself might be there, Jesus had to go down to the very bottom. Down into the dark depths of suffering He went. He was judged, condemned, and punished by God in the sinner’s stead.

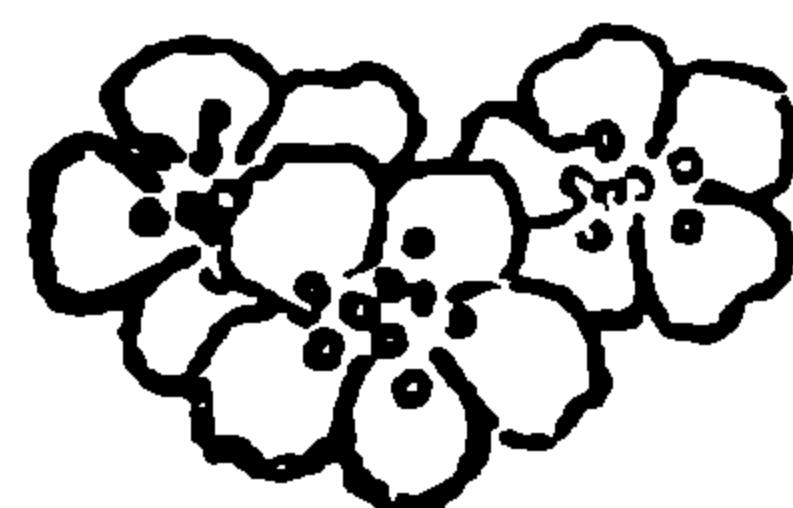
“He bore, that we might never bear,  
The Almighty’s righteous ire.”

But all that is a thing of the past. The judgment has been endured. Out from the depths the mighty

Victor has risen, and has gone to the place from whence He came.

From His place at the top He sends a message of love to *you at the bottom*, to tell you that *you are wanted at the top*. He longs to bless you and save you.

Will you not trust such a mighty, loving, living Saviour? "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."



## THE BEDROOM FLOOR, AND WHY IT WAS NEVER SCRUBBED.

• • • •

**D**URING a recent visit to a rather remote part of the Transvaal, I was lodging at a small house on the veldt.

On retiring to rest at night, I could not help noticing the extremely dirty state of the bedroom floor. It looked as if it had not been cleaned for months. I determined that the following day I would call the landlady's attention to it, and ask her to have it scrubbed.

The next morning, however, when I rose to dress, I saw what had escaped my notice the evening before. The floor was of such a nature that no scrubbing could possibly make it any cleaner. It was made, not of wood, or bricks, but of big clods of dirt, dried and hardened in the sun and trodden down till a solid surface was formed, as level and smooth as any ordinary floor.

Of course, I gave up my idea of asking the landlady to scrub it. The more such a floor were scrubbed the worse it would become. No amount of soap and water would do it any good.

Will you be surprised, reader, if I tell you that that bedroom floor aptly sets forth your condition in the sight of God ?

Do not frown and throw the book aside. I am telling you the truth. Hear what the Bible says of the whole race of mankind : " Every one of them is gone back ; they are altogether become filthy."

Even those who try to do good are just the same. *God* does not call their actions good. " There is none that doeth good, no, not one." " We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." (Ps. liii. 3 ; Is. lxiv. 6.)

This is what many cannot understand.

At the close of a gospel meeting at O——, a young man remained for conversation. He seemed really wishful of being saved ; but it soon became evident that he was far from realising how utterly bad he was.

I read to him that verse where Paul says, " I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

" Now," said I, " you confess that you are a sinner ; but do you acknowledge that in you there is absolutely nothing that God calls good, nothing to make a difference in His sight between you and the worst of men ? "

He was not prepared to go so far as to admit that, and though I tried to get him to see it, and confess it, he would not, and presently he got up and went away.

I wonder if *you* are prepared to acknowledge that in God's sight you are so bad, so unclean, so corrupt, that you can no more improve yourself, or do anything to amend your condition than the bedroom floor in the house on the veldt could be made clean by scrubbing it.

This is a truth that many are very slow to learn. They labour under the delusion that if only they try hard enough, and persevere long enough, they can make themselves more fit for God's presence. They might as well imagine that if only they could get a good scrubbing brush, and plenty of soap and water, they would at last succeed in improving the condition of the bedroom floor.

Multitudes of men and women are engaged in a hopeless task of this sort, and many are the various kinds of scrubbing-brushes that they use.

There is, for instance, the scrubbing-brush of **Self-Restraint**. Have you not sometimes used this brush? You have tried to control your temper and put a curb upon your unruly tongue. You have kept a strict watch over your actions, and have endeavoured to restrain your passions. In this way you have been scrubbing away at the dirty floor. But you have utterly failed to effect ~~any~~ real improvement. You are as far from God as ever. Your heart is just as bad as it was when you began.

Perhaps it is the scrubbing-brush of **Moral Living** that you are trying. You do not swear or

cheat, or get drunk. No impure speech ever soils your lips. You never do anything that men would call wicked. But all this makes no difference in your condition before God. Your moral living has not changed the evil character of your heart.

Some try the scrubbing-brush of **Education**. But education never yet changed a sinner into a child of God. A man may have passed through all the standards of the elementary schools; he may go successfully through a college course, and may learn all that the leading Universities of Europe can teach him; but he is still a guilty, unclean sinner. In his heart of hearts he hates God and loves sin just as much as the most illiterate man on earth.

A young lady, cultured, refined, and admired by a large circle of acquaintances, became anxious about her soul. The Holy Spirit was dealing with her, and one day she was heard to sigh—

*"I don't want to say it, but it seems to me that I hate God."*

She was discovering that, though refined, amiable, and well educated, she was just as bad, just as much a lover of sin and a hater of God as a coarse, disagreeable, ignorant person is.

Many fancy that where other scrubbing-brushes fail, the brush of **Religion** will succeed. So they read their Bibles and say their prayers. They are regular attendants at church, and take the sacrament at every opportunity. Perhaps they sing in the choir.

They may become district visitors or Sunday-school teachers. But all this leaves their carnal nature unchanged. Their religious garb serves but to cover up the uncleanness within.

If the scrubbing-brush of Religion could make anyone clean, it should have made Saul of Tarsus so. Zealous beyond all his contemporaries, rigid in his observance of ceremonies and ordinances, devoted in his obedience to the priests, he might well have claimed to be the most religious man of his day.

But all the while there raged in his heart a bitter hatred against Christ. When at last his eyes were opened, and he found how terribly mistaken he had been, he confessed that he was the chief of sinners. In spite of all his religiousness he had to acknowledge "In me dwelleth no good thing."

Do not, then, make a scrubbing-brush of *religion*. Not that I would say a word against real religion. It is a grand thing. I am sorry for the man who has none of it. But religion, of itself, can never make the sinner clean. It can never wash away his sin. Yet it is a thing greatly to be desired.

During the year 1895, my friend Mr. M. and myself were holding meetings in the city of Kingston, Jamaica. God was working in a marked way. There was a great wave of blessing. Night after night we had the joy of seeing sinners turn to the Lord.

One evening we were led to warn our hearers very

emphatically against trusting to mere religion to save them. "Not religion, but Christ," was our watchword on that occasion. We explained that salvation is not to be obtained by turning over a new leaf, joining some society and becoming religious; but that it is the result of coming in true repentance to the Saviour, and resting upon His finished work of atonement.

Amongst those present was a certain minister. He went away and announced that he would preach in his chapel a sermon on "No religion, no Christ." His aim was to show people that it is vain for them to say they believe in Christ unless they prove it by practical religion, and that in this way religion is of prime importance.

Now who was right, the minister or ourselves? I believe that both of us were right. *He* was right, in refusing to believe in any professed faith in Christ unless true religion were the result. And *we* were right in maintaining that no amount of religion could save a man's soul and make him fit for heaven.

But if neither self-restraint, nor moral living, nor education, nor religion, nor any other scrubbing-brush of a similar kind can make you clean, there is something that can. **CHRIST** is the God-provided remedy. There is power in His precious blood to wash all your foul stains away.

"**Ye must be born again**" are the words that

confront every Christless soul. They were addressed to a most religious man. And they are as true to-day as ever. What *you* need, reader, is to be born again. Nothing short of that will do.

But *you* cannot bring about this new birth. What, then, must you do?

First of all, lay aside every scrubbing-brush! Give up all hope of improving the state of the dirty bedroom floor. In other words, own your exceeding sinfulness. Bow in self-loathing at the Saviour's feet. Pass sentence upon yourself, sternly and unsparingly.

Then look away from yourself altogether. Christ stands ready to save. His love is infinite. His blood can cleanse from all sin.

Put your whole trust in Him. Let your plea be the merits of His blood. If you want something to say, say :—

“ Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.”

Be sure that your faith rests wholly and undividedly upon Him. “ *Whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed.*”

So great in God's sight is the value of the blood which Jesus shed that He counts clear of every charge the sinner who believes.

The dirty floor is cleansed, as it were, by its being made anew.

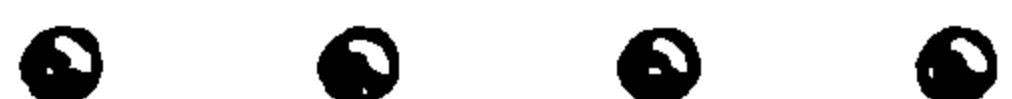
The corrupt state of fallen man received its condemnation in the cross of Christ. A new state, a new life, a new position belongs to the believer. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus.

No scrubbing-brush is needed. Trust in the Saviour, and you will be pardoned, washed, justified, saved.

“The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” (I John i. 7.)



# THE MARBLE LIONS; or, Fast Asleep and Wide Awake.



WHILE on a visit to Pretoria, in the early part of 1904, I was staying at the house which was once the residence of Mr. Kruger.

An unpretentious, one-storey building, with a narrow verandah, or stoep, skirting it in the front, there is little to distinguish it from the other dwellings in the same street.

It may easily be recognised, however, by the two famous lions, sculptured in marble, the gift of the late Barney Barnato to the ex-president. There they stand, like sentries at the gate, though their late owner no longer sits on the stoep behind them.

It is said that the two lions were meant to be symbolical of two statesmen. The one, with its eyes fast closed, and its whole attitude suggestive of deep sleep, was intended to represent a dull, heavy, unobservant character; the other, the very picture of

alertness, aptly represented the keen, quick-witted, up-to-date man who saw things with a clearness of vision denied to his less wide-awake rival.

But there are others, besides the two statesmen, whose condition is strikingly illustrated by the attitude of the marble lions.

There are those who, with regard to eternal things, are

wide awake.

They realise that their life on earth is, after all, but a very small portion of their existence, and they live in view of the great hereafter. Their eyes have been opened to see that their sins had exposed them to terrible danger, and that unless they were cleansed and forgiven, heaven's gates would be for ever closed against them. They have fled to Christ for refuge, and have been justified from their guilt by His blood. Happy people! Wide awake to all that makes life worth living, and eternity worth looking forward to!

But countless thousands are still

fast asleep

in their sins. They know not their peril. They dream not of danger. They glide gaily down the stream of life, never asking themselves on what shore they will land at last.

( 3 )

Reader, are you one of these? Wide awake you may be to all that concerns your earthly interests; sharp and shrewd in business matters; keen in the enjoyment of life's pleasures; but, I ask you, with reference to the higher interests of your never-dying soul, *Are you awake or asleep?*

Not long ago we were having some special Gospel services at Wynberg, Cape Colony. Amongst those who attended the meetings was a young man who had been a soldier in one of the Colonial regiments. I became much interested in him, and took an early opportunity of asking him as to his outlook for eternity. Was he prepared to meet God? Had he obtained the forgiveness of his sins by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

"Well," said he, in answer to my questions, "*I can't say much about it, but I am doing the best I can, and I hope I shall come out all right in the end.*"

His reply showed clearly enough that he was fast asleep as to the important issues at stake. He had never been aroused to his lost condition. He had been lulled to sleep by the great enemy of souls singing his well-worn song of "Do the best you can," and was leaving it to chance as to how he came out in the end!

I spoke to him seriously about his danger, and pointed out the madness of being satisfied with a mere "hope" for the future—a hope, too, based upon such an utterly worthless foundation as "doing the best that he could."

He seemed impressed. Begging him to look the matter fairly and squarely in the face, I bade him good-night.

At the next meeting I noticed him again. His face seemed to wear an expression of anxiety that I had not seen before. At the close he did not wait for me to speak to him, but came straight up to me, saying,

*"I want to get this matter put straight to-night."*

What a change of attitude! He was now as *wide awake* as he had previously been *fast asleep*. He was awake to his danger; awake to the folly of leaving the safety of his soul to chance; awake to the need of having a better and surer foundation to rest upon than that of "doing his best." Thank God! he was awake at last.

It was an easy and a happy task to show him the way of salvation. I pointed out to him that if *he* had been indifferent to his sin and his peril, *God* had not been indifferent to it, but had, at infinite cost

to Himself, provided a Saviour; and that salvation lies in trusting that God-given Saviour.

Reader, are *you* awake to the seriousness of the things of which I speak? Then let me tell you of this Saviour. God is too holy and too righteous to pass over your sins without *atonement* being made for them. The punishment that they deserve must fall upon *someone*—either upon yourself or Another. In order that the stroke of judgment might not fall upon *you*, God, in His great goodness, gave His Son to be the sin-bearer. At Calvary the stroke fell upon Him. It need, therefore, never fall upon *you*.

If you put your trust in Him Who died for you God will forgive you and save you. For Jesus has not only died, but has risen again, and through Him God offers pardon and peace to “all that believe.”

Even as you read these lines you may look up and say, “Lord, I believe!” If your *heart* says the words, it is enough. For the Word of Truth declares that: “*By Him, all that believe are justified from all things.*” (Acts xiii. 39.)

It is possible to be fast asleep without being worldly or utterly careless.

Said a young woman, in a certain town in South Africa, on her way home from a gospel meeting:

*"It never occurred to me before that I needed to be converted."*

Yet she had been very religious. For three years she had been a zealous Bible-seller. She was known and respected by the Christian workers of her church, none of whom would have called in question the sincerity of her religion.

That night, however, questions had arisen in her mind that had never previously occurred to her: "What does God think of me? Am I converted?" She had to own that though she had plenty of religion, she was not saved. She was travelling as fast as time could carry her to a lost eternity, and all the while she had been *fast asleep*.

Thank God that her eyes were opened at last.

But it may be that *you*, reader, are not yet awakened! You are still sleeping the sleep of indifference! It is surprising how completely the devil can get men under the influence of his deadly opiates!

We were driving in a wagonette from the Howick Falls to the railway station in company with a young man of very fragile and delicate appearance. He was evidently ill, and his frequent cough confirmed the suspicion that he was far gone in consumption. A

friend with whom I was travelling spoke to him, and soon found that our surmise was well-founded. Consumption had wrought its ravages upon him. He was a dying man.

My friend asked him as to his soul. Had he thought of what came after death? Had he fled to Christ for shelter from the storm of judgment?

To these questions the young man replied, in the most indifferent way, that he never gave such matters a thought, that he did not consider himself a sinner, that there was a lot in the Bible he didn't believe, and that, in short, he didn't care to trouble his head about such things.

Can words describe the folly of such an attitude? A man upon the brink of the grave, upon the very threshold of eternity, yet utterly careless and thoughtless! There indeed was a pitiful instance of Satan's success in keeping a sinner fast asleep in his sins.

Reader, you may not be so near the grave, and the great hereafter, as that young man; *but who knows?* The bloom of youth may be yet upon your cheeks; but who can tell how soon the dread King of Terrors will claim you as his victim? One thing is certain. **Go you must, sooner or later.**

Permit me, then, to ring in your ears the question

that startled Jonah from his slumbers: " *What meaneſt thou, O ſleeper? Arife, call upon thy God.*"

Call upon Him for that which He has promised to give. You will find that He is far more ready to bestow His blessing than even the most earnest amongst us is to receive it! He is " *great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked;*" but because of the merits of the blood of Jesus, " *the ſame Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whοsoever shall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved.*" (Nahum i. 3; Rom. x. 12, 13.)



# The Double Honeycomb.



A FARMER in South Africa, whose bees had produced a honeycomb of enormous size, wished to find out, if possible, whether any of still larger dimensions had ever been known.

After making various inquiries, he wrote to the editor of a well-known American weekly paper asking if he could give any information on the subject.

The editor replied as follows:—

“ Among the odd questions which reached us this week is one from a correspondent in South Africa, who wants to know the size of the largest honeycomb that has ever been found in America.

“ The largest of which we can find any authentic record is one which measured thirty feet in length. It was taken from a hollow tree in the southern part of Georgia.

“ Two swarms of bees had a hand at making it. One worked from the top of the hollow and the other from the bottom, until they met in the middle.”

Many people have a notion that *salvation* is to be arrived at in much the same way as that honeycomb was produced, by some of the work being done from the top and the rest from the bottom.

"Christ has done His part," they say, "and we have to do ours."

This sounds right and plausible enough. Thousands who would denounce the doctrine of "salvation by works" will nevertheless endorse the idea as stated above.

"Yes," they say, "we must do our part, and where we fail we must trust to Christ's merits to make up for our shortcomings."

Now this is as different from the true gospel way of salvation as a dose of arsenic is from a draught of milk.

A cup of poison is no less deadly because it may look like clear water, and a false statement is no less dangerous and deceptive because it may bear the semblance of truth.

The object of this little book is to show you that salvation cannot be obtained in the way that the double honeycomb was produced, but that *all the work must be done from the top*.

The fact is that as sinners we are powerless to do

*anything* towards our salvation. If Christ had done 999 parts, and left us just one out of a thousand to perform it would be all up with us, for we should not be able to do even that. "*Without strength*" are the inspired words that describe our condition. (Rom. v. 6.) Sin has such a paralysing effect upon us that it leaves us "as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again." (2 Sam. xiv. 14.)

Now while the Bible teaches us that it is *impossible* for us to contribute anything in the shape of "doing" in the matter of our salvation it also shows us that it is *unnecessary*.

The work upon which our eternal blessing depends is a *finished* work. Everything that had to be done has been completely done already.

It was for this that Jesus suffered on the cross. He saw our helpless and ruined condition. The claims of justice forbade all hope of salvation except through the doing of a work which no mortal could ever accomplish. This work, the work of atonement, Jesus undertook. Before He yielded up His breath, He cried: "It is finished."

Reader, if the work is finished, what is there left for *you* to do but to enjoy the blessed result of it?

The result of it is this: God will freely pardon and

eternally save every sinner who abandons all pretence of "doing" and stakes his confidence upon the work that has been done.

What keeps so many from salvation is their persistence in trying to "do their part" as they term it.

During a recent visit to Durban a young friend of mine in that town was telling me of a narrow escape that he had had from drowning.

"For a long time," he said, "I struggled against the current. I put forth all my strength and did my best to reach the shore. But I made no headway, and I was becoming exhausted. I had to give it up. I lay helpless in the water. Then I found myself drifting towards the beach. The waves rolled me on. Finally I got safely to the shore."

