

# THE VOICE OF MERCY IN THE HOUSE OF AFFLICTION

by James Smith

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*Smith's pastoral work designed for people facing health challenges and spiritual neglect, providing spiritual comfort and the voice of God's mercy to those suffering hardship and affliction.*

48 Chapters

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Chapter 1

## **00 The Voice of Mercy in the House of Affliction**

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The Voice of Mercy in the House of Affliction!

Or, The Sinner's Companion in Sickness and Sorrow

by James Smith, 1855

## 00p PREFACE

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### PREFACE

Having formerly written a little work for Believers in affliction, which the Lord has condescended to make a great blessing to many; I have been urgently requested to write one on the same plan — for those who in health and ease have neglected the one thing needful. Though for several years I have been prevented, by numerous engagements, from gratifying my friends in this particular, I at length determined in the Lord's strength, to endeavor to grant their request. The success that has crowned my other works — has encouraged me in this; and the hope of being useful in the conversion of souls to God — has prompted me to undertake the work. May multitudes have reason to bless God that "The voice of Mercy" was ever published, and may the God of mercy, who alone can make it useful — accompany it with his effectual blessing. The book is intended for the afflicted; its design is to produce conviction, penitence, faith, and joy in God. The pieces are . . .

short — that they may not weary the weak;

plain — that they may be understood by the illiterate;

and pointed — that they may make an impression on all. The work may be read by the sufferer when alone, but is also suitable for those who visit the sick to take with them, and read a portion at each visit. The subjects presented are of the greatest importance, they concern every person; therefore while especially adapted to the afflicted — the book is also suitable to those who are healthy and in comfortable circumstances.

Reader, do you know of any among your relatives or acquaintances, who are in affliction — but who know nothing of the power of godliness? Do you not pity them? Will you not pray for them? Is it too much to ask you to take or send this little book to them?

It may lead them to think.

It may convince them of sin.

It may conduct them to the Savior.

It may soothe their sorrows.

It may bring peace and joy to their souls. Who can tell, they may have to bless God, and thank you, for such an act of kindness to all eternity! The bare possibility, is enough to stir us up to do all we can, much less so small a thing as that which the writer asks. O to be honored by God to save souls from death! To bring glory to the name of that dear Savior, who . . .

died for our sins,

rose for our justification,

intercedes for us at this moment in Heaven,

and will soon come to receive us to himself, that so we may ever be with the Lord! May the Holy Spirit who is the author and giver of life — work by this feeble instrument, accompany it to every house of affliction, and make it a lasting and extensive blessing. Amen.

James Smith, 1855

New Park Street Church, London

## 01 A Call to Consideration

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A Call to Consideration "Thus says the Lord Almighty: Consider your ways!" Haggai 1:5

Times of affliction — are seasons for consideration. In health we are apt to be thoughtless and careless — and then the Lord sends some affliction, and says to it, "Go, call that person to consideration!" The Lord is now speaking to you. You have in health neglected your soul. You have trifled with divine things. You have disregarded the Lord's word. He has borne long with you — but he has now adopted another course. Hear the rod — for it speaks! It speaks as the voice of God. Let this thought sink into your minds. "God is now speaking to me. He speaks to me in mercy. He speaks for my good. He speaks to me in time — that he may not punish me through eternity. He speaks to me in the land of hope — that he may not banish me to never-ending despair!" How kind! How gracious is this! Will you attend to the voice of God? He says, "Consider Your Ways!" Look back upon the past. Review the road you have traveled — the course which you have chosen. Have you made God's word your guide? Has his glory been the end you have kept in view?

How did you spend your time?

How did you treat the bible?

What have you done for your soul? Have you been living to God — or to yourself? Your ways are represented in God's word. . .

as crooked, because not regulated by his law;

as wicked, because opposed to his commands;

as a hedge of thorns, because lined with disappointments and vexations;

as the way to Hell, being sinful and perverse.

They were your own ways, for you . . .

chose them,

persevered in them, and

preferred them to God's ways.

They led you away from God. They only gratified the evil dispositions of your heart. They will only cause you pain and sorrow now, if you reflect rightly upon them.

Think of the past very seriously. Search over the past, and see what there is in it, that you can now approve of and commend. Try your ways by God's holy law. Ponder the paths which your feet have trodden!

You have omitted prayer.

You have slighted the gospel.

You have disregarded the authority of God.

You have treated his mercy with contempt.

You deserve his wrath.

He would be just if he was to punish you forever!

But, "consider your ways!"

Mercy invites you to do so; and invites you with the best intention. It calls upon you now because "there is forgiveness with our God."

Justice bids you to consider, and threatens — that it may not punish. But if you refuse to attend now, if you allow your conscience to be hardened, if you close your ear to the voice of warning — then that justice will shine forth conspicuously in your eternal punishment! If now you consider, repent, and receive God's merciful invitation, and flee to him for mercy — then he will be just in pardoning all your sins, and in saving your soul. For Jesus died, to satisfy the claims of divine justice, for all who come to God and seek mercy through him. And in the gospel, God is proclaimed as "a just God, and a Savior." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Compassion entreats you to consider. God is slow to anger. He is full of compassion. He is plenteous in mercy. He knows all your sins. He sees the exact state of your heart at this moment. He alone knows what an eternity of suffering means. He could hurl you down to Hell in one moment! But he delights in mercy. He is ready to forgive. He says, "Consider your ways, and come and let us reason together, for though your sins be as scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Dear friend, now consider your ways, for God bids you. He bids you at this moment. Do not put it off. You may become more insensible. Death may spring upon you suddenly. Do not delay for one moment. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!"

Consider your ways for reason urges you. It is most unreasonable to neglect or delay — for your danger is imminent. You have neglected too long. You need the consolations of religion, to cheer and comfort you in your present affliction. Seek them at once, and remember, "that every one who seeks, finds."

Consider your ways, for eternity exhorts you. It is just at hand. It is surrounded by all that is solemn and serious. Consider then at once. Consider as in the sight of God. Consider and give your heart to the work. Consider your ways, and carefully compare them with God's holy word. Consider and prepare for the result. Go on as thoughtlessly as you have done — and guilt, fear, disappointment, and despair are your portion — your eternal portion! "Consider this, you who forget God, lest he tears you in pieces, and there are none to deliver."

There is a deliverer now, one who is both able and willing to deliver You; but the time is coming, when the deliverer will be the judge — and then deliverance will be impossible. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" God is speaking to you, he would speak with

you. Go to his throne of grace. Approach him in prayer. Confess your sins. Seek immediate salvation. Rest not until you find grace with God, and rest in Christ. It may be obtained now. "Seek — and you shall find! Knock — and it shall be opened unto you."

## 02 The State of the Heart

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### The State of the Heart

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked! Who really knows how bad it is?"  
Jeremiah 17:9

Reader, the Lord is speaking of your heart. Perhaps you have been thinking that you have a good heart. That though it may not be perfect — yet it is not wicked. You imagine that you have many good thoughts, and that you are better within, than without. This is common thinking. But it is a fearful mistake. The Lord searches your heart. He knows . . .

every principle that prompts it,

every motive that rules it,

every thought that springs up in it,

very word and every action that flows from it!

He says, "I the Lord search the heart!" He is searching your heart at this moment. His eye penetrates beneath every secret fold. He is, he always has been — perfectly acquainted with your heart. He cannot be deceived. He will not speak falsely about it. It is very important that you should know the true state of your heart — especially now while you are afflicted. Let us therefore attend for a few minutes to what God says of your heart.

"The heart is wicked!" God is not talking about the heart of some notorious criminal — but about every heart. Your heart. My heart. The hearts of the rich, of the poor, of the learned, of the illiterate, of the moral, of the immoral. Every heart by nature is wicked. Hear the inspired Psalmist, "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

"The heart is desperately wicked!" Not merely a little wicked — but desperately wicked. Your heart is desperately wicked. Solemn thought! Awful fact! But it is no exaggeration. It is only sober truth. Hear God's description of men in old times, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." This is the case with your heart. Do you believe it? Do you realize it? Or, are you still imagining that your heart is not so depraved as this? Hear the Savior, "For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you!" Mark 7:21-22.

Every one of these things may not have been felt by you; many of them may not have appeared in your conduct — but the reason is, you have not been exposed to those powerful temptations which draw them out! Others have felt these evils working, and many have committed the crimes enumerated. Now our hearts by nature are all alike. They are all wicked, desperately wicked. Therefore the word of God says, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become

unprofitable; there is none that does good — no not one! For there is no difference." This is God's testimony, do you believe it? God says that your heart is wicked, desperately wicked; this you must admit, or you call God a liar. "He who believes not God, has made him a liar." But you object, "I have heard many say the same as I do, and I know many respectable people who think as I do upon the subject." That is probable. Very few think as God thinks, see as God sees, or speak as God speaks — but let God be true. But the passage says, your heart "deceitful." It has deceived you. It has perhaps deceived others. But it cannot deceive God. Its deceitfulness is unparalleled, for it is "deceitful above all things." Nothing is as deceitful as the human heart. It conceals us from ourselves. We have never seen ourselves in our true colors yet. We have been deceived by our hearts, times without number. You have been deceived by it up to the present moment, and unless you receive God's testimony upon the subject — you will be deceived to your everlasting destruction!

Many are deceived all their days. They die under a deception. They never discover their deception — until they open their eyes in Hell. This is a fearful fact — but it is a fact. A fact which you should very seriously consider, for Satan will try every means in his power to lull you to sleep, to keep you under a deception, with a view to ruin you forever.

Look very carefully at the state of your heart. Compare what flows from your heart, with God's holy word — as to your thoughts, purposes, and desires — and you will soon discover that you have been deceived. Follow up the work of self-examination, and you will at length have to say with the Apostle Paul, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing!" Beware of unbelief on this point; go to the Lord and pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."