If *you* are to reach the shore of salvation you will have to do what my young Durban friend did. You will have to cease your "doing" and "lie helpless." In other words—

"Cast your deadly 'doing' down,  
Down at Jesus' feet,  
Stand in Him, in Him alone,  
Gloriously complete."

Perhaps someone exclaims, "Surely you are forgetting that we are bidden to *work out* our own salvation!"

No, I am not forgetting it. But tell me, if you found a letter addressed to somebody else, would you feel justified in opening it, and appropriating its contents? Would you consider that it lay with *you* to fulfil any demands which the letter made? Of course you would not.

Now, at Philippi there lived certain people who had believed the gospel. The once hard-hearted prison warder was one. Lydia, a saleswoman from Asia Minor, was another. These, and many more, had been converted during the brief visit of Paul and Silas to their city.

Driven from their midst by persecution, the apostle wrote an affectionate letter to the sorrowing company of believers that he had left behind. In it he exhorts them to work out *their own salvation*, and reminds them that God was working in them with this end in view.

By what claim or title do *you*, an unsaved sinner, appropriate to yourself an exhortation to a company of people who were saved, and who were rejoicing in the knowledge of it? How dare an unconverted person say, "We are told to work out our salvation," when the words are addressed to *saints*? How can we work out *our own* salvation until salvation is indeed our

own? How can anybody *work out* unless God *works in*? Read the whole passage in Phil. ii., and you will see that it has nothing to do with the way a sinner obtains salvation.

The only work necessary for our salvation is a work that is infinitely too great for us to have any part in the doing of it.

On a certain line of railway a long freight train was found to be too heavy for the engine to draw up a steep gradient. A wire was sent to the nearest station for an additional engine. After a brief delay it arrived, and was attached to the train in the rear.

Puff! puff! went the engine in front; puff! puff! went the engine behind; but the long line of heavily-laden cars refused to move up the slope.

A little boy among the knot of people that were looking on from the window of a house near by looked up at his father.

“Papa,” said he, “don’t you think I should lend them my toy horse?”

You smile at the lad’s childish folly. But not one whit less foolish are they who bring their vows and their resolutions, their prayers and their efforts, their sacrament-taking and their alms-giving as contributions to the work of their salvation. Such things can

( 7 )

no more help in the matter than the boy's wooden horse could assist the engines in moving the train.

The sweet honeycomb of salvation is the result of the work of Christ alone. At Calvary the bees, as it were, swarmed upon Him. Our sins were there. Death was there. God's holy judgment was there. Christ endured all. The sting was His that the honey might be ours. We had no part in enduring the sting, and no part in producing the honey; no part in bearing the bitter pangs of judgment, and no part in purchasing the sweet joys of salvation. The work was Christ's from beginning to end.

"Then am I just to fold my arms and wait till God saves me?"

By no means. Though God does not demand from you a stroke of work, He expects that there should be, on your part, a certain attitude. He commands all men, everywhere, to *repent*. (Acts xvii. 30.)

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" are words of gospel truth; but they were addressed to one who was already repentant.

Reader, have you repented? In other words, have you got down low before God, realising and owning your exceeding sinfulness? Have you looked at yourself

with loathing? Have you exclaimed, with Job, "I am vile"?

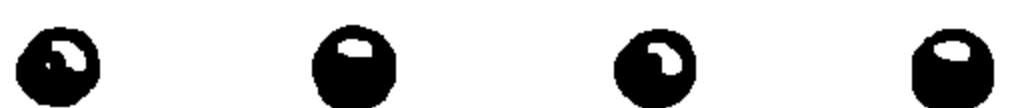
If not, it is of little use to speak to you of the finished work of Christ. But if you have discovered your desperate need, if you feel full of sin within, and helpless to rid yourself of your burden, no news will be so sweet to you as tidings of *the finished work of Christ.*

The honeycomb of salvation is the result of that finished work; and it is for you to taste and enjoy its sweetness.

*"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."* (Rom. iv. 5.)



# The Man under the Seat; or, The Right Way and the Wrong.



THE train for Durban had come to a standstill at the Ladysmith station, and I was just about to take my seat, when I noticed a lady in a second-class carriage calling in an excited way to the conductor.

“Has that man any right there?” she exclaimed, pointing to some object under the seat of the compartment in which she was travelling.

Stooping down, and looking in the place to which the lady pointed, the conductor saw a man, stretched at full length upon the floor, as close to the partition as he could get, evidently with the desire of concealing himself as much as possible.

Grasping him by the shoulder, the conductor bade him get up. Slowly the man crawled out, and at length stood upon the platform with a guilty, scared expression on his face.

"Who are you? Where do you come from?" asked the official.

No answer being forthcoming, the conductor turned to the lady.

"Where did this man get in?"

"I do not know," she replied. "I have come from Volksrust myself, and he must have been in the train before I got in. I expect he has come from Johannesburg."

The lady's surmise proved to be correct. The man was evidently one of the many who come out from Europe expecting to make their fortunes at the gold mines on the Rand. Disappointed in his anticipations, and overtaken by the "hard times" that followed the closing of many of the mines, he had found himself stranded, thousands of miles from home, without the means of getting back.

He had evidently boarded the train under cover of darkness, before it left Johannesburg, hoping in that way to get to Durban, where perhaps he would be able again to stow himself away upon some homeward-bound vessel, and thus get back to Europe.

However, he was detected on the way and was not permitted to continue his journey to the wished-for destination.

I could not but pity him. But in a much greater degree is my pity excited at the sight of thousands, whose desire is to reach heaven at last, but who will surely be detected and disappointed because they are travelling as stowaways.

What do I mean? I mean that there are many who take their place in the ranks of Christian profession, but who have *no right to be there*. They are Christians in name only. They may imagine that they are all right, that the imposture will not be detected, that they will get to heaven at last. But they are bound in the coils of a terrible delusion.

They are not lawful passengers in the train that is bound for glory. They have no ticket, purchased by the precious blood of Christ. They are without a passport that will secure them admission to the realms of eternal bliss.

Reader, what about you? Have you a ticket that will carry you to your journey's end? Or, are you travelling in a way that exposes you to detection and disgrace?

John Bunyan, in his well-known allegory, the "Pilgrim's Progress," describes two men who came leaping over the wall into the path which Christian

was treading. Their names were Mr. Formalist and Mr. Hypocrisy, and they professed to be going to the Celestial City. But mark the point! None had any right to walk in that way but those who had entered by the wicket-gate! None can rightly call themselves Christians, or hope to reach the golden city, unless they begin with "*repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*" So Mr. Formalist and Mr. Hypocrisy entertained a vain and delusive hope. For a time they appeared to be genuine pilgrims to the better land. But the day came when their true character was discovered. They stood detected! And off they went, the same way as they had come, and never reached the desired goal after all.

Profession of Christianity, without real repentance and faith in Christ, will never take you to heaven. It can but make a stowaway of you. The shell of religion without the kernel is worse than worthless. The form of godliness without the power is a delusion and a snare.

God must and will have *reality*. Life is real, eternity is real. Heaven is real, hell is real. Your sins are real. Your danger is real. God is real. Salvation is real. *Be real yourself.* Do not be content with anything short of the *real thing*.

It is far better to come out into the light *now*, and stand exposed in God's presence with all the guilt of your sinful life upon you, than to wait for the ruthless hand of judgment to drag you from your hiding-place and unmask you before the Throne.

Do not say that you will trust the Lord to help you, and ask Him to make you different to what you have been. *There is a prior question to be settled* before you can talk like that.

Suppose that when the stowaway was discovered at Ladysmith station someone had been found willing to pay his fare on to the coast. Suppose that a gentleman had put his hand in his pocket and said, "Conductor, the fare from here to Durban is £1 1s. 8d. Here is the amount; give the man a ticket."

"No, sir," the conductor would have replied; "the man has already travelled from Johannesburg to this place without a ticket. Before he can proceed further payment must be made for the distance he has already come."

The conductor would be right. In the same way, before you can rightly talk about the future, there is the question of your *past* to be considered. "God requireth that which is past."

"Is there anything I can do for you?" said a gentleman to a dying lad whom he was visiting.

"Do?" replied the lad; "O sir, can you *undo*?"

It is *undoing* that a sinner needs, in view of having to meet a God of infinite holiness.

What you need, reader, is something that can undo the past.

And it is of such a thing that the gospel speaks. There is power in the precious blood of Christ to cancel all the sins of your life, to wipe out from the page of God's recording book all the deeds of guilt which you have committed. Through the work which Jesus has accomplished on the cross your sinful past may be *undone*, so that God can say, "*Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*"

Is not this what you need? It may become true of you to-day. It *will* be true of you when, in all sincerity, you put your trust in Christ. The moment you do that God will account you clear of every charge, through the merits of His blood. You will be "*justified from all things.*"

Your future, too, will be assured. Not only will your sins be forgiven and put away, but you will have a through ticket to glory provided for you. And *such* a ticket!

When a man takes a ticket for any long railway journey, say from Cape Town to Johannesburg, he has to provide his own meals on the way. But if he is going on a voyage across the ocean and books his passage by one of the magnificent liners that ply between South Africa and England, he gets a ticket *which includes all meals on the journey*. That is similar to what a sinner obtains when he comes to Christ for salvation. He not only receives a free pardon, but is amply provided for all along the way. Christ is his righteousness. Christ is his upholder. Christ is his food. Christ is his refuge in the day of trouble. Christ is his resource in the hour of temptation.

Reader, He invites you to come to Him. But you must be sure and come the right way.

There is a right way, and a wrong way of coming. The wrong way is to come as the stowaway came on board the train for Durban. He did not reach his destination because he came the wrong way. Nor will you ever reach the wished-for goal unless you come the right way. The *wrong* way to come to the Saviour is to come with promises, and vows, and resolutions, and efforts. The *wrong* way to come is to come fancying that you have a little strength, and

that all that you need is to be *helped* in your endeavours to please God.

The *right* way to come is to come empty-handed ; uttering no vow, making no promise, abandoning all hope in self, and trusting, as a naked, helpless, hell-deserving rebel, in the love and power and blood of Christ.

Trust Him *like that*, and you will obtain—what ?

As to the past—Peace !

As to the present—Grace !

As to the future—Glory !

For the Bible says : “ Being justified by faith we have **Peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom also we have access by faith into this **Grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the **Glory** of God.” (Romans v. 1, 2.)



# The Placard behind the Platform; or, Get Right with God.

• • • •

OUR train was making a twenty-minute stop at Beauford West, and I was pacing up and down the platform, glad to have an opportunity of using my legs again after being cooped up in a confined space for so many hours. The railway journey from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town is long and wearisome, and any break in the monotony of it is welcome to the tired traveller.

Pausing in front of the bookstall in the course of my walk, I was glancing over the assortment of books and papers when a large picture upon the cover of a magazine caught my eye. It was a photographic view of the interior of the Bingley Hall, Birmingham, during one of the evangelistic services recently held there by Dr. Torrey. The famous preacher is shown standing upon a raised daïs, his supporters in hundreds around him, and the seats in the body of the hall filled with thousands of eager listeners.

What struck me most in the picture, however, was an immense placard on the wall behind the platform, high over the preacher's head, containing four

striking words, which could easily be read from any part of the vast hall.

What were the words ?

**"Get right with God."**

Purchasing a copy of the magazine, I seated myself once more in the train and began to turn over its pages. Presently I came across the story of how a young lady was converted through a visit which she paid to the Bingley Hall.

During the service she was much impressed. The preacher's ringing words made her feel the seriousness of her position as an unsaved sinner. She realised that she was without a shelter from the coming storm of judgment; that her sins had exposed her to extreme and imminent peril, and that she was a stranger to the only One who could save her.

But she could not bring herself to the point of accepting Christ as her Saviour there and then. The things of the world still had a strong hold upon her. Satan was doing his utmost to keep her in darkness and bondage. She decided to put the matter off, for that night at least.

In this state of mind, when the service was over, she was making her way towards the door. Owing to the large crowd her progress down the aisle was slow, and as she waited for those in front to move on, her eyes rested on the placard behind the platform, "**Get right with God.**"

By and by she found herself in the street. But those four words still stared her in the face. She could not banish them from her thoughts. The Holy Spirit brought them home to her conscience in power.

There was no rest or peace for that young lady after that, until, as a repentant sinner, she knelt at the Saviour's feet, and through faith in Him *got right with God.*

Do you realise the importance of being "right with God," reader? If so, let me remind you that *now* is the time, and *here* is the place for it to be brought about.

A party of gentlemen had just finished their dinner. The chairman *rose* to propose the toast of the evening.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I give you our old friend, the World!"

"Our entrance into it, naked and bare ;  
Our progress through it : trial and care ;  
Our exit from it, we don't know where,  
But if all right here, we'll be all right there."

I am not prepared to endorse all the words of the speaker. There are multitudes who, when they make their exit from the world, *do* know where they are going. The believer in Jesus *knows* that he is bound for eternal glory. The Christ-rejector may *know*, with equal certainty, that he will spend eternity in the hell that he deserves.

But the chairman of the dinner-party assuredly spoke the truth when he said :

“ If all right *here*, we'll be all right *there*.” The only way to be “ all right ” there, in the next world, is to be “ all right ” *here*, in this world. The sinner who does not get right with God *now* will find that he is all wrong by and by, hopelessly, eternally wrong. The importance, then, of *getting right with God at once* can scarcely be over-estimated.

Somebody, perhaps, will ask, What is it to be “ right with God ” ? The question deserves attention, for many labour under a mistake as to this very point, and imagine they are all right when, in reality, they are all wrong.

During the year 1902 the city of St. Pierre, the Paris of the West Indies, was overthrown by a terrible eruption of the neighbouring volcano. In the short space of thirty seconds, thirty thousand souls were suffocated into eternity by a blast of sulphurous gas from the mountain. An instant later the whole city was transformed into a vast cemetery, and the still quivering bodies of the lifeless thousands were buried under a shower of stones and cinders and molten lava.

At the moment of the catastrophe a telegram was in course of transmission from the city office to a town some miles away. At the latter place the clerk was receiving the message. The needle was spelling out the two words “ All right ” when it suddenly

stopped. An indistinct noise followed, as if something were amiss, then all was silent. The hand of the operator had ceased to move for ever.

Deeply affecting it is to think that the very last words that reached the outside world from the doomed city were the two words "All right," and that the next moment everything was *all wrong*, fearfully and awfully wrong, with both place and people.

There is many a man who, in like manner, would reply, "Oh, I am all right," if he were questioned as to his outlook for eternity. Yet really he is all wrong. Wrong, because he is building his hopes upon an insecure foundation; wrong, because he has never come to the only One that can set him right.

A scriptural proverb reads thus: "There is a way which *seemeth right* unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Prov. xiv. 12.) It is not enough to be on a way that *seems* right. The way of "doing my best" *seems* right. The way of "keeping the commandments" and "doing to others as you would that they should do to you" *seems* right. The way of "saying my prayers" and "regularly attending my place of worship" *seems* right. I might mention a hundred ways trodden by multitudes who *think* they are all right, but who will, sooner or later, discover that the *end* of the way they are treading "are the ways of death."

Jesus said "I am the way." No way is right

(however right it may *seem*), unless it is the way of faith in Him, and in His atoning work.

Simon the Magus was a man who *thought* he was all right. He credited the statements of the preacher, he was baptized, and was to all appearances on the right road. But when the apostle Peter arrived at Samaria, he soon perceived that Simon was *all wrong*. “Thy heart is not right in the sight of God,” he said.

A man may live a moral life, and may be respected by all who know him. He may be upright in business, kind to the poor, and a professor of religion. But none of these things are able to set him *right in God's sight*. Being right with one's fellow-men does not make one right with God.

You may be right with your friends, right with your employer or with your servants, right with your neighbours. You may be on good terms with all who know you. But it does not follow that you are right *with God*.

There may be nothing in your life which anyone would consider wrong, yet in God's sight you may be *all wrong*. His thoughts are not as ours.

Again I repeat the four words that arrested the attention of the lady at the hall in Birmingham :

**“GET RIGHT WITH GOD.”**

Let me explain, as simply as I can, how a sinner can get right with God.

The first thing to remember is that He desires "*truth in the inward parts.*" He does not look for *righteousness* in you. He knows that you have none. But He would have you acknowledge the *truth* as to your lost and helpless condition. The first step towards getting right is to frankly confess that you are altogether wrong.

What is it that has alienated you from God? *Sin.* "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." (Isa. lix. 2.) The disturbing element is *your sins.*

Now, if you are to get right with God, it can only be by the disturbing element being removed. In other words, your sins must be dealt with in such a way that it shall be *righteously possible* for God to justify you.

This is just what God sent His Son to accomplish by His death upon the cross. When hanging there the great question of *sin* was entered into between Him and God. God poured out His wrath. It fell, in all its dread severity, upon Jesus. Made sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21) He bore sin's bitter penalty.

In virtue of this, God can freely exercise His mercy. He is the Justifier of "him which believeth in Jesus." The moment that you, a guilty sinner, turn to Christ in simple faith, you are brought into the blessed results of His atoning work. You can think of your sins as having been all laid upon Him. *He suffered what you deserve to suffer.* And God is

too just, too righteous to call *you* to account for sins that Jesus bore.

“ God will not payment twice demand,  
Once at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.”

It is by this means that a sinner is set right with God. Not by his prayers, or his efforts, or his feelings, but by the precious blood of Christ. The disturbing element is gone for the believer in His death.

Have *you* put your trust in the Saviour? Can you truthfully say, “ I have bowed at His feet a heart-broken sinner, and I know He was judged and punished in my stead”? If so, you are right with God. Your sins are atoned for. Peace with God is your happy portion.

Not one trace of your guilt remains. Is not Jesus risen? Does He not sit upon the throne of glory? You may be sure that in going there He has left sin and everything connected with it behind. And in God's reckoning you are as clear of your sins as He is. You are “ right with God.”

Reader, what about you? If *you* have not yet done so, let me urge you once again to

**GET RIGHT WITH GOD.**

# The People that Laughed.

• • • •

**O**N the balcony of the Royal Hotel, Bloemfontein, stood a group of men and women, laughing and joking at the strange scene before their eyes.

Swirling and foaming a few feet beneath them flowed a mighty torrent. The spruit was full and overflowing, the street had been transformed into a river, and the hotel stood like an island in the course of the raging flood.

It never entered their heads that there was danger. But as they stood there, mirthful and light-hearted, watching the ever-rising waters, they felt a shock. The laughter ceased. The mirth was over. Consternation was printed upon every countenance.

But I will quote the newspaper account. Says the *Transvaal Leader*: “People staying at the Royal Hotel gathered on the balcony to watch the strange sight of the waters flowing in Fountain Street. Then came a sudden roaring rush of waters, flooding the street ten feet deep, and bearing all before it. A wagon, caught by the flood, crashed against the balcony and bore it down. The agonised people above clung to the breaking ironwork, shrieking for help. But little

help could be given in the face of those raging waters."