Very, very few know the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of their own hearts: therefore it is added, "Who really knows how bad it is?" That is, who can know it fully, perfectly. No one can. The depth is unfathomable. The naked sight of your heart would be unbearable. The Lord lets his people see enough of it . . .

to make them despair of all help from themselves,

to loathe themselves, to lay low at his footstool, and

to fly to the Lord Jesus Christ for a complete salvation. The state of your heart has been pointed out from God's word, his testimony has been set before you; you must now receive — or reject it. You must admit its truth and fly as a poor, lost, ruined sinner, to the Lord Jesus Christ for life and salvation — or go on under the influence of a deception, against which you have been warned, and perish in your own deceivings! "Take heed that you be not deceived," or an eternity of woe, of unavailing regrets awaits you! Many regret in sickness — that they neglected these things in health; and more regret in eternity — that they neglected these things through time. May the Holy Spirit lead you to see, feel, and say —

Astonished and distressed

I turn mine eyes within;

My heart with loads of guilt oppressed

The seat of every sin!  
What crowds of evil thoughts,  
What vile affections there!  
Distrust, presumption, artful guile,  
Pride, envy, slavish fear!  
Almighty King of saints,  
These tyrant lusts subdue;  
Expel the darkness from my mind,  
And all my powers renew. This done, my cheerful voice  
Shall loud hosannas raise;  
My soul shall flow with gratitude,  
My lips proclaim your praise!

## 03 A New Birth Necessary

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A New Birth Necessary "Marvel not that I said unto you: You must be born again." John 3:7 Our Lord was conversing with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; he had informed him, that unless a man is born again, he could not see the kingdom of God. This had filled him with surprise. He did not catch the Savior's meaning. He therefore inquired, "How can these things be?" He was thinking of something natural — but the Lord meant something spiritual. He thought of a change of body — but Jesus meant a change of heart.

Many make mistakes on this point now. They either think that the new birth is not necessary — or they do not understand what it is. My friend, what are your thoughts on this subject? Have you ever thought much about it? Are you concerned about it now? It is of the greatest importance. It demands your immediate consideration. You cannot be justified in putting off the consideration of it for one hour. Your everlasting all is at stake. The destinies of eternity hang upon the events of time. You have delayed too long. Trifle no longer, I beseech you. Give your most serious attention to the subject at once. Jesus says, "You must be born again!" Who must? You must. This is true of every man, woman, and child who has sinned against God. A man may be moral. His conduct before men may be very consistent. He may be sober. He may be honest. He may be benevolent and kind. He may be religious, so far as the externals of Christianity are concerned. He may read his bible. He may attend the means of grace. He may contribute of his substance for the spread of the gospel. He may keep company with the saints. He may be a member of a church. But these things will not be admitted as a substitute for a change of heart. He must be born again. Amiable tempers. Correct conduct. Obliging manners. Attention to civil and religious duties — are all excellent in their place — but they are no title to Heaven. The new birth is indispensably necessary. It is universally necessary. The Savior speaks to the moral and the immoral — to the learned and the illiterate — to the religious and the irreligious — and he says, "Marvel not that I said unto you — you must be born again." Are you a young man — or a young woman? You must be born again. Are you in the prime of life? Or are you advanced in years! It matters not, you must be born again. But what is the change required? It is not an outward reformation — but an inward regeneration. It is not a change of conduct merely — but a change of nature. It is not a change of creed or opinion — but a change of heart. By your first birth you became a rational creature — by a second birth you must become a spiritual creature. The first birth is according to the course of nature, by which we become men; the second birth is by the power of the Holy Spirit, by which we become Christians. The first birth fits us to live in this world — but the second birth fits us to live in another and a better world.

You must be born again — or receive a new nature and live a new life. The change is very great, it is called a new creation, therefore of Christians it is said, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10. And again, "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

It is said to be also a resurrection, thus our Savior speaks, "Truly, truly, I say unto you — the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear shall live." John 5:25. All men by nature are dead in sin, dead to God; they feel no interest in spiritual things, nor any concern about them. They must be quickened by the Holy Spirit. They must be raised from this state of death. The Ephesians were, as Paul says, "And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience." Ephesians 2:1-2. So were the Colossians also, as we read, "And you, being dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh — has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Colossians 2:13. They are then spoken of as "risen with Christ," and as having their life hid with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1-3.

Now you must undergo this change, or you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. You must be "renewed in the spirit of your mind." You must receive the new heart, which God has promised. This will produce a radical change in your VIEWS. Your views . . .

of sin and holiness,

of the law and the gospel,

of the world and the Savior,

of God and yourself,

of earth and Heaven —

will all be quite new; and you will wonder that you had not seen things so before. Your FEELINGS also will undergo as great a change.

You will hate sin, and desire holiness.

You will turn from the world, and turn to the Savior.

You will fear Hell, and seek for Heaven. To you, a saving interest in Christ, and to enjoy communion with Christ, will appear to be "the one thing needful." You will . . .

read the bible with new eyes,

hear the gospel with new ears,

and taste a sweetness in the things of God, of which you formerly had no conception.

You will find yourself in a new world, surrounded with new objects! You will find your mind interested in, and taken up with, new subjects. Spiritual things will appear to be realities, and matters of the greatest importance. The beginning of this change is, in many, imperceptible. It often commences with a thought — then there is a desire — then prayer — then fear — then hope — then inward struggling — then faith — then joy and peace. But WHY is this change so necessary? Because by nature we are all totally depraved, our persons are wholly polluted. We are disqualified for holy employments, and holy enjoyments. We cannot perceive the beauty and excellence of divine things. We have no appetite for spiritual provision. We have no faith in God, or love to God, or desire for God. If we were in Heaven, we could not be happy. The presence of God

would give us no joy. As soon may the fish enjoy being on the dry land, or the bird live in the depths of the sea, as for a sinner without a new birth, to enjoy the presence and perfections of God. We have no power for spiritual duties, or taste for spiritual pleasures — until we are born again. But if we must be born again, divine agency is necessary, therefore let us pray for it.

Deep concern should be felt, therefore let us encourage it.

Careful inquiry into our state should be made, therefore let us prosecute it.

Caution should be exercised, therefore let us not draw any hasty conclusions.

We must be born again or perish, therefore let nothing satisfy us but the well-founded persuasion that we are passed from death unto life.

## 04 An Earnest Exhortation

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An Earnest Exhortation "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man who trusts in him." Psalms 34:8 The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. His goodness . . .

appears in nature,

is displayed in providence, and

shines forth in all its glory, in the salvation of sinners. His nature is most amiable and glorious. Holiness, or purity — is the leading feature of his character. He hates whatever is impure or unjust. He always does what is right. But he frequently gives, what no sinner could reasonably expect. He pardons offenders. He freely forgives the greatest sinners, when they plead before him the name of his beloved Son. He confers grace on the most unworthy. He gives grace to all who seek it:

Grace to sanctify their natures.

Grace to comfort their hearts.

Grace to fit them for his presence and glory forever. His love makes every one happy who knows and enjoys it. It is so great — so tender — so constant. If we know that God loves us, we know that he will withhold no good thing from us. He has already given his Son to die for our sins. He has promised his Holy Spirit unto those who ask him. He will give grace to all who apply for it. He has given us his holy and faithful word — and whatever we ask of him in faith, we shall receive. "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him." His goodness is unsearchable. He is good in himself. He is good to the unthankful and the unholy. He is especially good to the soul that seeks him. Do not doubt his goodness. Do not question the truth of his word. Do not fear to draw near unto him. Do not think that he will reject you, or refuse to show mercy unto you. But, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." As you try whether things are pleasant or disagreeable, by tasting with the mouth; so try if the Lord is not good, by putting his word to the test with your soul.

Real religion gives the sweetest comfort — it is true happiness.

It is sweeter than the sweetest music;

more delightful than the most lovely landscape;

more pleasant than the most amiable company;

more ennobling than the most dignified titles;

more beneficial than the most excellent food;

and more profitable than the greatest wealth.

It is profitable to all things, having the promise of all good things in the life which now is; and of inconceivable glory in that which is to come. And what is true religion? It comprises . . .

the knowledge of God in Christ,

union to God through Christ,

fellowship with God by Christ, and

obedience to God like Christ.

Or, it is to know, possess, enjoy, and obey God. Just that which you are invited to possess, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Seek to know him: By reading his word. By meditating on Jesus. By calling upon his name. "Acquaint now yourself with him and be at peace, for thereby shall good come unto you." Receive from him. He will give unto you. He will give you his richest, choicest blessings. If you feel your need. If you really desire to possess. If you plead the name of Jesus. If you ask with earnestness and sincerity. If you believe his word of promise, in which he pledges himself to give the favors you ask. He will certainly grant you whatever you ask.

Every sin he will pardon.

Every grace he will bestow.

Every good thing he will confer. The invitation now given us is hearty and sincere; it is warranted by God's character and word; it flows from a deep experience of God's goodness, and from love to your soul. Your encouragement to taste and see that the Lord is good, is great, for, "Blessed is every one who trusts in him." They are blessed with the most costly blessings. They are placed in the most favorable circumstances. They are truly happy, for the mercy of God surrounds them, as it is written, "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Psalms 32:10.

They are really fruitful, for, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8.

They enjoy solid peace, as the Prophet says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you; because he trusts in you." Isaiah 26:3. God's goodness to him is astonishing, it supplies all his present needs, and provides for all his future necessities; hence the Psalmist exclaims, "O how great is your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear you; which you have wrought for those who trust in you before the sons of men." Psalms 31:19.

They are safe in time, and will enjoy safety throughout eternity. "Those who trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved — but abides forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." Psalms 125:1-2. "The fear of man brings a snare: but whoever puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe." Proverbs 29:25. My dear friend, you are invited to enjoy this happiness. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." This will . . .

prevent many painful disappointments;

secure to you all real good;

preserve you from Hell at last.

Prove then, by experience, that the Lord is good, and ready to forgive. Go to him now. Go at once. Go this moment. Delay not,

lest darkness come upon you;

lest your heart grow hard;

lest death overtake you.

You may now be blessed. You may now be saved. Let nothing keep you from the Savior. Listen not to Satan, he will deceive you. Yield not to fear, it will undo you. God is waiting to be gracious. The invitation is sent to you in love. There is no obstacle in your way but unbelief. Nothing can keep you from the enjoyments of mercy — but your own heart!

## 05 A Solemn Question

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A Solemn Question "How shall we escape, if we neglect such a great salvation?" Hebrews 2:3 This is a most solemn question. It requires our closest attention. It is proposed for our good. It should be immediately and seriously considered. We are by nature, lost sinners. That such sinners might be saved, God became incarnate. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." In our nature he did and suffered what law and justice required for our salvation. He finished his work. He ascended to glory. He sent his gospel to all nations. He has sent it to us. It is the good news of salvation. It informs us that we may be saved — and how we may be saved. It points out the way of life. Exhorts us to escape from eternal death. Invites us to receive and enjoy this invaluable blessing.