Two or three weeks after this tragic event a friend was showing me round the Bloemfontein Museum. Suddenly a picture caught my eye. It was a photo, taken during the recent flood, showing the hotel just before its collapse, with the people on the balcony.

The whole scene stood vividly portrayed before me. And I could not but think of others, whose danger is as real as that of the unfortunate inmates of the hotel, but who no more suspect it than they did.

Reader, do you know any such people? To make the question still more personal, are you yourself one such?

Laughter-loving and gay you may be, but your sins have exposed you to the danger of hell-fire. Meet God you must, sooner or later, and unless you get those crimson sins washed away, justice will compel Him to banish you into eternal darkness.

It is no time for trifling. Life is a serious matter. Eternity is more serious still. Serious questions confront you and call for serious answers. What of your soul? Where will you spend the great hereafter? Are you ready to meet God?

A thoughtless, butterfly kind of life scarcely suits one who can only remain on earth a few years at

most. Think! *You have notice to quit!* Go you must, and that very soon. Time is hurrying you on; death will hurry you out. What then?

Do not imagine that my remarks are only intended for old men and women. More die at seventeen than at seventy.

A skilled sportsman does not care to shoot a bird at rest. He delights to take it while upon the wing. "Bang!" goes the gun, and the little lark, soaring in the summer sky like a tiny speck upon the canopy of cloudless blue, falls to the ground. Its song was joyous, it feared no danger; but its life is over for ever.

That is how Death acts. He has room in his bag for the aged and wrinkled; but oftentimes he makes a special mark of the young and the blithe and the gay.

You may be winging your way merrily along under the sunny sky of youth and pleasure, but beware! Even at this moment Death may be aiming a shaft at you.

Death, however, is not the end. "After this the judgment." Have you thought of that?

A Christian lady was speaking to a young friend of hers about these matters.

"Oh," she replied, "I intend to become a Christian before I die. But I am only twenty-two, and there is plenty of time yet."

So think many. They do not mean to be lost for ever. It is their sincere intention to be converted some day ; but they imagine there is plenty of time, and so they *put it off* until some future day—a day that sometimes never comes.

Amongst those who perished amid the ruins of the Royal Hotel was Mr. S., the proprietor. It appears that he had intended to leave that same day for Cape Town, but had put off the journey. If only he had put his intention into practice ! He delayed, however, and lost his life in consequence.

Do not be content with *intending* to become a Christian. If you delay for a single hour in reaching the place of safety, you run a most fearful risk. By to-morrow you may be in eternity.

Why do I say “ **THE** place of safety ” ? Because there is only one.

Where is it ? Mark the answer. The only place of safety for sinners is under the shelter of the blood of Christ. Nowhere else can you find security from the coming storm of judgment. \*

It is *your sins* that have imperilled your soul, and exposed you to God’s righteous judgment. And if you are to be saved it must be through the removal of your sins. “ Knowledge of salvation ” is by “ the

remission of sins" (Luke i. 77), and "Without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.)

If your sins are not to bring down judgment upon your head they must be *atoned* for, and nothing but the blood of the Substitute can atone for sins.

Now it is for this that Jesus suffered upon the cross. We read that He "suffered for sins"; not His own (for He had none), but for ours. He bore the wrath of God in order to make atonement for us. It is in this way that a refuge has been provided. He who flees to the Saviour is sheltered by the precious blood that He shed.

There were some at Bloemfontein who managed to flee in time. The day after the disaster the telegraph wires up and down the country were humming with messages from those who had escaped.

"Thank God, I am safe" were the words which in several instances conveyed the news to anxious friends.

In a truer and deeper sense the sinner that has fled to Jesus can use these words.

"Thank God, I am safe," such can say. Not "I shall be safe some day," but "I *am* safe, as safe as the blood of Christ can make me; as safe as if I were in heaven already."

Not "I *hope* I am safe," but "I *am* safe, because I

have confidence in Christ, and in the power and efficacy of His blood."

"Thank God, I am safe." Safe from the danger to which my sins exposed me! Safe from the judgment that I so richly deserve! Safe in Christ! Safe for ever!

Reader, can you say "Thank God, I am safe"?

It is vain to hope for safety in any other way than by trusting in Christ. If you lean upon your own fancied goodness, saying that you are "better than others," you will assuredly be lost.

If you expect to reach heaven by "trying," or "doing your best," or "striving to please God," you will meet with bitter disappointment at the end.

None but Jesus can save. During the Bloemfontein flood some brave men made an effort to save the lives of those in peril.

A man was carrying a child from Mrs. V.'s house, but suddenly in mid-stream he fainted and dropped.

Dr. T. was conducting a young lady through the flooded street, when the stream bowled him over like a ninepin, and the lady was borne away beyond his reach.

Another gentleman, who was carrying a child, was thrown off his feet by the force of the current, and nearly lost his own life.

These would-be deliverers did their best. They were *willing* to save, but were not *able*. They proved to be but broken reeds.

But Jesus is both willing and able. None but He can save you. No priest or preacher, no Christian parent or friend can ensure your safety. Efforts, works, religious observances, and a moral life are but broken reeds. Lean upon them and you will perish. But “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*” (Acts xvi. 31.)

Do you still treat the matter lightly? Will you still pursue your way, merry and thoughtless, leaving your eternal welfare to chance?

Remember that, though it may be laughing time now, weeping time will come.

If you could have looked into the Bloemfontein Town Hall when, after the disaster, it was turned into a temporary hospital, you would have found the occupants overwhelmed with grief.

An eye-witness thus describes the scene: “Sounds of fearful sobbing filled the hall as some woman recovered from the stupor of shock to realise that her all had gone, and that perhaps she was a widow. One man mingled his sobs with those of the women. His three sons had been drowned before his eyes.”

Will you find words, do you think, in which to chide yourself for your folly if you wake up in eternity to find that *your all has gone*? Your joy gone. Your friends gone. Your life gone. Your opportunities gone. Yourself gone, gone into the unutterable gloom of eternal night in the land where hope never comes.

You will never forgive yourself! But it need not be. God is very gracious. His grace is free, *but you must avail yourself of it*. It only flows through one channel, and that is, through Christ and His atoning blood.

Trust in Him and all will be well. The song-filled courts of joy above shall be your eternal abode instead of the region of wailing and despair.

Even here and now you shall taste of a joy that you never knew before. Fresh delights shall unfold before your wondering gaze. Pleasures that you never dreamed of shall be yours. All this is to be found in Jesus. Knowing and trusting Him is the secret of a happy life on earth, as well as of a blissful eternity by and by.

“In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”  
(Psalm xvi. 11.)

# *The Vow of Revenge.*



OUR Gospel meetings were in full swing. A large marquee had been erected in one of the fashionable suburbs of London, and night after night we had the joy of bearing the best of news to the ears of sin-laden men and women.

It was towards the close of one of the Sunday evening services that the incident which I am about to relate took place. I was very tired ; the oppressive heat of the cloudless summer day had given me a bad headache. The preaching ended, I felt that I had better walk quietly home and leave my friends to manage the after-meeting by themselves.

While making my way towards the house in which I was staying I heard the sound of hurried footsteps upon the pavement behind me. Presently a gentleman overtook me.

“ Pardon me,” he began, “ I should be very glad of a few words with you. You are the preacher from the Tent, I believe ? ”

“ Yes,” I replied. “ Were you at the meeting this evening ? ”

“I have followed you from there,” he said; “and if you can spare a few minutes I would like to tell you some of the details of my life’s history that you may better understand my case.”

“Will you accompany me to my friend’s house?” I asked. “It is hardly a stone’s throw further.”

“I would prefer to talk to you here, if you don’t mind.”

“Very well. I shall be pleased to hear your story.”

“Some years ago my only brother and myself went to South Africa, partly from love of change and adventure, partly with the desire to make money. We soon obtained employment in connection with the Rhodesian Railway, which was then being carried forward from Mafeking to Buluwayo.

“The railway completed, we settled down at Buluwayo and opened a store. Before long we had a good business. Money came rolling in and success seemed sure.

“After a while, however, my brother was taken ill with fever. Rapidly he grew worse. The doctor said the outlook was serious.

“I began to be alarmed. Was my brother going to die? I hoped against hope that he might recover, for he was my only brother and we had always been chums.

“For the first time for many years I got down on my knees in prayer. I prayed to God to spare my

brother's life. I vowed that if only He would do so I would devote my days to His service.

"But God did not hear my prayer. My brother died.

"I was beside myself with rage. I shook my fist and vowed revenge. I swore that since God had taken my brother's life I would henceforth do all that lay in my power to oppose His work and thwart His will, and dishonour His name.

"I lost no time in disposing of the business at Buluwayo and returning to England. I obtained a situation in London and well I have kept my vow. I have plunged into all kinds of wickedness, and have led others into the same. I have been a determined opposer of God's work and have poured ridicule upon His people.

"What makes my case worse is that I was brought up in a Christian way. When a boy I regularly attended chapel with my mother, and as I grew older I made some profession of religion.

"To-day I am spiritually a wreck. What I want you to tell me is this. Having heard the story of my wicked life, and knowing that all the time I was sinning against light and knowledge, do you think that there is any hope of mercy for me?"

With joy too deep for words I told him that there was assuredly mercy and forgiveness even for him; that it was for the *ungodly* that Christ died; that His precious blood cleanseth from *all* sin; and that His

own lips have promised: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out."

The gentleman listened, and I silently prayed that his heart might be opened to receive the message. Much further conversation passed between us, and then, with a warm grip of the hand, he bade me good night, assuring me that he would seek the Saviour and trust in His love and power.

Several times, before leaving the district, I saw him again, and I believe that in true repentance and faith he turned to the Lord and found pardon for all his crimson sins.

Maybe, reader, *you* have crossed the seas, as this gentleman did, in quest of adventure, or with the desire of making money. Thousands of miles stretch between you and the land of your birth. Home influences have ceased to have any hold upon you. Thoughts of God have been banished from your minds.

From one sin you have gone on to another. With your godless companions you live as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, no eternity.

It is not too late, however, to turn to the Lord. None are too bad for Him to save. His enemies never uttered truer words than when they said, in mocking scorn, "This man receiveth sinners."

It was early in 1903 that Dr. A. H. Simonton, a young medical man in America, applied for an appointment in the United States Navy as an assistant surgeon.

In due time his application came before the examining board of officers. In the course of the examination it appeared that the applicant was of unusual size. Measurements showed that while he might be able to squeeze down the companion-way of a battleship he could not possibly get through a hatch on a torpedo boat.

Dr. Simonton's application was therefore rejected, for the reason that he was too big.

But if you apply for pardon at the Saviour's hands, do you think there is any chance of your being refused on the ground that you are too big a sinner? Never!

Yet with many there is the fear that their sins are too great and their lives too abandoned for them to expect a welcome at mercy's gate.

Such was a man who was found by a city missionary, and urged to come to the Lord. He had lived a criminal and vicious life, and now he feared that he was too wicked to be saved.

"Think," said the missionary, "of Christ as He hung between the two thieves; and then look up and say to Him, 'O Christ, Thou *canst* not save me.'"

The man replied, "I dare not say that."

"Then look up into His face and say, 'O Christ, Thou *wilt* not save me.'"

"No," said the man, "I dare not say that, either."

"What will you say, then?"

The man saw the truth at once. He believed that the Lord was both able and willing to save him as he was. He trusted Him there and then, and went on his way rejoicing.

That is the kind of confidence which the Bible encourages. You may have sinned deeply and long. Your life may have been foul with many an aggravated offence against God. Your heart may have become well-nigh as hard as granite. But the promise stands true: "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Christ will never go back on His own word.

A man who ventured his life to save a lady from drowning commenced a lawsuit against her husband to recover the reward which he had offered to anyone who would rescue her.

It appears that the lady and her husband, a well-to-do farmer, were crossing a bridge during a flood when the bridge collapsed and they fell into the river.

The farmer managed to swim to the bank, but his wife was carried down the stream. Her course, however, was stopped by a tree, in the branches of which her dress caught.

Her position was one of great peril. Her husband ran along the shore, loudly calling for help, and offering two hundred pounds for her rescue.

A man who heard the offer flung off his coat and plunged into the swollen stream. By dint of great

effort he succeeded in bringing the lady safe to the bank.

Naturally, he expected to receive the promised reward. But the husband demurred, saying that he made the offer under temporary excitement, and that it was much too large a sum to pay for the service rendered.

But *Jesus* will never treat a sinner like that. His promise is not one of reward for any service to be rendered, but a free, unconditional offer of salvation to those who come to Him. He never says to any applicant, "Your sins are too black," or "Your heart is too hard," or "You have refused My call too often." Without a word of reproach He receives with the warmest of welcomes the vilest sinner who trusts Him. "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Is not that a promise that you can rest upon?

Perhaps you say, "I am not sure that the word 'athirst' is really true of me. I am not so earnest about these things as I ought to be."

Very likely you are not. But we also read, "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely."

That word "*Whosoever*" makes it more personal, and more applicable to you than if your own name were mentioned.

Quite recently an advertisement appeared in an English newspaper inquiring for one Joseph R. Mee, who had not been heard of for forty-four years. A

Mr. Joseph R. Mee, of Orange River Colony, wrote in reply, but, uncommon as is the name, he was not the individual in question.

If Christ's promise were made to a person of your name, you might reasonably doubt if it meant you. You might think, "There are others, perhaps, that bear the same name as myself." But "whosoever" forbids any doubt. *Unquestionably it means you.*

Will you apply for the offered blessing? Come to the Lord. Trust Him as your Saviour. Claim the pardon that He is waiting to bestow.



“Thy Brother Jacob.”

OBADIAH 10.

# “THY BROTHER JACOB.”

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## OBADIAH 10.

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 WONDER whether it has ever struck us why, in God's eye, Jacob was so superior to Esau, as the Lord said, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” Have we ever reflected how that was? And, you know, we are told, in the 12th of Hebrews,

that Esau was a *profane* person—a very strong word, beloved friends. Yet Esau was a fine character naturally, a much finer character, as men go, than Jacob, but Jacob had God's favour and Esau had not. And I need not say there are lessons to be learnt there, not only in the fact that results, but in the characteristics of the two men that are placed before us, and that teach us these lessons. Do you think we know them?

Now, there is one thing that, at all events, characterizes Esau, and does not exactly characterize Jacob, and that is that Esau lived in the present. Jacob, weak and failing as he was, had his eye upon the future if it was only as far as the blessing

was concerned, for he recognised God and valued the favour and the promises of God. No doubt he was manœuvring as to means, and tried to bring about the fulfilment of these promises in his own way, whereas, Esau cared very little about them, and shifted for himself, and uncommonly well. Esau was a clever man, and a strong man—in fact, *a man*. You could hardly call Jacob a man at all, but Esau was, undoubtedly.

Esau, in a certain sense, started, and went all through life, not merely making the best of it, but really with tact, cleverness, and success. He was, undoubtedly, a successful man, though he made a number of mistakes. As to

## “ THY BROTHER JACOB.”

pleasing his father and mother, he did not know the way to set about it, and vexed them excessively in the case of his marriages. However, be that as it may, we find that he succeeded. He had kings reigning in the chapter we read,\* and he had dukes reigning, whereas, poor Jacob, after a certain amount of prosperity, was afraid to meet him, for he had avoided Esau's face—went to a far country to get out of his way, and there he had been for so many years—a servant, a slave.

Nevertheless, Jacob achieved a certain success, and he returned with “two bands,” across “this Jordan,” so he was, to

\* Genesis xxxvi. 31—xxxvii. 1.

some extent, somebody ; but he was nobody and nothing in comparison with Esau. When Esau was in all his grandeur, “Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger,” that is, he was not a bit more firmly fixed on the earth than his father before him. With all his attempts, he remained a stranger where his father was a stranger—succeeded his father in that respect.

Though Jacob shunned his face and kept out of his way, yet Esau always had a grudge against him, and not only he but his posterity too, as we see in Obadiah. We there find him helping on the affliction. That was a terrible thing—he was not exactly the instrument, but he was helping

on, with all his heart, the distress of poor Jacob. “ Thy violence against thy brother Jacob—in the day thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the stranger carried away his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. Thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger, neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction, neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress : thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity, neither shouldest thou have

stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape ; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress ; as thou hast done it shall be done unto thee, thy reward shall return upon thine own head." And there is where we take leave of him.

God deals with him after that, and even Jacob destroys his mountain. " Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord. But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and there shall not be any remaining of Esau, and the house

of Jacob shall possess their possessions, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's."

There is where we leave him, and there is where we see the heartlessness of the great man of the earth. The great man of the earth, with all his vaunted superiority, is *heartless*, and that does not do for God. We have got to beware of it. There is nothing so distasteful to God as heartlessness.

With all Jacob's faults and weaknesses we could not say he was heartless. He had his exercises, his very failures brought him into these exercises. Our failures are thus blessed, because they exercise the heart and soul, and if they bring us to God unreservedly, we can thank God for them.

“ In everything give thanks.” It is a difficult thing for the soul, but, nevertheless, it is God’s way. And it is a blessed thing to be able to say in everything that we give thanks, because God is brought in. Well, that is Jacob in his failure.

We would just notice one or two things in the course of Jacob. The child of God is always apt to be influenced by circumstances. When Jacob comes back, he refers to when he first crossed Jordan and lay down with a stone for a pillow, and set up a pillar, and says, “ With my staff I passed over this Jordan ; and now I am become two bands.” He was getting a little elated by the fact of his being surrounded by “ two bands.”

Then we see God's interposition on his behalf. But He has to deal with him personally first, and the result was, he got touched in his leg, and limped for ever. It was a coming down, from the “two bands” to a limping Jacob ! Such a sense had he then after that, and for all the rest of his journey, of what *he* was, that, when Joseph brings him up before Pharaoh, and the king asks, “How old art thou?” Jacob says, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years ; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and I have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers.” That is Jacob. What a contrast to Esau ! Do you think that Esau, the man of the earth,

would ever have said that? There was heart in that confession. He recognised the failure, he recognised that he, though he was standing before Pharaoh, a superior, was only poor Jacob.

Then he improves, for he remains fifteen years there, and finally bids farewell to this world, with his heart carried on to the resurrection, and to the hopes that lay there for him, for where do we find him in the 11th of Hebrews? Almost in the superior place of any there. That chapter is the record that God gives of His worthies on the earth, in His own view.

We find him there, then, worshipping, and with the staff with which he crossed

over Jordan. “ With my staff I passed over this Jordan ; and now I am become two bands.” We hear nothing about the “ two bands ” in Hebrews xi., but we find him returned to the staff ; but worshipping. Are we satisfied to be there. That is the place to be in this world—nothing but the staff to support feeble nature ; but worshipping.

May the Lord in His grace hold our souls there, especially in these days, for His Name’s sake—“ faint, yet pursuing.”