Gospel salvation is represented, as a sovereign remedy for all our moral maladies. It is that which will restore us to spiritual health — and will make us holy, happy, and honorable. It is compared to a splendid feast. It presents all that we can need to revive, refresh, and delight us. It contains . . .

a free, full, and immediate pardon, for all our sins,

a title to everlasting life and happiness,

a complete deliverance from sin, Satan, death, and Hell.

It is a great salvation!

God alone could devise it.

It required that God should become man to procure it.

It is the richest gift that God could confer on sinners.

It is great beyond expression — beyond conception! Consider . . .

1. The price it cost:

the labors,

the sufferings, and

the death of the Son of God!

2. The evils it prevents:

banishment from God,

the endless lashings of a guilty conscience,

the torments of eternal despair in Hell.

3. The blessings it secures:

the presence of God,  
the perfection of our nature, and  
the unspeakable glories and joys of Heaven!

4. The glory it confers — it makes us . . .

the sons of God,  
joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ,  
temples of the Holy Spirit, and  
mirrors in which the glory of God will be reflected forever!

5. The extent to which it reaches — the uttermost. No sinner can be too vile to be pardoned through the blood of Jesus. No creature can be too depraved to be sanctified by the Spirit of God. It reaches to the most desperate cases. None are excluded. None should despair. It is salvation to the uttermost! Until . . .

omnipotence can be conquered,  
infinite wisdom be baffled, or  
the merit of the blood of Jesus fail —  
there is hope for the vilest of sinners!

6. Its duration is forever! It is everlasting salvation. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation, unto all those who obey him. Once saved by Jesus, we are saved for evermore. Put these things together, and say — Is it not a great salvation? It is the salvation of great sinners, from the greatest evils, to the enjoyment of the greatest blessings.

Must it not then be an inexcusable sin, to neglect such a great salvation? Yet there are thousands who do so. It is constantly preached — yet many never give themselves the trouble to go to hear of it. It is published in the Bible and other good books — yet they seldom if ever carefully read of it. They treat it as if it was a matter of minor importance, or of no consequence at all. How astonishing!

They think they may neglect it in times of health, and quiet their consciences by promising to attend to it in sickness. But they are comparatively few, who having neglected salvation in health, do seek and enjoy it in sickness and death. And many who do read the bible with tolerable regularity, and who go often to hear the gospel preached — who still neglect this great salvation. They do not give it that sincere and hearty attention which it demands. It does not fill their thoughts, awaken their desires, and engage their powers. They hear the message — but do not cordially embrace it. They listen to the proclamation — but do not exercise faith in it. They have the blessing presented to them as a gift from God — but they do not receive it. They postpone the serious consideration of it. They prefer the pleasures, or follies, or fashions of this life to it: and in effect say with Felix, "Go your way for this time, when I have a convenient season — I will send for you." But whom do they put off? The great, the glorious, the infinite God.

What do they treat with neglect? The present, future, eternal salvation of their souls.

What do they prefer to this blessing? Vanity, lies, the merest trash!

Why do they neglect this great salvation? Because sin has hardened the heart, blinded the eyes, and perverted all their mental powers.

What will be the consequence if they persevere in this course? They must be condemned by God — and must suffer forever the due punishment of their deeds in eternal Hell!

Reader! how is it with you? Are you enjoying this great salvation? Are you seeking to possess it? Or, are you treating it with neglect? If you have neglected it hitherto, if you are neglecting it now — let me exhort you to attend to the question proposed to you by God himself. How shall you escape, if you neglect such a great salvation?

It is kindness,

it is love to your soul,

it is concern for your everlasting welfare,

it is a desire to see you holy and happy

— which leads us to ask, "How shall you escape — if you neglect such a great salvation?" How will you escape? Death will soon summon you into the presence of God. The judgment will soon commence. You must stand alone at the bar of God. You must give an account of yourself to God. You cannot avoid this. The decree is past. The facts are made known in God's book. Heaven and earth may pass away — but his word which declares these things shall not pass away. How then, will you escape? Do you imagine that you can flee from God? How can you escape from the grasp of omnipotence? Where can you flee from the eye of the Omniscient? How will you escape? Do you think that you can bribe God? Can you bribe the most just God? Or, what can you offer when you stand naked before your judge? How will you escape? Do you imagine that you can escape by deception? In vain will you try your ingenuity! Your folly will be manifest to all! How will you escape? Do you imagine that you can escape by your strength? "Have you an arm like God?" Can you overcome the Almighty! How will you escape? Do you imagine that you can escape by concealment? What will conceal you? Then shall be fulfilled that solemn scripture, "They called to the mountains and the rocks: Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?" Revelation 6:16-17. What a solemn scene! What an dreadful picture! What a solemn scene! What an dreadful picture! And if you neglect this great salvation — such will be your condition!

Now you may escape, then there will be no possibility of escape. Once more we ask the question: How will you escape? Do you ask, "Escape what?" Ruin. Total Ruin. Eternal ruin. The ruin of body and soul. The ruin of your entire person forever. Ruin merited by sin. Ruin secured by your folly. Ruin preferred to the joys of the blessed, and the riches of glory. My beloved friend, think. Think seriously upon this subject. Let it sink down deep into your heart. You can think of nothing else half so important. I beseech you, do not put it away from you, and so judge or pronounce yourself unworthy of everlasting life. Ask yourself: Am I saved? Salvation is come near unto you. You are not far from the kingdom of God. Will that salvation be received? Will that kingdom be entered by

you.

Beware of trifling!

Beware of delays! Your life hangs upon a thread!

You may be within one hour of eternity!

Satan will try to induce you to postpone the matter. But do not allow him to deceive you. He has deceived you too often. He is the enemy of your soul. He seeks your destruction. Yield not to him — but at once direct your most serious thoughts to this all-important subject.

Embrace the message of mercy at once.

Accept the kind invitation of your God without delay. The arms of Jesus are open to embrace you. The ears of God are open to listen to your earnest prayers. The fountain of Christ's blood is open which will cleanse you from sin. The gospel feast is prepared which will satisfy your soul. The best robe is ready which will clothe and adorn your person.

All things are ready, Come!

You have delayed too long — delay no longer. You have neglected too long — but yet there is hope, neglect no longer. Cast yourself at once at the feet of Jesus, seek and obtain mercy of God — and everlasting life is yours. Life in the favor of God. Life in the enjoyment of God. Life, as like the life of God as the life of a creature can be. Life which comprises every blessing, which includes everything that is desirable. Life which has cost the Son of God the labors of his life, and the sufferings of his death to procure. O look to Jesus and live, believe in the Son of God and eternal life is yours!

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life!" 1 John 5:11-12

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him!" John 3:36

## 06 The Way to Obtain Peace

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The Way to Obtain Peace "Acquaint now yourself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto you." Job 22:21 By nature we are all strangers to God. We know him not. We have heard of him. We have spoken of him. But he is to us, unknown. The natural man can form no definite idea of God. He has no correct idea of his nature, perfections, demands, or promises. The advice given us in this passage is excellent. It directs to God. To the Most High God. The God who is offended by our sins. Who is pledged to punish every impenitent transgressor. But who has revealed himself in the person of his Son. Who is now in Christ reconciling sinners unto himself. Who invites us to approach him without fear.

It directs us to confess our sins unto him. To seek and obtain pardon from him. He is ready to forgive. He is now waiting to be gracious. He only needs to be known to be trusted, to be loved, to be obeyed.

Reader, acquaint now yourself with him and be at peace. You must know him or perish. There is no eternal life without the knowledge of God. For "this," said Jesus, "is eternal life — that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." In order to know him — you should read his word. Read it as intended to make him known. To give you clear and correct ideas of him. Listen to the preaching of the gospel as you have opportunity. Think of what you read and hear respecting him. Speak of him to those who do know him. Ask them respecting his character, his love, his pity, and his various excellencies.

Pray much for the Holy Spirit — and beseech him to reveal Jehovah to you. It is his work to give the true knowledge of God. He enlightens the understanding, unfolds the meaning of the word, and enables us to conceive aright of the Most High God. Be much in prayer, for it is by earnest, fervent, frequent prayer, that we become familiar with God.

He who would become acquainted with God — must be often with him — must hear him speak in his word, and speak with him on his throne.

"Acquaint now yourself with him." This is the time. Under your present circumstances. Perhaps you were brought into these circumstances, on purpose to afford you the opportunity. If you let the present slip, another opportunity may not be given you. Begin then at once to think of God, of his goodness and his greatness; of his holiness and his mercy; of his justice and his grace.

Here are powerful inducements presented. "Acquaint now yourself with him — and be at peace." There is no peace while you are a stranger to God. In this state you are numbered with the wicked, and "there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked." They may labor under a delusion, and because conscience slumbers, they may call their quiet, indifference peace: but it is not so. There is no peace with God — but through the knowledge of God. You must know God in Christ, before you can be at peace with him.

It is only as the sinner perceives that God is love, that he is plenteous in mercy, that he is ready to pardon — that he lays down the weapons of his rebellion, and seeks to enjoy his favor. Terrors may alarm him. The law may terrify him. Judgments may fill him with dread. But it is only a sight of God in Christ — which will . . .

melt his stony heart,

subdue his stubborn will, and

attract his depraved affections. Nor can there be peace, until . . .

sin is pardoned,

the conscience is purged,

the mind is enlightened,

confidence in God is produced,

and hope in his mercy is generated.

These all flow from a spiritual knowledge of God. No one knows God — who does not desire to enjoy friendship with him. No one can enjoy friendship with him — unless he is pardoned and consecrated to his service. In proportion as I know God, I shall . . .

believe his word,

trust in the atonement of Jesus,

seek the influences of the Holy Spirit,

and walk humbly with him. And just in proportion as I do so — shall I enjoy peace.

Seek to know God, and then you will not . . .

dread his wrath,

fear his judgments, or

tremble to appear before him;

but you will . . .

hope in his mercy,

trust in his promises,

enjoy his presence, and

expect to dwell with him forever!

"Acquaint now yourself with him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto you." The evil feared — shall be prevented, and the good desired — shall be bestowed. All good comes to us through the knowledge of God. Hence the Apostle says, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and

goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." 2 Peter 1:3-4.

Temporal good may come unto us, it often does. But spiritual good certainly will come. Our sins will be pardoned. Our persons will be justified. Our nature will be sanctified. Our trials will be moderated. Our comfort will be increased. Our prospects will be brightened.

All real evils will be prevented — and all necessary good will be bestowed. Good will come unto us in time while walking with God. We shall have . . .

peace of conscience,

fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and

a secret something within which will sweeten all our trials, and sustain us under our sorrows.