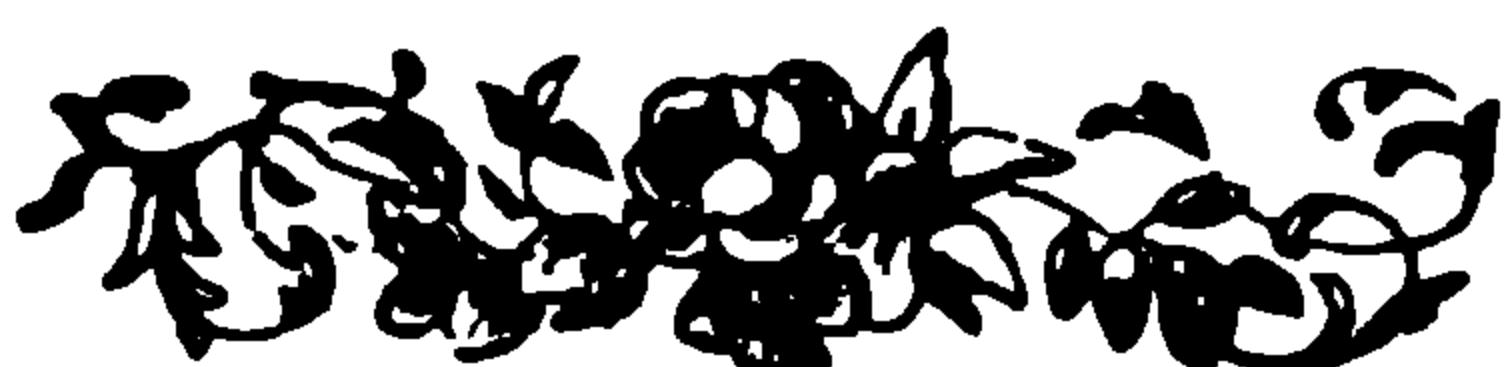
# THE WILDERNESS—THE LAND : THE LESSONS OF EACH.

DEUTERONOMY XIII. 1-9; XI. 10-12; XXVI. 1-11.

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By W. T. T.

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## THE WILDERNESS—THE LAND, THE LESSONS OF EACH.

Deuteronomy viii. 1-9; xi. 10-12; xxvi. 1-11.

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You will find two very different experiences recorded in chapters viii. and xi. of this book. Chapter viii. sets before us the wilderness and its lessons. If I think of it as the place where every Christian is, though it is true also he belongs to heaven (seated in heavenly places in Christ), yet looking at

## 4 THE WILDERNESS -- THE LAND :

the wilderness as the scene through which we are passing, the object and purport of it are clearly discernible.

In heaven there will be no broken hearts, no trials, no hunger, no thirst ; but here the blessed God finds a place such as this is suited to display His heart as equal to it all ; that the difficulties, the trials and sorrows, through which His people pass, do but afford Him the occasion for shewing how He can care for His own. The blessed God charged Himself with the clothes and feet of His people these forty years ! How wonderful ! It is the greatness of His love that enables Him to enter into it all—nothing too great and nothing too small for

His care and interest. We on our side *need* the wilderness; it is a place in which dependence and subjection are put to the test. “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, and know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon

## 6 THE WILDERNESS—THE LAND:

thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.”

Now this is the wilderness ; it is connected with God’s ways with His people: and as I have observed, it is here we learn dependence and subjection. It was all a sandy waste before them and behind them, and just the place for them to learn how to lean on Him ; “that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.”

It is wonderful, surely, how little we are cast on God; no matter how varied our circumstances are, there is one common point to be found in all our histories alike,

namely, independence. It was independence in the first Adam in paradise, when he thought he could do better than God had done for him.

There is not one solitary thing in this world that ministers to you as a child of God, as a new creature in Christ Jesus. You are to count on God and none but God. The Lord Jesus Christ, as a man, was perfect in dependence and obedience. The first man in the garden of Eden, surrounded by all the tokens and marks of God's care, displayed his perfect independence: the second Man in the wilderness, without any subsidy, is perfect in dependence. He recommended, morally, the history of the

nation. “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” (See Hosea xi. 1 ; Matt. ii. 15.) *They* were in the wilderness ; He was in the wilderness : only they broke down and failed everywhere —He was perfect in it all. Christ recovered everything for God and secured every blessing for His own. Have we learned what it is, day by day, and moment by moment, to live by every word of God ? There is nothing but restlessness and unreality in all around us ; no quiet, no repose.

What a path that of dependence is ! What would straits and difficulties be to a man that walked in that road ? What were they to Caleb and Joshua ? They were

*bread* for them, and they could not be less than bread for us. What a wonderful display: the blessed God shewing me He is above difficulties, and faith feeding upon them! The second lesson of the wilderness is subjection : how few of us know what it is ! I do not mean resignation ; resignation means that you endure it because you cannot help it; subjection, that you fall in with the will of God as the delight of your heart. The wilderness is the scene where the will may be constantly crossed ; and that is just the place to elicit the subjection of your heart. See its perfection in the second Adam (Matt. xi.), “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou

## 10 THE WILDERNESS—THE LAND :

hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." And this, observe, was at a moment when all had failed to meet His longing, loving heart. John doubted His being the Messiah ; Israel refused Him ; and the cities which had witnessed His mightiest works repented not. What a wonderful thing for the heart to find its rest in the fact that God has had *His* way ! It is not that I cannot help it, but my joy and satisfaction when the will of God triumphs at my cost. If not so, when our desires are interrupted, our pathway broken in upon (it may be in good things, that were only

88

the energy of the natural will), how disappointed with ourselves, (and shall I say it?) how almost disappointed with God ; heart-broken oneself ; and with the dreadful sensation of being disappointed with God ! Oh, to be glad that God would have His own way, even if it breaks in upon cherished hopes and prospects ; but nothing will impart this to us save implicit obedience and subjection, and a faith that will trust Him in the dark. “As for God, his way is perfect.” “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.” Not a single affection of His heart is kept back or unexpressed ; read them in the light of the sorrows of the heart of

Jesus, and you will find how it will cheer you passing through the valley of the shadow of death. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock.” *Who* is it that leads His sheep, keeps them in His hand, and watches over them day by day? There is but One, and His name one. The Lord give us to draw the reason of His ways with us from the knowledge of His heart, then His will shall be our delight.

The end of chapter viii. describes the land as it is in itself; it is a region of plenty and satisfied desire. “A land of wheat and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without

scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it ; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

But in chapter xi. the land is described in its contrast. In Egypt there is trouble connected with the best of things ; they had trouble to procure the fertilising streams of the Nile ; Canaan, on the contrary, drank water of the rain of heaven, and the eyes of God were always on it, from the beginning to the end of the year.

The very best thing you possess in this world has trouble connected with it ; who can tell when we may lose it ? The sweeping desolations of death may come in upon it ; and " increased happiness does but widen

## 14 THE WILDERNESS—THE LAND:

the target at which death shoots his arrows.” I may die to them or they may die to me; here we are in the presence of death; there we shall be in the presence of Christ.

The only place that can command or detain the eye of God now, is the spot where that blessed One is, and there I go to remember my sorrow no more; by faith I am *now* introduced into it, and share His joy. I love to think *He* cares for me in the wilderness; still I love to think He says, you shall know another place the exact contrast to it. Now what is to engage us in this place of rest and satisfaction? This we have in chapter xxvi. “When thou art come in and possessest it, and dwellest therein.”

Every Christian has come in, but then it is another thing to take practical *possession*, or make it our own ; and to *dwell* is to make it our *home*. Are you rather a visitor to earth upon His business, and a dweller in that home ? A stranger here—at home there ? In Christendom the effort is to be what they are not. No one can work themselves up to be heavenly. I am to walk here in the sense of what I am in Christ. Do you *dwell* there ? Have you possessed it ? Can you say, Thank God, He has brought me in, given me possession, and now I dwell there ; and the spot I possess is the very place where the Beloved One of God is crowned ? Thus we have looked at the wilderness .

## 16 THE WILDERNESS—THE LAND.

and the land, the objects and purports of each. May our hearts largely profit by the lessons of both, while we have deeper and larger apprehensions by the Holy Ghost of our present place on high in Christ before God, as well as one with Him in glory, for His name's sake. Amen.



15 ————— 94

# The Grace of God and the Reproach of Christ.

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HEBREWS XIII. 8, 20, 21.

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# THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE REPROACH OF CHRIST.

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HEBREWS XIII. 8, 20, 21.

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**W**E open here with Jesus Christ who does not change when everything else does, and we close with the Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, who has been raised up from amongst the dead. That is the circle—Jesus Christ who changes not when everything else does ; we ourselves ; and then the Great Shepherd of the sheep in the power of resurrec-

tion, raised up from amongst the dead—that is everything.

Now it is a great thing for our souls to realise this Lord Jesus as Shepherd—the Great Shepherd. It is of great importance. We are not left as comfortless, we are not left without the Shepherd ; it might seem so, but we are not.

And then, besides that, it is a Shepherd we know, and we know His voice—the sheep hear. He is the Shepherd of the sheep, not merely *a* Shepherd, but *the* Shepherd of the sheep.

And, then, we know that the sheep hear His voice, and know His voice, and know not the voice of strangers, and they follow Him. It is a blessed sequence : they are *the* sheep, none other, they are separated to Himself by His voice, and they know Him ; we do not require to ask about separation where you have got that. It is the voice of the Shepherd that separates the sheep, separates already the sheep

from the goats, but the sheep are those that hear and know His voice and follow Him. It is a work in the soul, and it marks them off for time and eternity, and there they are.

Well, then, this great Shepherd, who is the Shepherd of the sheep, mind, He is one who is in resurrection. He has been raised up from amongst the dead, He is passed out of death and He is in life—there He is, and that is the One that shepherds the sheep, and that is the One whose voice we hear and know and follow. It is not that we have to follow Him, in one sense, anywhere now, because He has sat down, but He has been here, the earth is the scene of His shepherding, and it is where He carries it on, and that is the place in which He leads us.

Then, after that, we find that the thing that characterises the sheep is, that they do not want; now, beloved friends, that is a great test. People speak so much about

tests, and they want tests, and tests by which they judge; but what is the test, beloved friends, what is the test for your soul and my soul? The test is this, that we want not—*want not*. As it says, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” and it would be a scandal for me to confess want if the Lord is my Shepherd, so I say, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” And not only that, He leads me, in the midst of all confusion and all the upheavings within and without, He leads the sheep beside the still waters and makes them to lie down in rich pastures.

Is that the way it is with your soul and my soul? Can we speak very high things and talk very great, and yet have not got to the foundation truths that belong to the sheep of Christ? That is the thing for our souls. We have found One that leads us, we have not got to trouble to lead ourselves, we have found One that leads us beside the still waters, and makes us lie

down in rich pastures, and we shall not want—do not want.

That is the thing that characterises, and that is the thing that separates. There is no such thing, we all know it, there is no such thing as a soul without Christ that does not want something or other. There is where we are—the blessed thing afterwards is, that we find this Jesus the Christ our Shepherd, never changes, and therefore is it not a blessed thing to learn the ways, the manners, the customs, if we might so say, of this Jesus who is the Shepherd of the sheep, where we can learn them? Where do we learn them? Do we not learn them in the Gospels that have been given us? And is it not a remarkable thing (I say it I suppose on good authority), that the Gospel of John was the very last thing that was written for the scriptures?—so I say, there we are.

Well, now, we have got this Shepherd, we do not want, we know His voice, we

follow Him, He leads us beside still waters and makes us to lie down in peace in the rich, or green, pastures. Well, as I said before, this Jesus, He changes not, He is the same as we have known, as we know, and He is the same as we ever shall know Him. He is God—He never changes.

Now, let us keep clear of anything extraneous ; be not carried about—tossed about by every wind that blows. Is that the way it is to be with us ? “ Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established”—the heart be established. And is the heart established that is going after divers and strange doctrines ? It is utterly impossible for them to go together. When the heart is established, and if the heart is established, what is it established with ? Is it established with glory ? No ; it is established with grace. And how is it we see hearts so unestablished ? Some people think they are be-

yond grace ; is it surprising that their hearts are not established ?

Beloved friends, those are the very hearts that are not established, because God will have it that if the heart is to be established, the only way that it can be established before such a God is by grace. “ Let us hold fast grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear : for our God is a consuming fire.” What a lot of things He will have to consume by-and-by, of those even that are supposed to be the nearest to Him. However, this Jesus Christ changes not, therefore let the heart be established with that which is within, and not with that which is without—with grace, not with meats, outward ceremonies, which have not profited them ; all very well in their season, and in the time they were established—shadows of the good things to come—but the body, or substance which we have now, is of Christ.

Now we come to a little more—we have got an altar. Do not think that we have got nothing—no worship. Do you think that Christians have got nothing? Do you think that Christians are to be pushed on one side, and are the only people that have got nothing? They are the only people that have got something! All the rest is utterly valueless.

The altar is the first thing. Abraham set up his altar the first thing. When we have come to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the very first thing is to set up the altar. Are we to get on without worship? When God has saved us and brought us to Himself, we set up an altar, and it is an altar that is exclusive. We set up an altar with which those have no title to have fellowship that serve the meats. Is it not a blessed thing occasionally to realise the fact that we are exclusive, if it is exclusiveness with Christ? We may get afraid of the word, and it is very badly

used sometimes, and perhaps by ourselves too ; but the exclusiveness that is with Christ is another thing, and with that altar that is set up with Christ, they that serve the old thing have no right to have participation.

Well, now comes another thing. We are very fond of speaking of inside the veil and outside the camp—it is a sort of saying with us. We have a great many sayings that God will have to knock from under us. It is not sayings that we want, we want heart exercise, we want to have realities. And there is nothing like a little bit of reality if it is nothing else. The stress is not so much upon within the veil as without the camp. It does not say going within the veil, it says going out without the camp bearing His reproach. That is the side we are so apt to leave out. We leave out the things that are not pleasant. It is a custom with us, and we should get rid of these customs, because

the time is coming when all these customs will have to be thrown overboard. If we eschew the customs now, we shall not be disappointed by-and-by.

“Jesus, also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” Well, now, what was that, what was without the gate? Of course we all know. What was taken without the camp and consumed was the sin-offering, of which the blood was carried within the veil, and as the hymn says—

“His precious blood has spoken there,  
Before and on the throne.”

The body was carried without the camp and utterly consumed—gone for ever. That is what we are associated with in respect to sin and its end, and it is well that we should know it, because no defilement can enter within the veil, one need not say, nothing that is the least contaminated. The consequence is, as when

the apostle says, “Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace.” You have good ground for it, because you are thoroughly identified with the abolition, the consumption, outside the camp, of sin ; it is gone, and gone for ever completely. “He was made sin for us.”

We may ask ourselves, is it not a blessed thing to linger in thought with the entire consumption of that, where Jesus has taken His place on earth! “I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me”—all, without exception of classes and peoples. Is not that worth something to realise that? To realise the central point on this earth or just off the earth? Why there is a complete end once and for ever of everything that is derogatory to the presence or glory of God—it is all left behind. It does not want you and me to tell. Why? Because it is not we that speak, but the blood that speaks ; it is there and for ever, and God is glorified.

There is the place, and if it is the place it is with Jesus. Are you going to leave Him outside there and go inside the camp? He is not there. That is the last appearance of the Lord Jesus to man, as man—outside the camp, bearing the reproach. Well, if we do not realise it, and take it to heart, it is just as well to reflect upon it, because here we have no continuing city, so do not try to make yourself at home, go on with the real thing, with the God of peace—there is the peace. The God of peace has brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant, and you are to be well pleasing in His sight, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Is it not worth being separated to that, is it not worth being outside the camp bearing His reproach? What is that reproach? The reproach that being made sin for us put Him to, when accounted not

fit for the camp. It is, on the other hand, for the good pleasure of God. There is nothing so holy—it is most *holy*—the sin-offering.

Just think that the Lord should bring us into the contemplation of such things. Do not let us be shy of it, but let us realise and rejoice in the fact, and rejoice in what God rejoices in, and so be separate—exclusive if you like—for His name's sake.



“The Beginning of the Gospel of  
Jesus Christ the Son of God.”



THE LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,  
20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

# “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.”

MARK I.



You cannot but see at once what a complete change came over the world by the introduction of this new thing from God—the beginning—the beginning of the gospel.

Four thousand years had passed over the world, at least, up to this time, and nothing approaching to this that we have before us had ever come into it. There had been many glories, the glories of David and Solomon also, and the people led out of Egypt and wonderfully supported in the wilderness, and all that. They had gone through many phases, as we know—mankind was likely to do something in 4,000 years—and yet there was nothing approaching to the scene that opens in this chapter, and what is that? “The beginning of the gospel.”

It is a wondrous thing. Do you at all realise that in your soul? Supposing we speak now to

## 4 "THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF

an unconverted soul. Have you realised that the responsibility that lies at your door is greater than anything that ever has been or could be, by the introduction of the gospel of Jesus Christ—this new thing that has come out from God Himself to poor lost humanity, and without respect of persons, of course I need not say? It must be so if it comes from God.

And what is the gospel, I mean what is the meaning even of the word itself? because you know we speak of the gospel—it is in everybody's mouth; so has it ever come across your soul to think of what the gospel is, not merely as we hear it sounded in the air about us?

What is the gospel? Just the meaning of the gospel itself? Well, it is something good, at all events. And where from? From God. And it is something more than that: it is a message of good from God. Whom shall we say to? Now just receive it—to you, to you!

Do not let it slip by, but take it home personally to yourself, that God has been pleased in His own wondrous grace and goodness, knowing what your needs are, to send you a message of good from heaven itself, and from Himself.

The word itself contains that, that God has been pleased to send a message of good to your soul, as if there was no other soul on the face of

the earth but your soul, placing you in a most wondrous responsibility for eternity—not merely the effect it may have upon your conduct—but your eternity.

Beloved friends, that is the thing, and you have got an immortal soul. The few years that you may pass in the world are but a drop in the ocean. Your soul is immortal and will never cease to exist, and where will it exist? because what are just the few days that you spend upon earth—nothing to eternity? And you have got a germ in you that will never cease to exist, whether in eternal blessedness or the reverse. You have got that upon you to recognise.

Well, here we have the introduction of this new thing that never existed on the earth before, which came direct to the soul of man at this exact time. In due time, God sent forth His Son: it was God's due time—there was no mistake about it. Jesus came—the Son of God came at the exact time that it was needed that He should come. Here it is: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

It is a most wonderful thing to think not only that the Son of God existed and came into this world, but came to me. He did not come down into the world for a new thing for Himself. What did He come into the world for? Why,

because you were in it. If you had not been here, He would not have come. That is the reason, and think of it, beloved friends, and think of it seriously. He would not have come to gratify Himself naturally; but He did come to gratify Himself, too, for, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

It was not to the world He came to gratify Himself, but He came to you, and He came from God. He condescended to be God's Messenger. The close of the verse is "Son of God." The consequence is, the Son of God—well, He is God, and if He is God He is Jehovah—Jehovah the Lord has been spoken of as coming. Well, if He is coming, says John, *make room for Him*. We might apply that to our souls—the world is His, He created it and made it: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fatness thereof." This Person therefore comes into the world, as it tells us in John's Gospel, though the world knew Him not; still He came, and naturally He sends a herald before Him to say, *Make room for Him, make room for Him in your heart.*

But it is not that here. Therefore it tells us at once how room was to be made for Him, and though, as we learn elsewhere, He would suddenly

appear in His temple, yet we have nothing whatever about the temple here, but quite the reverse. A poor man, and he is the herald of this Person, but only a voice: it is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," that is the one that announces the One that is coming, and comes to the world, saying, "Make room for Jehovah." And how was he to make room for Him? "Make his paths straight." And then comes the baptism of John, the seal of repentance.