Good will come unto us from God. He will send it, and send a blessing with it. Whatever comes will be good, for the curse will be extracted; and though it may be painful — it shall be profitable.

Good will come unto us in eternity — when dwelling with God. In time he visits us occasionally — but in eternity we shall dwell with him forever. Everything that can be called good, that will outlive the general conflagration, and that is suited to our natures — will be ours in eternity, if we are acquainted with God. Would you then have all your sins pardoned? Would you enjoy solid peace? Would you secure all good things in time? Would you be certain of all good things in eternity?

If so, "Acquaint yourself with him, and be at peace; thereby shall good come unto you."

Beloved friend, reflect upon your present condition. What is it? Are you an enemy to God — or are you his friend? One or the other you must be. Are you a stranger to God — or are you acquainted with him? One or the other is the case. Are you at war with God, a rebel in arms against his government — or are you reconciled to him, and at peace with him? In the one state or the other you are at this moment. If you are not reconciled to God — then there is no promise of good to you; but every evil should be feared, and be feared so long as you are in an unconverted state.

Let me beseech you to attend to the exhortation at once. There is no real cause for one moment's delay. You can find no reason for putting off this necessary duty. No excuse can be accepted. You will therefore from this moment practically decide to acquaint yourself with God — or to go on in ignorance; to seek reconciliation with him — or to persevere in opposition to him; to seek to obtain all good in time and eternity — or to brave all the evils which such a sin can deserve, or a just God can send or permit. What a fearful alternative is this!

Yet it is the true state of the case. You must this moment, take the advice of God's book and act upon it — or reject that advice and treat the Holy Spirit who wrote it with contempt. But perhaps you do know God. If so, cultivate a closer acquaintance with him. Counsel others to do as you have done, and say to all who are likely to listen to you, "Acquaint now yourself with God, and be at peace; thereby shall good come unto you." Tell them of the joys you realize, of the dangers you have escaped, of the prospects which are before you; and invite them to Jesus, exhort them to flee from the wrath to come. Speak to them of the Savior's love, of his atoning blood, of his tender

heart, of his precious promises, of his free invitations, and say unto them, "Come with us and we will do you good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." O speak a word for Jesus! Try by all means to save sinners from going down to the pit of eternal woe! "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." Jude 1:23.

## 07 The Savior's Benevolence

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### The Savior's Benevolence

"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, 'Give me a drink' — you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water!" John 4:10 The Lord Jesus was now weary with his journey, and he sat down to rest beside Jacob's well; a woman of Samaria came to draw water, and being thirsty, he asked her for a drink. But the Jews and Samaritans being at variance, she refused him, when he at once told her that if she had really known him — she would have asked him to give her "living water," and he would not have refused her. Figurative language was very common in the east, and Jesus uses a figure here; but it is a figure which is easily understood by those who compare one part of the scripture with another. The blessing which Jesus had to bestow, he calls, "living water;" by which is to be understood, the Holy Spirit. Hence he says upon another occasion, "If any man thirsts, let him come unto me, and drink. He who believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke he of the Spirit, which those who believe on him would receive." John 7:37-39. As sinners, the two principal things which we need, are an atonement to expiate our sins, and the Holy Spirit to sanctify our natures. The atonement gives us a title to Heaven, and sanctification fits us for it. The atonement was made by Jesus, when he died; and the Holy Spirit is given by him, now that he is in his glory. The Holy Spirit and his influences are here compared to pure spring waters. They purify us from our pollution and defilement which we have contracted by sin, which unfits us for Heaven; and cleanses the heart from pride, prejudice, and lust. They are a source of activity and life within us, producing . . .

holy desires,

earnest longings for God,

faith in his word,

hope in his mercy,

and love to his name.

They refresh and revive us when weary and cast down, giving us comfort and courage to prosecute our journey and go on with our work. They strengthen us with might in the inner man, and make us strong in the Lord. They give holy satisfaction, and make us contented with our lot below. They are permanent, as Jesus said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him — shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall he in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This blessing is the gift of God, it flows from his bounty. It is the effect of his benevolence and liberality. He gives it . . .

freely, without price;

cheerfully, without reluctance;

and readily, to every applicant. This blessing of the Spirit is, after the Savior, the principal blessing. It includes all other good things. It is as necessary for us as sinners, as water is to the weary exhausted traveler in the eastern deserts, who must drink or die. We must receive the Holy Spirit and experience his gracious work in our hearts — or perish forever. As nothing could satisfy the claims of justice on our behalf — but the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus; so nothing can make us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light — but the indwelling, operations, and work of the Holy Spirit. But there are but few who perceive and realize this — and therefore it is not sought.

There are many professors, it is to be feared, who scarcely know anything of the divine person, sacred influences, and saving operations of the Holy Spirit. They have not taken into their minds any scriptural ideas on this subject. They do not feel the importance of a change of heart, they are scarcely aware that their nature needs renewing, and therefore they do not seek this invaluable blessing. They are not impressed with the gracious promises of the Holy Spirit; nor affected with the fact, that God will freely bestow him upon those who sincerely ask him.

They are also to a great extent, unacquainted with Jesus, who has received this blessing, and who confers it upon all those who obey him.