It tells us in another place: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways shall be made smooth." All that will come about eventually, as we know. Everything should get out of His way, everything not suited to His presence. Make His paths straight—make room for Him.

But what really did happen? They made room for Him truly, but in a manger—"There was no room for him in the inn," in this world "He had not where to lay his head;" and so distasteful was He to the world, so distasteful His own ways that at the early age of thirty-three He was pushed clean out of it. Such is *the world we live in.*

Nevertheless, John the Baptist went on to explain what was needful personally for the introduction of this wondrous Person into the scene.

Well now, you have been not what you ought to have been, he, as it were, says to the people ; you had better change from all that—a complete turn over. And what was that complete turn over ? To come to John, to acknowledge they were all wrong, to know and own that they were sinners, and needed the remission of their sins, and this was set forth at that time in the baptism of John.

There was thus, so far, a clear ground for this wonderful Person to enter in upon. He came from Nazareth and was baptised by John—associated Himself thus with these poor people who confessed their sins apart from the guilty nation. These simple folk find themselves with that other simple person who was in the wilderness ; but he was in the presence and with the presence of Jehovah Himself. That is the opening.

The next thing is that John disappears—he disappears like the Lord Himself afterwards. What we want, says the world, is just your absence—that is what the natural man says to the message and to those who bring it. And will, till the Lord come and assert Himself, and bring in the reign of righteousness. Up to that time every one that stands for God, and that comes into this order of things, is to be pushed on one side—it will not do or go down. John

was pushed off into a prison ; they send for his head, and it formed a thing to dance round ; and there was the end of this greatest prophet of the Lord—the greatest prophet that ever was, as our Lord Himself tells us. There was nobody like John the Baptist ; nevertheless remember, “he that is *least* in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

So here he disappears off the scene, and necessarily—necessarily for God, so to speak. John the Baptist’s ministry was not the character of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was that which introduced it, but the thing itself could not go along with John the Baptist. You cannot have the two things together, and that is the difficulty for the human mind : the trying to mix the old and the new together, but it cannot be done.

Now we come to Jesus—Jehovah. He comes to John and is baptised, and anointed after that, and owned of God as Son, and then He goes and gathers round Himself.

John came preaching the baptism of repentance, that is not the voice of Jesus, that is the voice of John, and of all importance in its place. What is the voice of Jesus, and what does it continue to say ever since ? Follow Me, follow Me, follow Me. And what will be the result ? To be where He is, to be sure. “They said unto him, Rabbi,

## “ THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF

(which is to say, being interpreted, Master) where dwellest thou ? He saith unto them, Come and see.” That is the voice of Jesus. Come unto Me, He says. It is not, You must turn over a new leaf, not, You must come confessing your sins—all perfectly true as it is, in its place. The voice of Jesus is, Follow Me. And there is a response at once in the true heart—it is irresistible. It is irresistible except to the hard heart of unrepentant man. The moment the voice of Jesus searches the heart and soul, the response must be immediate.

It was very real when the Lord Himself uttered it to these two poor fishermen who left their nets and followed Him ; they said nothing, they were too much taken up with the sweetness of that voice, they obeyed it, and turned to it immediately, and never left it except once, alas ! when they all forsook Him and fled.

How important it is that you realise in your soul that voice, however it may be uttered, that says to you personally, Follow Me.

The effect, as we find, was immediate. Simon and Andrew, first of all, and then the others left their father Zebedee in the ship and went after Him. He goes into Capernaum. He, in Person, now begins His work, and it is important to follow in His work. These men that follow Him

see His work—they had nothing to do but to look on—they follow Him and they see the wondrous things that He does.

He goes into the synagogue, and finds a man possessed of the evil one. That is the first thing that takes the eye of God in this world, aye, the first thing that takes the eye of God when He looks at this world is—well, it is possessed. And you, if you have not been set free, *you* are possessed—you know you are not free yourself—you know you cannot do as you like. Suppose you have got good feelings or desires, you may try to carry them out for a day, or for a week or two. What does it end in? The most miserable failure.

I am speaking, of course, to the soul that has not handed itself over to another possession; such a one is led captive of Satan, just as he likes. It is a very humiliating thing for proud man to realise, and he shuns the thought of it. The soul that has not committed itself to God is in the hands of Satan; man is not his own master and there is no use blinking it. When you come to the word of God, and therefore to the eye of God, and as He looks at the men in the world, He says, There is a man possessed and no man can set him free but Me—God manifest in the flesh. And He comes into Satan's castle and turns him out, and

that is what these disciples see. They have come to a Person that sweeps Satan away before Him, and that is what you will see if you respond to the word, Follow Me. As Peter tells us, “ Resist the devil and he will flee from you;” it is not, Get out of his way; he will have to get out of your way: that is the difference.

That is the liberty wherewith the children of God are set free. That is the first thing that Jehovah—God manifest in the flesh—meets, He meets a poor man possessed, and sets him free.

Then we come to natural diseases. This fever was in the house of one of those that the Lord Jesus had called. When they were come out of the synagogue He finds Simon's wife's mother sick of a fever. It comes before the leper—the type of the sinner. He sets her free, and the effect of being set free is that she falls into her right place in a moment: she gets up at once and attends on them. She falls into her place thus, as it were, without a word. So they are served by this woman that the Lord had taken out of a fever. Did she give herself great credit for serving them? No; it was free service, as it had been free deliverance. We see there the liberty of service—there is no service worth anything that is not like that.

All that had diseases were brought to Him and

He healed them. Jesus Himself is represented here as the true Servant. If you want to know what service is, you might study this chapter.

What a superiority is displayed in the Son of God here upon this earth. We find Him doing God's work and nothing else, and God's work rightly. He came with a message of good from God, and He was not going to be put off it.

He goes on—and another thing that marks Him is this, that though He was Jehovah, and Jehovah was Jesus, He was a man. He took the place of a man, and He found Himself in the natural place of a true man, and that was with God. He departed into a solitary place and there prayed—that is where the strength of that Man lay.

“And the people sought him, and came unto him, and prayed him that he should not depart from them.” He says, That is not my business, My business is to go everywhere, it is not to be at the beck of mankind. As the apostle Paul tells us, “If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” And He came to please God in His service, the consequence was He was to take on the message of God. There were other cities, and to other cities He would go, “For therefore am I sent.” Reach them He would, and reach them He did.

## 14 "THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL OF

Then we come to the leper, and that is a figure of sin in itself in a man—irremediable. It is there and cannot be got away. There is where we are, beloved friends. We are sinners, and sin is in us. It has taken hold of us. A man may try to be what he likes, he cannot get rid of his leprosy, it is an incurable disease. And then, as to its activity: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar," because God says we all have sinned and come short of His glory. The thing itself is a production of what is there. The thing comes out: it does not come on us from somewhere else. You may be shut up in a cloister, but do not think you can shut sin out. The smallest place I can get into I shut sin in, because I shut myself in. The smaller the place, the tighter the fit, and it will burst itself out. That the thing exists is just as certain as that you exist yourself, and in a hopeless condition. So that it is only the power of God that can meet the case.

The Gospel is an old-fashioned name, it is a message of good from God.

It is only the Person that brings this message of good, that brings the power to relieve poor humanity of what has taken possession of it.

We have the figure of it in this leper, and the figure of the way it is mastered. The man that is brought to God is set free of it.

Here we find the way that it is met, and that is by Christ Himself, Jesus, the Son of God—in a divine way, by a divine Person.

The man says, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." How many persons acknowledge the power and know not the will ! How many souls realise and think of God as an austere Person, and nothing else, and even go so far as to put Christ between them and God, as if His only attribute were vengeance, and, if it were not for Jesus, He would, so to speak, annihilate us !

What does that portray but the ignorance of the human heart of what God is—of Him who sent His Son.

Here was one that recognised the power of the Person that was before Him. But oh ! the will, he might say, I am not so sure of that ! If he could have got a friend ! anybody that could have gone between—but to go direct to the Person Himself—he says, "If thou *wilt*"—I know you *can* !

The Lord took the little faith that was there, and He pressed it upon him ; and He says, as it were, You know little about Me, but I will. He brings out in that, not only that He would, but that who can say, I WILL but God ? There is not a human being, not any being in all creation that can say, "I will." Let Him say it on your behalf,

## 16 "THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL," ETC.

and let your soul say, I know His will as well as His power.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

*That* is His will. Now, I say, close with it, and do not let it pass, for His name's sake.



12

THE  
SECRET OF BLESSEDNESS  
IN A SINFUL WORLD.

A BRIEF EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST PSALM.

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By THE LATE W. TROTTER.

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London:  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

The following pages, written many years ago, for the edification of another, are now for the first time published. May the Lord graciously use it for the blessing of His saints and the awakening of the godless.

# THE SECRET OF BLESSEDNESS.

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THE thesis of this psalm is the blessedness of the godly man, in contrast with the certain doom of the sinner whenever the time may come for judgment to be executed. Blessedness is a preferable word to happiness, inasmuch as the former attributes to God who blesses, what the latter word, as used by man, assigns to fortune or chance. Still the word blessed is to be understood as meaning what is usually implied in the word happy. The psalm is thus an answer to the almost universal inquiry of mankind after happiness. It shews us where true happiness—real blessedness—is to be alone found.

Happiness is a positive state of existence ; but so truly is this world “a vale of tears,” that the idea of happiness most familiar to men’s minds is a negative one, and views it as depending on the absence of pain, weariness, disappointment, sorrow. Scripture itself stoops to our weakness in this respect, and represents the future happiness of the saints as partly consisting in entire exemption from every kind of grief. “ They

shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more: neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Again, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

But there are deeper and surer sources of unhappiness than any of the afflictions thus enumerated; the sources, in fact, from which all these afflictions flow. But for sin, not one single sensation of bodily pain, not one moment's mental anguish, would have been experienced by a single member of the human family. Not that present exemption from these effects can be secured by moral and spiritual deliverance from sin, which is the cause. The godly suffer as well as others, and in many respects, more than others; but this prevents not their blessedness. It may and does hinder the perfection of it; but not its reality. In this world of evil, a man without sin would be the greatest sufferer on the earth. Of this we need no other proof than the Man of sorrows, who was "acquainted with griefs." But who doubts His blessedness? It is in Him indeed that we have the only *perfect* instance of the character here described. It is not given as a description of Him, but of any godly man, and, primarily, any godly Israelite. For all the godly partake in reality of Christ's character, though in Him alone has it been perfectly exemplified.

In the description here given of the godly man, his character is viewed first negatively and then positively. The first verse shews Him exempt from those deeper sources of unhappiness from which all afflictions have really sprung; while the second reveals the positive secret of his blessedness. As for the first: it is not “Blessed is the man that feels no pain, sheds no tears, suffers no loss or disappointment.” No! “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” We have here a double climax: First, as to the characters named: Secondly, as to the attitudes described. The ungodly—sinners—the scornful. Walking—standing—sitting. The ungodly are the least culpable in this climax of evil. Their fault is negative. They know not, love not, fear not God. He is not in all their thoughts. They do not wish to remember Him, or to know His will, or obey His commands. “Without God in the world” is the solemn portraiture of their state. Such people have their counsel—their habits of thought—their grounds of judgment—their principles of conduct. In all these *God has no place*: they are *ungodly*. Blessed is the man that heeds not their counsel, that follows it not. It includes all the maxims of the decent, reputable, but ungodly part of society; persons free from gross vices, but with whom *self* is the master-spring—the main object. Even with their freedom from gross vices, this

is the case. They would not for their own credit, frequent a low tavern ; but neither would they, and for the same reason, attend a cottage prayer-meeting. It is respectable to go to church, or to a well-cushioned fashionable chapel, and they go there ; but it is equally respectable to attend the theatre or concert room, and as it is even more agreeable it is more willingly practised. For these and a hundred other habits and deeds such maxims are pleaded as, "We must do as others do." "What good is there in being singular?" "We must act conformably to our station." "This or that is expected of us." "What harm is there in it?" These are but a small specimen of that which is here termed "the *counsel* of the ungodly." Sinners add to the ungodliness of the former class, positive ways of evil, wicked habits and pursuits. These differ according to constitution, early education or the lack of it, and a number of influences beside. "Every one hath turned to his own way." One may be a way of violence, another of fraud, and another of intemperance. Blessed is the man who equally abstains from all—who "standeth not in the way of sinners."

"The seat of the scornful" is occupied by the one who has so hardened himself against God as to mock at sin, deride the piety of others, and make a jest of sacred things. Then, as to the second climax, to be in movement, *walking*, clearly affords more hope of being turned in a right direction, than where evil has

been deliberately chosen, and a person *stands* in the way of sinners. But to be *seated*, and that in the scorner's chair—to be at ease—where God, and Christ, and heaven are only named to point a joke or raise a laugh; this is, beyond a doubt, the crowning attainment of such as call evil good, and good evil. Yet not only from this final maturity of shameless vice, but from all the steps which lead on to it, the subject of the psalm abstains. In the scorner's chair he declines to sit; in the way of sinners he will not stand; in the counsel of the ungodly he refuses to walk.

Where then does he find the positive secret of his happiness? The psalm informs us, “ His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Man must have a positive object, or he cannot be satisfied. He is possessed of an understanding and of affections, for which employment must be found. On the nature of this employment more than on anything besides, does man's happiness depend. Let the understanding be either unoccupied or ill occupied; let the thoughts rove at random, or be fixed on subjects corrupt in themselves, and debasing in their tendencies; let the affections cling to objects in themselves unsatisfying, and which separate from God; or let the affections, directed towards proper objects, be destitute of those objects: how in any case that has been supposed, can the soul be happy? And if the soul be unhappy, mere bodily ease and accommodation

serve but as a mockery of its woe. On the other hand let the thoughts be rightly directed and diligently employed: let the affections be in habitual exercise on their proper, suited objects, and circumstances are of little power to hinder happiness in such a case. Such occupation for both the understanding and the affections is found in the word of God, here called, "the law of the Lord." We must not restrict the expression to the "ten words" spoken on Sinai, or even to the whole law given by Moses. It is used of the entire revelation which God at that time had vouchsafed to man; and as it was *in* and *to* the nation of Israel that this revelation had been given, the name of God here used is that of His covenant relation with Israel—"Jehovah." "His delight is in the law of Jehovah." What a number of thoughts are suggested by this statement. We have the idea of authority, for it is a law that is in question, however extended the signification and use of the word. But it is an authority cheerfully acknowledged. His delight is in the law, and how evident it is that the Lord Himself—Jehovah—must be both known and loved, for the heart to find its delight in His law—His word. For us, of course, divine revelation is now much more extended still: it comprises the revelation of God in the person and work of Christ, already come. God has thus made Himself known in a much more personal way than in Old Testament times; so that while the authority of the word is no less absolute, the af-

fections find a personal object to rest upon, much more distinctly manifested, and love takes the place of law. I speak now of the terms by which the whole revelation as known by us may be designated, and of the difference between these and the one here used—"the law of the Lord." But even in the Psalmist's day, how easy the yoke of a law in which his delight was found ! His delight was in it. Surely there is no less for us to delight in, now that God is fully revealed, and revealed as Love.

But lovely as is this portraiture of a man whose delight is in Jehovah's law, this is not the whole of what is presented here. "In his law doth he meditate day and night." This is the natural result of delighting in it ; and by a happy re-action the result becomes, in its turn, a cause of increased and ever increasing delight. The more we delight in God's word the more habitually shall we meditate therein ; and the more we meditate on God's word the more shall we delight therein.

Just as a man's speech or writings is the means or instrument by which he communicates his thoughts, and makes known his feelings, so is God's word the instrument or means by which He makes Himself known. Meditation is the means by which we, on our part, become possessed of that which is made known. In the case of a fellow-creature,—Suppose I find all my happiness in keeping company with him, listening

to his discourse ; or, supposing him absent, in reading his letters or writings, poring over their contents, repeating them to myself and following out the trains of thought to which they give rise—clearly, in such a case, it is my delight in the speaker or writer, my admiration of his character or abilities, my sympathy with his thoughts and principles and pursuits, my attachment to himself, which accounts for the delight I have in his writings and discourses. So, if my delight is in the word of God, and if in that word I meditate day and night—my thoughts whenever released from pressure returning to God's word, and flowing spontaneously in that channel, it is because God Himself is known, loved, and delighted in. If it be, then, the secret of true happiness which is here unfolded to us, what is it but that *God Himself alone suffices for the happiness of his intelligent creature, man?* “Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”\* “The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.”† “Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.”‡ “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.”§ Such breathings as these are expressions of the counsel of the godly. Even as to the means of enjoying Him as our portion, other scrip-

\* Psalm xxxvii. 4.  
† Lamentations iii. 24.  
‡ Psalm lxxiii. 25.  
§ Psalm xvi. 5.

tures are not wanting. “Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever ; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.”\* “Thy words were found, and I did eat them ; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.”† See also Psalm xix. 7-11; and the whole of Psalm cxix.

The happiness attendant on the character and course of the godly man is described in verse 3 ; first under the figure of a tree, and then in literal terms. What a picture does the former part present ! “A tree”—one of the loveliest objects in creation—a specimen of living beauty. “Planted,”—not a wilding, growing from seed scattered hap-hazard by the wind, and alighting anywhere—but *planted* : some skilful eye discerning the suited situation, and some careful hand removing all obstructions to the future growth of the tree thus planted in a generous soil, with every advantage of watchful culture that could be bestowed upon it. “By the rivers of water ;” and not dependent, therefore, on the fitful shower, though profiting by it whenever it falls. A river at the roots, this tree is secure from drought. What a lively representation of the man who depends not for happiness or usefulness on any creature supplies, who leans not on an arm of flesh, but trusts in the living God, and finds all his springs in Him. “That bringeth forth his fruit,” and “in his

season " too. Not like " untimely figs " which the tree casts unripe and unfit for use ; but *in his season*, the time when it is expected, having reached maturity, and being fit for every end to which it is adapted. So the godly man—active when in health and vigour, patient and resigned when sickness compels retirement, firm when firmness is required, yielding and submissive when it is for God's glory that he should be so—" *he bringeth forth his fruit in his season.*" " His leaf also shall not wither." Instead of any decay in his profession—that which man's eye meets as the leaf in the tree—that profession is sustained in ever fresh and changeless vigour and consistency, by the life from which it springs. " *And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*" Such is the literal statement of the blessing from God which attends the godly man. But this requires a little close attention.

In present result, judged by any human or earthly standard, this statement would not seem to be verified. When we hear the psalmist himself exclaiming, " *Thou hast made void the covenant of Thy servant, broken down all his hedges, brought his strongholds to ruin, set up the right hand of his adversaries, made all his enemies to rejoice :*" when we hear him asking, " *Wherfore hast thou made all men in vain ?*" (Psa. lxxxix. 39-47): and when we hear Christ Himself saying, " *I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain*"

(Isa. xlix. 4 ; see also Matt. xxiii. 37)—it is evident that, “ whatsoever he doeth shall prosper ” is not to be taken as an absolute promise to be fulfilled in every sense, and in every case, and at all times. “ What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” (Rom. iii. 19.) This follows on a number of quotations from the book of Psalms ; so that this book would seem to be included in the term “ the law.” It was Israel to whom “ the law ” was given, whether in its narrower or wider sense ; and we have seen that the name of covenant relation with Israel is the name here used. Now it was part of Jehovah’s covenant with Israel, that obedience should be attended with prosperity. “ Blessed shalt thou be in the city, in the field, the fruit of thy body, the fruit of thy ground, cattle, kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.” (See Deut. xxviii. 3, 4.) The first thirteen verses indeed may be read as an exposition of the words before us, “ whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” But then these promises are to the *nation* in case of their obedience. Jehovah’s government would secure all this blessedness and prosperity to His nation, if obedient. But the First Psalm treats of a godly man, not an obedient nation ; nay, of a godly man, in contrast with the wicked. This, as to character, we have seen in the first two verses, we are to see it shortly in results. But the very presence of the ungodly, and even of scorners, implies a testing time for the faithful ; and,

as unfolded largely in other Psalms, *the great test is the suspension of this word as to any present fulfilment*, so that instead of the godly man prospering in all he does, it seems as though the wicked were in prosperity and the godly persecuted and forsaken. But this is not brought out here, and where it is, it is only for the present. There is a judgment impending, the effect of which will be to remove the ungodly, and leave only those as the righteous congregation, who, in the presence of the ungodly, and of the trial inseparable therefrom, have sustained the character of the man here described. In other words, *a remnant, distinguished from the wicked part of the nation, by the character here given as that of an individual godly man, will become the nation*, when the judgment has swept the ungodly away; and then of each such person it will indeed be true, “*whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*”

“The ungodly are not so:” entirely contrasted in character, whatever prosperity they may have for the present, it is shortlived, and they themselves, like “*the chaff which the wind driveth away.*” Think of the difference between the tree planted by the rivers of water, and the chaff which the wind driveth away! It is only till the judgment that the wicked can be supposed to prosper; but that judgment is sure, and “*the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.*” They ~~are~~ mingled together now, however different in character; dwelling

in the same city, perhaps under the same roof, sitting at the same table, or sleeping in the same bed. But judgment will distinguish accurately between the one and the other. And mark well, there is no hint here of the translation of saints to heaven, such as we are now taught to expect at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was a mystery never revealed till apostolic times, when redemption had been accomplished, the Holy Ghost had come down, and the earthly people had not only rejected and crucified their Messiah, but rejected the last offers of mercy through his death, by the Holy Ghost came down from heaven. Then, when nothing remained but for sovereign grace to call out from every nation a saved people to be associated with an earth-rejected Christ in His heavenly place and glory, then it was revealed, that He will perfect His work of grace by descending to raise His sleeping and change His waking saints, all being caught up together to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with Him: a translation of the whole body of the saints from earth to heaven, not dependent on any judgment to fall upon the wicked.

This is our hope as Christians; while on the other hand, the judgment treated of in the first Psalm, and throughout the Psalms, is a judgment by which the wicked are removed, and the righteous left as Jehovah's congregation on the earth. It is the judgment of Luke xvii. 24-37, Matt. xxiv 37-41, and numerous scrip-

tures besides, in which we read of the wicked being taken, and the righteous left. Meanwhile, "the Lord knoweth" (both discerns and approves) "the way of the righteous;" "but the way of the ungodly" (however seemingly successful now) "shall," in the time of judgment, surely "perish."



"That the TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto peace and honour and glory AT THE APPEARING OF JESUS CHRIST, whom having seen, ye love." 1 Peter i. 7.



PRICE ONE PENNY.

“LUKEWARM,  
AND  
NEITHER COLD NOR HOT.”

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By W. T. T.

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LONDON :  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

“LUKEWARM,  
AND  
NEITHER COLD NOR HOT.”

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THAT we are passing through times full of moment, it were vain to deny ; and to assert that this day is not one of sorrow and sadness to any heart that is true to Christ, and enters ever so feebly into that which now interests Him on earth, were insensibility to His sorrow. The key to our present position is His rejection. It is impossible to be in the path with Christ if this be not apprehended ; and if it be, there is no truth more practical or solemn. Reader, pause and ponder this one fact— all eternity will not supply this little moment—this hour of Christ’s rejection. But let me be no way understood to imply that external causes work together for our grief and perplexity at this juncture :

## 4 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

doubtless it may be so to a very great extent, but I apprehend the real grief comes from *within* rather than from *without*. What more sad than the Lord's professed servants failing in personal whole-hearted devotedness to Himself? failing in loyalty to Him? —failing in apprehension of what is due to Him? Ah, reader, the saints, rather than the world, make the path at this time one of sorrow and grief. They will not walk this road with you; and if you walk it and leave them, they count you an enemy, and they even hold you up to the gaze of the unconverted world outside—having first branded you as an extreme person. Those who so act are saints —members of the body of Christ—loved by Him; yet sadly Laodicean in character, neither cold nor hot—lukewarm. If for a moment the deeper sorrow of which I have written permits us to look outside, what do we find? We find hostile associations, most assuredly contemplated in scripture, mustering their forces with energy and vigour. We find men's wills running. How surely we can see that Satan is master of the field—that the devil has the day. And we see almost everywhere, *deserters*—men "building again the things which they destroyed," abandoning (at least apparently) a position never

truly taken up—principles never in reality adopted. And alongside all this we have a *loud, pretentious, showy* profession of attachment to the saints, which has no existence, save in the imaginations of those who are deceived, and who seem never to have thought over this word—“By this we know we love the children of God, *when we love God and keep his commandments;*” and “He that loveth his brother *abideth in the light,* and there is *none occasion of stumbling* in him.” It remained for the last days, our day, to caricature the love which most surely is of God. You will find now it consists, in most minds at least, in a selfishness that seeketh her own, along with *unfaithfulness* that barters God’s glory and the interests of Christ and the church, for what is called, *peace, union, and harmony.* It is an evident wile of Satan, and an attempt to render truth practically of no value, and as I have already said, to grossly pervert the word of the Lord Jesus, “Have *salt* in yourselves, and have *peace* one with another.”

Nothing is more remarkable in this day than the striking contrast between the *phraseology* and the practical *position* and *walk* of saints. There is much of “*in word and in tongue,*” very little of

## 6 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

"in *deed* and in *truth*." What a solemn picture is presented before you when you place *profession* and *practice* side by side! Doubtless the tendency of the day is to adopt an advanced form of *expression* of the truth, but to walk as worldly as ever. There never was a time when unknown and unfelt truth was more traded upon than now ; for instance, you will hear such solemn subjects as death and resurrection, discipleship and the coming of the Lord, all maintained, as the saying is, and preached, even by those whose course is unaffected by them. The solemn sin of the day is, that men are not formed by that which comes so smoothly from their tongues : they are therefore eloquent in condemning themselves—" *they say, and do not.*" Alas, alas ! for the want of *conscience* and *reality* among the professed followers of a rejected Lord.

There are no doubt saints who, from their earliest infancy, have been fondled in the arms of systems which are nothing but a kind of repairing of the flesh, if not a cultivation of it ; the object of all such being the best way to get on *in this scene*. We can see a melancholy consistency at least between their principles and practice ; but the heart sickens to hear men talk of death and resurrection,

## "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT." 7

the coming of the Lord, and so forth, who are keenly alive to the interests of earth, who speculate in the great money-grasping projects of the day, who are deepening their interests in the world, enlarging their borders—in one word, ministering to the first Adam.

I say, reader, the heart is saddened by such sights. One is reminded of the cause of it by that solemn word (2 Tim. iii, 8), "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth." I need not say that it was by imitation the truth was resisted in the day of Moses; and even so is it now. It is Satan's policy at this time, and he knows well the power of it. By this means he attempts not only to bring into contempt the truth itself, but to cast a slight on real life testimony to its power; and here it may not be out of place to say that in this consists the real difficulty of souls at the present time. It is their *condition* that tells on their *position*. I do not for a moment mean to deny the fact that a soul may be in the right place or position, that is, Christ's place for every soul now on earth, and yet very seriously wanting in *condition*; but I do assert most decidedly . . . and observation and experience bear testi-

## 8 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

mony with me, that the difficulties of saints at the present day about their *position*, arise, for the most part, from the condition or state of soul they are in at the time. For instance, how can we expect a saint who is ministering to self to have any conception of what is due to Christ—what His present mind is about the members of His body on earth ? The more I read my Bible the more I see this, that there is a state of soul which is capable of entering into God's mind and thoughts, and not only that, but a state or condition to which God will communicate His mind ; as well as the contrary, namely, that there is a condition incapable of grasping the mind of God, and to which He does not communicate His thoughts. What means such a solemn word as Leviticus x. 8-10 :—“ And the Lord spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die ; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations ; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean ? ” Does it not speak a solemn word to us now ? and does it not tell us the secret of manifold incapacity to grasp God's mind and

## “LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT.” 9

discern His path? Most surely it does. The Lord give us to ponder its weighty, solemn, soul-searching exhortation. Has the world nothing to say to the course and difficulties of saints at the present time? As far as my observation goes I find that, without an exception almost, it is either those who wish to go back again into the world, or else those who have never been out of it and *wish to remain in it*, that are unable to see what is suited to God and what is not, and lower the standard of divine purity and holiness down to the level of man’s miserable condition.

Has *self-will* nothing to say to the present perplexities of saints? You will hear them talk about their liberty, and the like. It really means *liberty for self*. If it were liberty of the Holy Ghost, another order of things would manifest it; but it is self-seeking and self-maintenance that is contended for. Now, that I may return from somewhat of a digression, though a needful one, let me say that the truth of God about which I have been writing is not what so many take it to be, namely, a divine creed, claiming subscription; no, what I write about is not a matter of *subscription, experience, or attainments*, but a solemn *reality*, a real

## 10 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

*condition*, into which every soul that simply rests on redemption is brought. When the Lord Jesus went down into the judgment, He not only settled the question of my sins, but he terminated the history of man in the flesh before God. It was, in a word, the winding up of the history of the first Adam. Every link, therefore, with the old creation has been broken by His death, and if I have to do with Him, it must be outside this scene. Now again let me repeat this is a *fact*, and it is intended to *command* me to *form* me. My state or condition determines my path. Is it true that the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, was the judgment upon the first man? If so, then the first man is gone in judgment, and I stand in a new order of things, I am linked up in life by the Holy Ghost with the very One who went down and bore the judgment, and is risen out of it. To faith, then, the first Adam is gone in judgment, and a new order of things has taken its place. I again repeat, this is not *attainment* or *feeling*, it is *fact*, apprehended by faith; and the whole course of a Christian ought to be from this, and not towards it—that is, I am to walk down here in the non-recognition of my-

self, because I am now contented with Christ in the glory by the Holy Ghost, my old man having been judged and set aside in His cross. The Lord graciously set this so clear before the eye of the soul, that the power and joy of it may fill every heart.

Again, another subject which is traded upon at the present time is the Lord’s second coming. It need not be remarked here how much more widespread this truth has been of late, compared with former years. You will find many now who tell you, to shew how orthodox they are, they hold the second advent (as they coldly term it), but their condition tells how easy it is merely to profess truth in these times. It is not truth in power, it is not truth learned from God. We lay it down as indisputable, that this hope can never be a present living hope before any heart that does not *now* feel the absence of Christ.

And oh, reader, how little His absence is felt by Christians ; how feebly have His own blessed words seized our affections ! “For their sakes I sanctify myself ;” that is, as if He said, “I go apart from this scene that I may detach you from it.” It would be impossible to enter into this and be worldly : it would be impossible to be in the truth

## 12 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

of Christ's absence from this scene and be worldly. How little, how feebly apprehended, or felt, His absence! Could the heart that was true to Him, and knew *Himself* as the one alone satisfying object, rest in anything in a scene where He was rejected, and out of which He has gone? Impossible! Where is that loyalty to Christ which refuses a place where He was scorned and disowned?

Mark, it is not for a moment questioned that souls have got benefit from Christ: but this makes it all the more sad, that He should be known and used as the servant of necessity merely, and not for what He is in Himself.

I do now feel it more and more each day, that there has been so little presenting of *Christ*, that souls have lost the sense of the *person*, in the overwhelming importance which has been attached to the benefit derived from Him: in one word, modern evangelisation consists in preaching salvation and not Christ. The necessary consequence is, feebleness in the heart and the affections as to the *person*; low thoughts, if any at all, of what is due to Him; souls have got this—saved for *earth*, instead of connected with *heaven*.

It is yet more grievous to the heart to find how little reciprocated Christ's affections have been or are. When on the very eve of His departure, He spoke the precious words of John xiv. He said one word, the only one, too, that would comfort a heart true in its love to Him—“I will come again.” He counted on this at least, that nothing short of His presence—Himself—could fill in our hearts the blank His absence would create. As has been blessedly remarked by another, there are two “comes” in John xiv., “I will come *to* you,” and “I will come *for* you.” The presence of the Holy Ghost is the accomplishment of the first, and the coming of the Lord Jesus, as in 1 Thessalonians iv., will be the accomplishment of the other. And this I will say, the second, that is His coming for me, is feeble before my soul if I am not in the truth of the first, namely, that He has come *to* me in the person of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I never yet knew a soul in the apprehension and freshness of the first that was not fresh in the hope of the second. But reader, how many other objects have taken Christ's place in the hearts of His saved people? Self-aggrandisement, money-making, earthly position, a worldly spirit, have all vied

## 14 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

with each other, and succeeded to the exclusion, *practically*, of Christ Himself. His absence from this scene is not felt, and consequently His coming again is but a poor, cold doctrine, not a living reality in the heart. When you turn to the early history of the church, what a contrast: to the Thessalonians Paul writes, "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord;" "Ye were ensamples to all that believe;" "From you sounded out the word of the Lord;" "Your faith to Godward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything;" "Ye turned to God . . . . to serve the living and true God; and to *wait* for His Son from heaven." (1 Thess. 1.) What a picture this—what a contrast with the present! And then, again, we know that so *full* and *present* and immediate was the hope of the Lord's coming for them, before the hearts of these Thessalonian saints, that the apostle writes (chap. iv.) to comfort hearts that were cast down because death, rather than the coming of the Lord, took away their loved ones. What a contrast with the present time!

Saints lay their dead in the grave, and mourn their absence, not because the Lord has not come, but because ties to earth are broken thereby, which

**"LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."** 15.

time too often heals ; new links with the world are formed, and it becomes as bright before the heart as ever. The absence of Christ is forgotten, and the blank created by His absence is filled up by other objects. Oh for more of that simplicity and those unworldly ways which bespeak a sense of the absence of Christ, and are suited to those who announce every Lord's day at the table that death by which not only sin is put away, but every link with this world is broken. I have written, reader, that which has deeply exercised my own heart ; and I would say, in conclusion, that the remedy is simple for all this failure and sorrow. What is wanted in souls is a more whole-hearted surrender of everything to Christ, an appreciation for, and love to Him beyond all else—not only to strip ourselves for Christ, but to surrender *ourselves* to Him—to hold fast His word and not to deny His name.

The Lord preserve His people in these days from Laodiceanism. How blessed when the one object that fills the heart and occupies the soul and commands the affections is Jesus ! Like Mephibosheth while David is away, nothing can fill in his heart the blank that David's absence creates, and therefore he deports himself in a manner that is consis-

## 16 "LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT."

tent with real sorrow, and sense of loss ; but when David returns, he and he alone fills the blank in Mephibosheth's heart—his affections have now an object to go out after. "Thou and Ziba divide the land" was the word. The reply, "Yea let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." He wants no more, but he can do with no less. As we have said, one object satisfies his heart, and commands his affections.

The Lord give His beloved people, in these last times, to be more whole-hearted, uncompromising, and devoted to His blessed Son Jesus Christ our Lord—Amen.

"O patient, spotless One!  
 Our hearts in meekness train,  
 To bear Thy yoke, and learn of Thee,  
 That we may rest obtain.

Jesus! thou art enough  
 The mind and heart to fill;  
 Thy life—to calm the anxious soul;  
 Thy love its fear dispel.

O fix our earnest gaze,  
 So wholly, Lord, on Thee,  
 That with Thy beauty occupied,  
 We elsewhere none may see."

# DEVOTEDNESS.

2 SAMUEL. XXIII. 13-17.

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BY W. T. T.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

## DEVOTEDNESS.

2 SAMUEL XXIII. 13-17.

THE present condition of things around us is bewildering and embarrassing in the extreme. It is a day of poverty and weakness. Boasting or assumption ill becomes those who have but “a little strength.” One has said, “If I look within I am miserable; if I look around, I am confounded; but if I look *up*, all is bright and beautiful;” is it then not worse than useless to waste the moments that are passing in looking whence nothing can come but disappointment and vexation?

But some one may say: That is a beautiful theory, but have we no responsibilities in the directions expressed in the words “within” and “around”? and is it a matter of no importance that these should be answered? The reply is, yes. And they are best sustained and met by setting the “mind

on things above, not on things on the earth ;" that is, occupation with Christ, where He is, is the way to the possession of that which nothing can cloud, dim, or take away ; and when it is so, these responsibilities I have spoken of are fulfilled according to the thoughts and mind of Christ—a matter of primary importance to a true heart.

He that has Christ before him, as the One to be pleased, as the One whose interests are to be consulted, is the very one who will do the best for all under Christ, according to His mind and His thoughts ; and this, let it be observed, is not each one, according to his own thoughts or judgment, doing what he thinks will suit Christ, but *first* learning from nearness to, and intimacy with the Lord, what He would desire, and then going forth, undaunted by either difficulties or dangers, to accomplish that desire.

It is clear that before the desires of a person can command me, the *person himself* must stand out before me as an object. The desires of one whom I neither know nor value, I should not care to make myself

acquainted with ; not so of one I valued and loved ; how much more of One who has eclipsed and superseded everything else in my heart, and has no rival there ! And this, I should say in starting, characterises devotedness. The one who is devoted is abstracted from all else by an object which has so completely engrossed the affection, and occupied the heart, that all thought of self-interest, or any other interest, is buried in the One who is my object. For example, look at Mary, in John xx. What does she care for all else but Christ ? Nothing. The early dawn, while it was yet dark, found her on her way to the only spot on earth that had now an interest for her--the tomb of Jesus. And when she comes to find *Him* not there, how inconsolably does she tell her tale of sorrow to Peter and John ! “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre ; and I know not where they have laid Him.” And what a contrast their ways to hers ! each satisfies himself of the accuracy of her report, and then they return to the circle of their interests on earth—“their

own home." Oh, what a picture! Not so Mary: she return home? without Him she has no home, nothing. She has a true heart —very ignorant, no doubt; ignorant too, where she ought not—yet, for all that, she is devoted; see how she lingers about that empty tomb! Is she not here, like another Ruth, saying, "Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried"?

But there is even more than this, for, if she is inconsolable without Him, and weeps as if her heart would break, see how she never calculates or measures for a moment; poor, weak feeble woman as she is in body, such is her love, that if she only knew where He is she is prepared to come and take Him away. Him, Him, Him! is the sum-total of her thoughts; difficulties or hindrances she thinks not of. What a picture! Prudence ever calculates; devotedness never! But there is even more, and a striking characteristic too, of one who is devoted; for when she finds Him—alive, too, as He was, and not dead—the love that was inconsolable without Him, is prepared now that she has

## DEVOTEDNESS.

seen Him, to do whatever He desires, though she never see Him again. (Vers. 16-18.) Beautiful picture of its kind it is ; presenting these two marked features of a devoted heart ; first, and above all, the object Himself, and all else as nothing compared with Him. Second, and next to Himself, His wishes—His desires.

Let us look at another instance ; is not John (John i.) a man devoted to an object ? “Sent to bear witness of that light ;” in himself, what was he ? Not (what many would be now-a-days) something because of Christ. John is nothing. What is a voice crying in the wilderness ? They come out from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region round about Jordan, to one who has himself found an object in Christ that has abstracted him from all else, and made him a stranger and a lonely man in the midst of a crowd ; and not only this, but whose own soul so dwells in delight and satisfaction in this One Himself, that, looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, “Behold the Lamb of God !”

But perfect and admirable as all this is

in its way, it is not the brightest scene in the devotedness of John; for we find in chapter iii. that he takes occasion by the question which had arisen between some of his disciples and the Jews, to let out what the governing object of his heart was. What was he? He was but a voice, but he was the friend of the Bridegroom; it was the Bridegroom he wanted to hear; it was His voice delighted John; yet not this only, but so satisfying was this blessed Bridegroom, Him who is not only above all, but Him who has all things given Him by the Father who loved Him, that self fades away, is dead; and that which announces it, proclaims most blessedly the superiority of Christ. “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John seems to me here like another Queen of Sheba. Such tidings of the fame of Solomon reached her in her own land, that she determined to see it for herself; great as was the report which created longings and yearnings in her heart, it was as nothing to the reality, namely, Solomon’s wisdom, the house that he had

built, the meat of his table, the attendance of his ministers, his ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord, which when she had seen with her eyes, there was no more spirit in her ; the magnificence of this sight paled all else before her. Yet great as was the effect thus produced in her, it is a glory of a higher order that commands John here ; he stands, as it were, on another mount of transfiguration, and sees no man save “Jesus only ;” and as that one object abstracts him away from all besides, do you not in those words, “He must increase, but I must decrease,” hear old Simeon joyfully say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

So far we have looked only at the power of an object which possesses and occupies ; and we have looked at it, too, in illustrations, which, however remarkable and striking in themselves, are feeble to give any idea of the *reality* of Christ as an object ; even the incident related in this history of David. With what power does that Blessed One

in glory occupy my heart, when I am in the consciousness of being with Himself, where He is, as well as in the consciousness of how completely He was for me here. Just think, He gave Himself, allowed the shroud of judgment which encircled me to be wrapped around Himself; in His death closed volume i. of my history, and in Himself, risen from the dead and in glory, opened volume ii How the greatness and magnificence of it passes all conception! He, that blessed One, who is in the bosom of the Father, came down here on earth to tell out the secrets of that bosom. He it was who became the Deliverer in the hour of our extremity and hopelessness, in the day of our dismay and despair, when we were absolutely intolerable to ourselves, when we had lost all self-respect, because we could not do what was right, and the dark garment of helplessness envelopes us in its folds, like Jonah in the depths of the sea; when the floods compassed us about; the waters compassed us about, the depth closed us round about; the weeds were

wrapped about our head; we went down to the bottom of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about us for ever; our night was setting in, and we were rapidly settling down in the darkness of death. Such was our condition when *He* entered the scene. He, the perfect, spotless Lamb of God, is born into the world He had made; is refused His own place among His own people (Israel), and in His own creation; glorifies His Father, where He had been dishonoured and despised; and, finally, bears the judgment which rested on all; vindicates and establishes the righteousness of God, by closing for ever in His death the history of the man that offended against God, and at the same time yielded up His own life, in all its personal excellency; is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and in Himself, so risen and in glory, becomes the Head of the new creation: and not only this, but by the Holy Ghost sent down, in answer to the glory of His person and work, we who believe are now united to Him where He is.

The second characteristic of a devoted heart is, that it makes itself acquainted with the *desires* of its object, and then unflinchingly sets itself to accomplish them. If Christ be my object, I seek to know His mind, His desires, and learning them, I allow nothing to stand in the way of my fulfilling them ; and this is a solemn subject at this present moment, when it is remembered that there are multitudes of saints who *act* as if there were no expressed mind or desire of Christ, and multitudes besides, from whom better things might be expected, who defiantly ask for a *command*, which indicates, to say the very least of it, a distance from the heart of Christ, and an absence of that waiting on Him, as well as of that intimacy with Him, that tarries not for a command, but seeks earnestly His mind, and makes haste to accomplish His desire at all cost. It is not by this meant that there are no New Testament precepts, but we mean to point out that low, wretched condition which satisfies itself with an indifference to the heart-yearnings or desires

of Christ, by pleading the absence of a command.

The history in our passage furnishes abundant illustrations of what I seek to convey:—David was in the cave of Adullam, rejected and disowned at this time, the conqueror of Goliath and deliverer of Israel though he be. There are a few, and only a few, who care so much for David that they will link their destiny with his, and *that* at a moment when, to sight at least, all is as dark as dark can be. How do they expect this? Why, where he is, *there* will they be. “And three of the thirty chiefs went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam.” David is *the* one they are thinking of; they want to be near him. Near him, did I say?—they want to be with him: they refuse all else but that which connects them with him. If they are to be sharers with him in his triumphs and honours by-and-by, they will be partakers of his reproach and shame now. That which links them to it is the joy of their hearts, they will be with him; and

while all around outside is dark, they within will company with him, and pass the hours of their vigil in waiting on the desires of his heart. They are in the place to know his wishes. Had they not been in the cave with David, they never would have heard his longing for water from the well of Bethlehem, and they never would have been in Adullam, if David had not himself eclipsed all else in their affections.

Then, see how they set themselves to meet the desires of David, how they were undaunted by the dangers and difficulties in the way, how they were carried by their devotedness to David over all the hindrances, and allowed nothing to stand in the way of their carrying out his desires ; and so we read—“ And the three mighty men brake through the *host of the Philistines*, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David.” They did not calculate or hesitate. David’s desire once known, the only thing thought of is meeting it. There might have been objectors ; there might have been

some who would say, “Wherefore is this waste?” It matters not to them; to fulfil David’s desire is their only thought. I feel as if the application of all this were self-evident; and yet when one looks around and asks, “Where do I see it?” one is confounded; and more so, as too many, if not most saints, are *mere benefactors* of men; the desires of Christ they neither know, nor seek to know: they are not *where* they could know them; they are thinking of man and his good, not of Christ and His glory. Do you reply, “But can you separate them?” I answer, “No,” provided you seek what suits Christ. He who consults what is due to Christ is the only one who really benefits man according to God’s mind: to human eyes it may be otherwise; but in the thoughts of God, the one who is true, faithful, and devoted to Christ, is the one who is most used to help, as well as most helpful to man.

To sum up, then: true devotedness consists in knowing Christ as the object that eclipses all others; in finding that it is Him-



self that alone satisfies my heart, so that the circle of His interests and desires becomes the circle of mine: where He is, there I must be, and being where He is—that is, near enough to Him to know His desires and mind—I set myself to accomplish them, and in so doing I take no account of difficulties, dangers, hindrances; even as David's mighty men, who undismayed, broke through the hosts of the Philistines, that they might meet the desires of their captain.

The one who is devoted is carried in a love that rises superior to everything in its way, and breaks through every host that stands to hinder or oppose. The Lord give His people in these last days so to know and love His blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave up His own precious life to put aside and end before God the history of that which grieved His love, that entire devotedness to Him may be the character of those who know Himself, and have tasted of His love.

# REALITY.

JUDGES VII. 1—8.

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By W. T. T.

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LONDON:  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

# REALITY.

JUDGES VII. 1-8.

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It is an immense comfort to meet with reality in this world, where everything is so confused, and there are so many mixed motives at work. God looks for reality. Nothing less suits His mind, or meets His thoughts. In the scripture which heads this page there are deeply solemn lessons on this subject, which we do well to ponder. May the Lord Himself, by His Spirit, teach us, making our hearts willing and subject to His word. In the previous chapter we find

the Lord getting His instrument ready for His work. This is a principle of the deepest value. God's instruments must not only be raised up by God Himself, they must be adapted and fitted by Himself for the work He has for them. Abundant instances and illustrations of this are to be found in the word. We shall only refer to one. God it was who raised up the man Moses to be the deliverer of His people Israel out of their cruel bondage. Of this Moses we read, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." (Acts vii. 22.) Nature would say, What a *fitted, prepared* weapon God has now at His hand ! But this is the very thought which is short of

the mind of God: for He will not, and does not accredit the qualifications of Egypt, but sends Moses to school (as we would say) for forty years, in order that he may be fitted and prepared and qualified for the work that God has for him to do. Oh, what *reality* there is in all this. How real is the fact that God's instruments must *learn* in God's school. There is no such thing, reader, as purchasing commissions in His army; *there* all must rise from the ranks.

Now, in the history before us, the same principle is found. God raises up Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite, that through him God might deliver Israel out of the hand of the Midianites. His family is poor in Manasseh, and like David, he is the least

in his father's house. Yet, what of all this? "Have not I sent thee?" withers up all such thoughts, and places a living *reality* before the soul.

Reader, have we known this? It is an easy thing in these days to put on an appearance before one another, and even to keep up, but do our own souls know the deep reality of having to do with the living God? And here remark that what is so sweet in the exercises of soul to which the words, "Have not I sent thee?" and "Surely I will be with thee," were a reply, is that what occupied the mind of Gideon was the relation between God and His people. "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" Now let us turn and look at

the steps—shall I say the forms?—of the school of God, in which this mighty man of valour was trained, and see how *reality* marks it all.

*First.*—The relationship of peace must be set up between him and God. He is brought into the presence of God, and hears these words: “Peace unto thee,” “Fear not.” Sweet, precious words! O what *reality*.

—*Secondly.*—As it was with himself, so must it be with his own family, namely, the relationship with God must be set up; and hence Gideon is set to work *at home* before he is sent out abroad. “And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said unto him Take thy father’s young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and

throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it; and build an altar unto the Lord thy God on the top of this rock, in the ordered place and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down." (Ch. vi. 25, 26.)

Reader, what a searching principle is found here! God's weapons are set to cut down the evil at home before they are used to cut it down abroad. It is the principle of 2 Timothy ii. 21: "If a man therefore purge himself from these (*see verse 21*), he shall be a vessel unto honour, *sanctified* and *meet* for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." There must not be in the Lord's vessel that which is unsuited to the

Lord. It is true that in the sovereignty of God He condescends to use a variety of means to bring about His own purposes. But this is not the thought of being *a vessel for God, sanctified and meet for His use.* What God looks for in His servants and people is *reality.* To use the expressive language of another God does not want “a lifeless finger-board to point along a way he neither leads nor follows.” He does want and desire one who is “strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” who can endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ —who warreth, not entangling himself with the affairs of this life, and who laboureth as an husbandman, having *first* been partaker of the fruits. This is all *reality*, and this

God looks for. He finds it in Gideon, the fruit, too, of His own gracious work with him. And now let us see how God looks for *reality* in the people who follow Gideon. He cannot trust His honour to the thirty-two thousand, they are too many for Him. What a solemn rebuke to the very thought that rises earliest and is cultivated latest in the natural mind. God will test that crowd. It cannot be that all are true to Him, some will surely go back. And so it is. When the ordinance of Deuteronomy xx. is gone through, which simply set each one to count the cost—to do, as it were, a sum in profit and loss—out of the thirty-two thousand, only ten thousand are found ready to stand in the face of danger and loss. But God

has not yet finished. He says, “The people are yet too many for me.” Most deeply solemn words these. Reader, He must work in a way which will leave no room for doubt that it is His hand that has wrought. So that the heart that is true to Him can say, “The Lord has done great things for us already.” And why? Because He well knew there was in Israel a haughty uplifted spirit that would credit themselves with victory. And now, mark, there is great force in the Lord’s words a second time to Gideon: “The people are yet too many; bring them down to the *water*, and I will try them for thee THERE; and it shall be that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with

thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water; and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down on his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water." The significance of all this is striking! Out of the ten thousand which the previous testing had left, only three hundred are found to stand before and rise superior to the new test. And mark it attentively,

reader, there are a greater number equal to the *difficulty and danger* than there are equal to what we may call the *blessing*; or, many who are able to face the danger fall before the blessing. But some one may say, What do you mean by all this? Was it wrong for thirsty people to drink water? Surely not. And that is not the point in the history at all, for the three hundred upon whom God set His seal of approval drank as well as the nine hundred and seventy who were sent away; but the point is, they used the water *in passing*, but were not engaged with it; the water which quenched their thirst and refreshed their body was not that which occupied their minds—they had not time to halt, their hearts were in the work

—they were real and they exhibited reality. And, reader, has not this a solemn application to us in this day! How many a soul is there who rises superior to difficulties that utterly breaks down in the presence of prosperity, or a position where they are well to do. Alas! how true it is that few of us can be trusted in sunshine (that is, when all is smooth around us). When tested by the Lord, those who *bowed down* were not fit for His use, any more than those who were sent back through fear or loss. And this is just the testing of the present hour, for God is bringing out the three hundred who are occupied with that which occupies Him. It is reality we need, dear reader. There is no lack in our day of head knowledge—this is

readily acquired, easily got up. Not only so, but nature likes it all, and turns it round to selfish purposes. In my mind, nothing is more sad or solemn than to see the way in which not a few, now-a-days, can talk about truth, and argue about it, who are themselves its living contradictions. *Reality!* *real*ity! is the crying need of the day! Oh, reader, to be one of Christ's three hundred in this day of His rejection—to have found in Himself the real secret of superiority, not only to the difficulties and dangers, but as well to the prosperity, ease, and quiet of this day. Oh, to be in earnest—to be *real* for Christ. To have, I do not say low thoughts of self, but no thoughts of self, all, all thoughts fixed on Himself, the alone

source and spring and channel of every blessing Reader, be assured of it, in the history of every Christian, there is a time when he or she is being brought down to the water. When it is so, the Lord give us *that* occupation with Himself, and His thoughts, which will bear us above and carry us over the trial, and exhibit in that *reality* which is alone worthy of Him.



THE  
PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

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By W. T. T.

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LONDON :  
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

## THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

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A GREAT principle of God, which runs through all dispensations and times, is the very distinct way in which the eye and hope of the saint is transferred from all here to what is in God Himself, as soon as a condition of things presents itself in this world with which God cannot connect Himself. Of course it will be found more distinct and marked in a moment like the present than in any preceding time.

I shall refer to three instances in this principle in the Old Testament, and contrast them with one in the New.

The first in the Old Testament is to be

#### 4 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

found in Genesis xi., xii. Chapter xi. details the history of the building of the tower of Babel, and the consequent scattering of the nations. In the plain of Shinar man set up a would-be independency: God is either refused or unrecognised in His own creation: man's best and highest thought was to enrich and ennable man—"let us make us a name." The name of Babel marks man's boasted independence, as well as the judgment which fell upon it, "because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." Now it is connected with this that chapter xii. gives us the call of Abraham; and Stephen, in Acts vii., tells us it was the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham. And here I would seek to press the fact that this call of Abraham was not only away *from* what was unsuited to the blessed God; it was this, but much more; it was a call into a path and testimony positive in itself,

## THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING. 5

and not only becoming the person so called, but suited to the blessed God amid a scene of wilfulness and independency of man ; even as the apostle tells us in Hebrews xi., “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.” It is important to mark the expression, he *went out* and he *sojourned*. What else, may I ask, was becoming one who was looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ? The maintenance of this distinct and new calling is incumbent on one in a scene marked by Babel ; and it is important to note how Abraham, when for a moment he surrenders it, as it were, and in a famine seeks help from Egypt, is obliged to retrac his steps to the very place which marked

## 6 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

his call, namely, Bethel, where his altar was at the first. He builds no altar in Egypt, but when he retraces his path and reaches Bethel, there Abraham called on the name of the Lord.

There is another truth of the very first moment connected with this; it is as Abraham maintains his call that he is preserved from the entanglements by which Lot is ensnared; and not this only, but it gives him the position of deliverer of Lot himself. And here let me press, that now the surest way to be superior to the entanglements and enticements of a scene like this, is to maintain the distinctness and peculiarity of our position as heavenly men walking through it. It is only as a people who are connected with Christ outside of it, that we are empowered and qualified to walk apart from it, as well as because ourselves delivered, we are able to deliver others.

I turn now to another illustration of the

## THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING. 7

principle I have enunciated, in 2 Kings ii. It was a dark moment in Israel's history; Baalzebub, the god of Ekron is sought after by Ahaziah, as if there were no God in Israel. Elijah's rapture is to precede the mission of Elisha, but ere the course of the one is closed, and that of the other is opened, there is to be a distinct break with all that which was associated with the Lord's name and power in Israel. *Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, Jordan*, were spots that could not fail to wake up reminiscences of better days in Israel.

*Gilgal* was the place of separation to God, but long ere this, Bochim had taken its place.

*Bethel*, the place of Abraham's altar, of Jacob's altar, had ere this become the scene of Jeroboam's calf, the witness of the people's apostasy from Jehovah.

*Jericho*, the scene of their first conquest and victory, then destroyed, had been, ere this, re-built.

## 8 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

*Jordan*, representing resurrection-victory, and crossing which they had passed from the wilderness to the land, is now crossed in a reverse order, putting Elijah and Elisha on the wilderness side of Jordan. How solemn in connection with all this the words of the prophet: “But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba, for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought.” (Amos v. 5.)

Now it is important to observe, that it is outside this condition of things Elisha is called in his day, ere he is sent back into it as a witness and servant of Jehovah; and therefore it was at the other side of Jordan, when they had crossed over, that Elisha sees Elijah’s rapture, sees him taken away, receives a double portion of his spirit, and Elijah’s mantle. Another order of things has opened upon him, another scene has, as it were, dawned upon his eyes: he is now empowered, qualified, equipped to return to a people who have forsaken Jehovah for

## THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING. 9

Baalzebub, to a scene where the water is nought, and the ground barren. Let me here ask upon whom first does the effect of his power tell itself? Of course upon himself. He rends his own mantle, and sets his face for Jordan; and then, returning to a blasted, blighted place, he becomes, in the power of the thought of what he has received, a contributor to it, diffusing healing and blessing around. What a *picture* of what the saint now ought to be, one who is in the resources that are in Christ the triumphant One—one who has seen Him taken away, as it were; and more than all this, what you do not find in the picture here, one who is united by the Holy Ghost to Christ where He is—a part of Christ. Wondrous thought! Alas, how little we seem to have any divine sense of what we are in Christ, and the peculiarity and distinctiveness of our path and testimony as such, in a world which has not only refused and rejected, but also crucified and slain our

## 10 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

Lord ; and because we have such feeble sense at best of what we are, we are correspondingly short in our apprehensions of the wondrous resources and power which is ours in Christ, to walk through this world for Him.

I turn now to Exodus xxxiii., where we shall find another illustration of the same principle. Then also it was a cloudy and dark day in Israel ; the people have made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped a molten image ; they have changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass, and have forgotten God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt. What a cry that is which is heard now in Horeb, “These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” What will Moses do ? The people of God’s election, salvation, preservation, have turned aside from Jehovah. Where can the eye of God rest in a scene like that ? and where can Moses turn for solace and repose ?

Moses will be no exception to God's principle, of which we speak. If Abraham is called out by the God of glory to be a stranger and witness for God in a day characterised by Babel; if Elisha is the companion and witness of the rapture of Elijah in a day characterised by Baalzebub; so in the day of Israel's calf and Israel's captain—for they said at another time, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.” (Num. xiv. 4.)—Moses, in separating from the guilty camp, says to God, “I beseech thee shew me thy glory.”

The scene of his hopes and expectations is transferred, and “thy glory” becomes the object and desire of his heart. What else could meet Moses in an hour like this? Where will his eye turn, and where will his heart rest? He says, as it were, I have seen enough of man to turn away from him for ever; “I have seen an end of all perfection,” “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”

I turn now to the scripture in the New

## 12 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

Testament, Acts vii. What do I find here? the same principle, only intensified and extended to the fullest. Why do I say so? Because now the Son of God has been *actually* cast out and put to death. It is this two-fold blot, if I may so say, upon the page of man's history, that determines the saints' singularity and peculiarity at this present time. Christ has been rejected out of the world, and the Holy Ghost, the witness and evidence of the world's guilt, is dishonoured and denied in the world and by the world. Where will Stephen, the witness and servant, turn his eye in a moment like this, and surrounded as he is by the most terrible circumstances? Now, mark it well, for nothing could be more distinct or unique. Previous to this the lingering love of God could thus express itself: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you to heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into

heaven." Directing, it was in fact, pointing the eye down to earth, and finding for them there even yet, faint though it be, a hope ; but is it so now ? how changed ! "But he [Stephen), being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into *heaven*, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." O, what a sight ! It is not now heaven opening on any object here : there was once one, and only one object upon whom it did open to Stephen ; the Holy Ghost directs the eye, and shews the object *there* ; "he saw the glory of God and Jesus." What a contrast this to the revelation to Moses in Exodus xxxiii. To him God said, Thou canst not see my face ; I will cover thee with my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts. But now there is nothing of this ; it is the full unveiled glory, and Jesus in it, that meets the eye of Stephen ; the first man has been put out in judgment, the second Man has gone up into glory, and nothing is there now to hinder

## 14 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

the eye of the saint and servant from gazing with unveiled face on that blessed One where He is ; and not this only, but now to find its home and its rest where Christ is. And here let me press what an immense difference it makes in the path and history of saints, as to whether they are looking for heaven to open *upon* them, or gazing up stedfastly into that heaven which is open *to* them. Alas ! how little fixedness of purpose, how little vigour of soul, as implied in that word *stedfastly* ; and, consequently, so little of what appears so marked in Stephen's case, and so little of power to *persevere*. Though surrounded by the most terrible circumstances, suffering at the hands of the very chief of his nation, he can kneel down in all the quietness of confidence and repose, and spend the moments that are left in praying for those from whom he is receiving all this appalling hate, and commit his spirit to the One whom they had cast out and crucified. Such, then, is the path of the saint

and servant of God. The Holy Ghost is as true to-day as He was then in keeping the eye directed to Christ where He is, in order that the saint may be for Christ where He is not; as true in maintaining the saint in practical association with Christ in glory. To sum up, then, the saints, singularity now consists in—

(1.) Being united by the Holy Ghost to Christ in heaven.

(2.) Being maintained by the Holy Ghost on earth, in such practical association with Christ, that the eye is turned away from earth to heaven.

(3.) As a consequence of the former, reproducing Christ down here: being like Christ where He is not; a messenger from heaven, walking in the power of divine resources and heavenly springs, above everything and apart from everything; a light amid surrounding darkness, shining all the brighter because of the darkness; able to help everybody, succour everybody, support

## 16 THE PECULIARITY OF OUR CALLING.

everybody. Does anyone allow for a moment that I am propounding impossibilities? To such an one let me say, If in the One who has gone up above every one and everything, all fulness dwells, and if in the saint here, weak and feeble though he be, the Holy Ghost dwells, is there any limit as to capacity and power for enjoyment personally of Christ where he is, or for distinctness, singularity, and boldness of walk and testimony for Him where He is not?

“We all, with unveiled face beholding the Lord in glory, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. iii. 18.)



# OUR POLITICS.

*By the Author of*  
“SONS OF GOD,” ETC.



THE LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,  
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PRICE ONE PENNY.

# “OUR POLITICS.”

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W. Good morning, E.

E. Good morning, W.

W. I did not see you at the polling station yesterday, E.

E. Well, no ; I haven't an interest in the matter.

W. No interest in the matter ! You astound me ! No interest in your country's welfare ? I am ashamed of you as an Englishman, I am really ashamed of you as a citizen of ——.

E. Rather a long and strong indictment, W. ; but still, I like people to say what they mean.

W. Well, is it any too strong, E. ?

E. Well, I do not think it altogether true what you say. For I often pray for the Queen, her ministers, and for all that are in authority within this realm. And I am sure you have often heard me say, “I wish trade were better for all.” And if I were a foreigner residing in France, I could do no less than pray for the “authorities” there ; as also for its commerce, in which for the time being I should be interested.

W. Well, E., if you say all those things, how is it with the same breath you say you have no interest in politics ?

E. Simply because I belong to another country. I am a pilgrim and a stranger here. A citizen of heaven.

W. Well, E., what nonsense you do talk; belong to another country! and yet an Englishman born, speaking the English tongue; born too in this very city as you yourself told me, and yet say that you are a pilgrim and a stranger here—I really do not understand you, E., you have got hold of some queer notions indeed.

E. Queer notions or not, what I have told you on this point, I have gathered from the word of God. For let me tell you, W., that that which is to govern you and me in this world as Christians, is the *scriptures*.

W. Well, yes, I admit that thoroughly, that the word of God is to be our guide here; but still, I do not see how it is that you can have nothing to do with politics: I should have thought that a Christian is the very man who should seek to record his vote at the “poll,” and so endeavour to put the right man in the right place. Indeed, our minister, the Rev. Mr. —, exhorted us only last Sunday morning, to go and record our votes early on the election day, and so accomplish that very end.

E. Well, W., I fully believe you speak as you feel; indeed, I am very glad to hear you say that the word of God is to be our guide here; because

it argues that wherein you see of the things of God, you desire to walk accordingly.

And as to what you say about putting the right man in the right place, I fully go with you, but with this difference, that the time has not yet arrived so to do ; and moreover, when it has arrived, it will not be left for you or me to do ; God will see to that. Yes, W., the time is fast hastening on when God will enthrone over this earth, the *One* whom the world refused—His Son : *then*, and not *till* then, will the right Man be in the right place. Meanwhile, God has crowned Him in heaven upon His own throne, with glory and honour ; the righteous reward for His obedience unto death upon Calvary's shameful tree.

And as to your last statement, that your minister exhorted you to go and record your vote, it is quite in keeping with the fact, that the *heavenly character* of the Christian while *now* on the earth, is feebly if at all understood by many of the teachers in Christendom, and hence the taught follow in their wake.

W. Now, E., I think you are speaking very uncharitably of your fellow Christians.

E. God forbid, that I should say an uncharitable word against any one of the Lord's own, bought with the same precious blood as myself. On the contrary, W., I think it is taking the most charitable view of the case, to

say they do not *understand* heavenly truth in relation to the Christian walking on this earth outside the world's pursuits. For myself, I can come to no other conclusion; for I could not possibly bring myself to believe that they understand it, and at the same time teach the *contrary*—that were base on my part; I do believe they are honest in what they teach at any rate: I think I am *most* charitable.

W. But E., you do not mean to set yourself up to know better about these things than our minister who had such an excellent college education—in fact, he writes *M.A.* after his name.

E. Certainly not. I have no wish to compare myself with him, for doubtless I may come very far short in the matter; but what I wish you to see (and all the dear children of God) is, that such teaching will not square with the word of God. And as to your minister having *M.A.* after his name, he might have *D.D.* after it, and yet know very little of what heavenly citizenship is: the letter of the word he may know infinitely better than myself.

W. Now, E., I think you are making very light of college education.

E. Indeed, I am not making light of college education. Nay; let all the tributaries of education (as much as is needful) be enlisted into the service of Christ; but let us distinctly

understand, E., that mere education apart from the teaching of the Spirit of God, does not make men intelligent in His things. It is the Spirit of God who alone can instruct us in divine things. If you have never particularly noticed that passage in 1 Corinthians ii. 9-14, I would earnestly commend it to your prayerful consideration. Every Christian, young and old, rich and poor, born of God, possessing eternal life, has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, the source of instruction in the things of God.

The next thing is to see that we do not grieve Him, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption.

W. Well, E., I must say you speak very differently about these things to what the majority of Christians do; and I must confess also that I do not understand your language; for I have been taught ever since I joined our church at —, that it is my duty to make the best of *both* worlds.

E. Let me tell you from scripture, W., that you can no more make the best of both worlds, than you can serve two masters: you know what our *Lord* says about that.

W. Well, E., I mean to go in for politics, and the Liberal cause.

E. The Liberal cause, W.? Shall I tell you what I think of the Liberal cause as you call it?

though I suppose at present you will think it a matter of indifference to yourself what I think of it ; still, I think *facts* bear out this estimation of it, that the Upas tree of Liberalism leads to Radicalism, and Radicalism full-blown is infidelity ; and infidelity with all its horrors paves the way for the “Antichrist,” the man of sin, in the last days.

W. I think you are painting rather a dark picture, E.

E. Indeed I am giving you no *ignis fatuus* ; but a stern approaching reality, which will one day, in all its terribleness, break over this scene ; and which, sad to say, many of God’s children—Christians—are helping on to-day. Flee it, flee it ! I entreat of you, W.

W. Well, I do not, as a believer, wish to help on what you have been speaking about.

E. I do not think you do really at bottom. But still it is strange how infatuated a person may get over his hobby. Do not you remember what you said to me when we were talking the last time together about one of the parties trying to help an “Atheist” into Parliament ? And I confess you made me sick at heart over *you* about it.

W. Well, what did I say, E. ?

E. You said this : “ Let us have Liberalism and infidelity, only let us have Liberalism ! ”

W. Did I really say that, E. ?

E. You did most emphatically, for you were very warm over the matter : you see where these things lead to, dear W.

W. Well, I must confess I shall have to look this matter straight in the face.

E. Understand, W., I am not pleading for what you are pleased to call Conservatism ; still, if I were a man of common sense in the world, and had to choose between two, I would rather have that with its outward respect for the rights of God, than the other with its radical, atheistical tendencies—the rights of the people, to the displacement of God and His rights. But, thank God, the Christian's politics, W., are above the din and confusion of earth's parties and strife.

W. I thought you said you had no politics, E. ?

E. Indeed, I said nothing of the kind ; the Christian has politics, but they are heavenly. A man's politics are of the country to which he belongs.

Supposing now, W., you were a German, living in Germany, do you think you would like, or do you think it would be seemly for an Englishman to come over there and interfere in the constitution of the country ? I doubt but you would be the first to resent it. You would probably say : “ You are a foreigner, you have no *status* here ; your tongue is not the same as ours.” You would doubtless continue, “ You may get work here if you

can ; but you must conform to the laws which we Germans have made." I grant it is only a figure, W., but figures or parables come a great deal nearer the truth than people sometimes think.

Did those blessed words of our Lord in John xvii. never occur to you, W.; that illimitable prayer of Christ to His Father ? Here is a New Testament—I always carry one in my pocket, just to read a little at meal times—just look at it a few minutes: "These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee ; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give *eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him. And *this is life eternal*, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth." (Vers. 1-4.) Think of it, W. ; Christ has glorified God on the earth, and finished the work given Him to do ; no wonder, then, in the next verse He should ask as Son of man to be glorified along with the Father, with the glory that He had with Him before the world was. That place is His to-day, W. All praise be to His peerless name !

Then in verse 6, we get another thing (you must excuse me, W., going over these scriptures a few moments ; but I want just to connect one or two points.)

W. Go on, E., I am waiting to see what all this has to do with the subject in hand.

E. Very well. In verse 6 we shall find the first point I wish to reach, as it respects Christians having anything to do with earth's politics. Our Lord says: "I have manifested thy name to the men which thou *gavest me out of the world*." Just think of it for a moment, you and me and all the blood-bought ones of the family of God, given by Him to Christ, out of this world—no longer *of it* though *in it*; but Christ's.

Then in verse 8: "I have given unto them the words which thou *gavest me*;" and in verse 9, "I pray for them, I pray *not* for the world, but for *them* which thou hast given me: for they are thine." Verse 10. "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." Look at the distinctness with which we are separated from the world, and consequently the world's objects. And how precious also to Christ and the Father!

And then in verse 11 He says: "And now I am no more in the world but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," &c. And then, in verse 14, "The world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, *even as I am not of the world*."

Verse 15. "I pray not that thou shouldest take

them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the *evil*." Verse 16. "They are not of the world, *even as I am not of the world*." Christ's position in this respect defines our own, you see, W.

And then, in verse 17, the Lord speaks of the power whereby we are to be sanctified, or wholly separated from the maxims, objects, and policy of this world—the mind and truth of God.

W. Well, E., I think I see from these scriptures how separate a person the Christian is from the world, in the mind of God.

E. True. And further: our blessed Master carried it out in all His ways upon the earth. For instance, if it were a question of submitting to the powers that be, in the matter of a tax; though He were the One who made all things and needed nothing of any man, God—yet manifest in flesh here among men—He submitted in obedience, sending Peter to fetch a piece of money from the fish's mouth, at the seaside; saying, "That take, and give unto them for *me and thee*." He was not only obedient Himself, but His disciples He taught to be so likewise.

And so also when Jesus was brought before Pilate (John xviii.), if it were a question of His kingdom, He said (ver. 36), "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not

be delivered to the Jews : but now is my kingdom not from *hence*."

You see, W., how thoroughly the *Lord* was outside the world in spirit and ways, when here among men.

W. Yes ; I do see it, E. I am sure I never heard these things so put before.

E. Well, I am anxious you should seize the blessed import of such scriptures, and that *they* may hold you in their sanctifying power for Christ. One can thank God, too, if one of His own begins to see these things, if even like "men as trees walking."

It is a great thing to have the film removed from the eyes which obstructs the vision.

W. It is, E. Indeed, I can see how blindly I have been blundering on these many years, in neglect of these wonderful things—listening, too, to those who should have taught me better.

E. Ah ! truly. Pray for them, my dear W.

E. There is just one other thing I would like to say a few words to you about before we part.

W. Well, what is that, E. ?

E. You noticed, I dare say, that the Lord, in John xvii. 11, says : "And now I am no more in the world." Again, in verse 13 of the same chapter, "And now come I to thee." So that you see the Saviour is absent in the heavens (and *we* are seated *there in Him*, though that is another

line of truth, according to Eph. ii. 6). And, He being absent, we are His representatives here; waiting for Him to come to receive us to Himself. You do wish to represent Him during His absence, do you not, W.?

W. I do most certainly. He is—I am quite sure of that—the only One worth living for here. (Phil. i. 21, 22.)

E. I say Amen to that with all my heart—and ten thousand hearts had I them, W.; and He is the only object worth *waiting for*, likewise, is He not, W.? Did you ever think of His coming?

W. Well, we shall all go to be with Him, when we die, shall we not?

E. Well, *death* is not the Christian's hope; it may or may not be his portion (1 Cor. xv. 51); but it is not his scriptural hope anyhow. It is Christ coming (not death), the coming of *Himself*, a Person. Did you never notice, in reading John xiv. the difference—the vast difference—between the *place* in His Father's house, where the many mansions are, and the “grave”? And the difference—the immeasurable difference—between “death” coming *to you*, and *Himself* coming *for you*? Marvellous grace and condescension to us, is it not? to take two journeys from *heaven*, to *seek* for such poor things as we are. Yet so it is. “Who loved us like to Thee?”

Boundless love ! How the heart of the believer would linger over Himself, would it not, dear W. ? Did you also never notice 1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10 ?

W. Well, yes : I have read it before now, I suppose.

E. If you read it, then, carefully, when you get home, you will see that the Thessalonians were converted to God from idols to serve the living and true God, "*and to wait for his Son from heaven*," &c.

I am deeply concerned that you should see "who" it is we wait for, W. ; because I feel that if you really got hold of it from the word of God, that *Christ*, the One for whom we wait, is outside this scene—denied His rights—I do not think you would have anything more to do with earth's politics.

By the way, before we part, did you ever notice that beautiful scripture in Philippians iii. 20, 21 : "For our conversation [politics or interests] is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," &c. ?

"*Our Politics*" are in heaven, where now our Saviour is.

W. Well, E., I think I must be saying good day to you. And I hope to come and have a further conversation with you some evening at home, after work hours, about the second coming of Christ. There was some one preaching or

lecturing about it (and the "One Body," you were speaking to me about recently), at the — Room, the other evening.

E. Well, thank God that the Person of Christ is preached more now, at the close of the "last days" than for centuries past. It is a fact, that God has used His word to the recovery of the affections of His people to Christ the Bridegroom of our hearts in the place where He now is. Do not forget this, W., that it is a heavenly Christ that we want preached as the power of separation from all the schemes of this poor world.

W. Well, I do not think I shall have anything to do with earth's politics any more, E., or voting either.

E. If you follow *scripture* I am quite sure you will not. And as to a Christian giving a "Vote," how can he, when the "Nomination Day" has not come? "*The Man*" is not here!

W. Ah! E., you talk in figures; but there, I am so glad to have met you, and had this conversation together. Good day, E.

E. Good day, W.; may the Lord bless you, and keep you till "that day."