Reader, if you really felt your need of the Holy Spirit; if you knew the gracious character and generous nature of the Lord Jesus; you would ask, and he would give you this living water. This poor woman did not know that God gave his Holy Spirit unto those who ask him. She did not know that this blessing comes to us through his incarnate Son. She did not know that Jesus had the Holy Spirit to confer on whom he would. She did not know how kind, how tender, how forgiving, how generous he was. Therefore she did not at first ask him for the blessing; but as soon as she did know — she asked, and she received it.

Now, if up to the present moment you have been ignorant of these things — this little book informs you of them; you are now just in the situation of this woman, when Jesus had unfolded the truth to her mind. Will you, like her, apply at once for this invaluable blessing?

Jesus is ready to bestow the blessing. He was willing, he was waiting to confer it upon this woman — though she refused him a drop of water from her pitcher. He is equally willing, he is waiting to bestow it on you. He received the promised Spirit from the Father, on purpose that he might give it unto those who ask him. He came into the world that he might remove every impediment out of the way of our receiving it. He went back to Heaven pledged to give it, and he reigns at the Father's right hand to bestow it. If you only perceive and feel your true state and condition as a sinner in the sight of God; you will soon perceive, and feel your need of the Holy Spirit; and if you in addition to this, learn the true character of the Lord Jesus — you will soon ask, and he will as soon give you the "living water."

Dear reader, if you are in an unconverted state, this is the first and principle thing that you need. It is the one thing necessary for you. Without the Holy Spirit, you will never have right views . . .

of sin,

of yourself,

of the holy law,

of the glorious gospel,  
or of our gracious God.

Without the Holy Spirit, you will never . . .

repent of sin,

believe in Jesus,

love God,

enjoy salvation, or

perform any good works.

Without the Holy Spirit, you will . . .

live in ignorance,

die in sin, and

perish forever.

You can find no substitute for the Spirit. He is essentially necessary. The sufferings and death of Christ, were not more necessary for your pardon and justification; than is the Holy Spirit for your conversion and sanctification! O that you were thoroughly convinced of this! If you were, you would never rest, you would never cease calling upon God, until the Spirit was poured upon you from on high. The matter is now plainly placed before you. You are informed from God's word, that you must have this "living water," or perish forever. You are assured, that no substitute for the Holy Spirit can be found. That Jesus has the Holy Spirit to bestow. That he is willing to bestow it on you. That he will have you pray for it. That if you do not seek it — it is because you have false views of your own character and condition; and in refusing to seek it, you . . .

despise God's mercy,

reject his word of invitation and warning,

and pour contempt upon the benevolence and love of the Savior.

Reader, are you a believer in the Lord Jesus? You need more of this living water. You need the Spirit to dwell in you more fully, and to exert his power more effectually over all your faculties. You are not full of the Holy Spirit. You have received him in measure — but there is much more to be obtained. See then what you should do. Go to Jesus thirsting for this blessing. Go as if you really needed and desired the blessing. Go as for a favor. Go as if you were going for what he loves to bestow. Go as if you could not do without it. Go as if you did not intend to be put off with anything else. Let not Satan divert your mind from it. Let not the world draw you aside. Let not your deceitful heart mislead you. If you really know the bounty of God, the value of this precious gift, the generous nature and gracious disposition of the Lord Jesus — then you will ask, and he will give you more of this living water. Ask therefore and receive, that your joy may be full.

## 08 The Sinner's Prospect!

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### The Sinner's Prospect!

"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest — this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous Lord loves righteousness. The upright will see His face!"  
Psalms 11:6-7

There is something very solemn in this passage. It is one of God's merciful warnings. It is intended to . . .

awaken thought,

arouse fear,

produce conviction,

lead to the Savior,

and prevent eternal ruin!

It is the voice of the Holy Spirit — he is speaking to us in love, and his word should be carefully regarded. Let us look at the passage for a few moments, and may the Lord bless it to our souls.

Here the object of God's displeasure is set before us. "The wicked." Let us be careful not to mistake the character. It is not to be confined to the openly profane. It includes . . .

all who are ungodly,

every one whose heart is not right with God,

all who are unrighteous. The whole world is divided into these two classes: the righteous — and the wicked.

Let us then examine our past life. Look at our sins of omission. Have we not restrained prayer before God? The prayerless man is a wicked man. Have we not slighted the bible? It ought to have been the man of our counsel, our daily instructor and guide.

Look at our sins of commission. Intemperance in eating or drinking, or both. Swearing perhaps, or lightness, levity, and frothy conversation. Lying, or the practice of deception in business, in the family, or among our friends. Immorality, a sin very common, fearfully general, among young people in our large towns and cities. Theft, or the taking and appropriating to our own use — what does not really belong to us. But we must forbear.

If you plead 'not guilty' to some of these charges, can you do so to all? If not, remember it is written, "Whoever shall keep the whole law — and yet offends in one point — he is guilty of all." James 2:10. He cannot be justified by works, or stand accepted of God but through a Savior.

Let us examine our hearts — and compare them with the requirements of God. Are they perfectly holy? Are they full of love to God, and love to our fellow-men? Or, have we faith in Christ? Are we at peace with God through the blood of the cross? Do we worship God in spirit and in truth? Or spiritually and sincerely? Is . . .

sin our burden,

holiness our delight, and

conformity to Christ our constant aim?

If not, we must rank among the wicked! We are God's enemies — if we have not been reconciled to him by the death of his Son. We are afar off from God — if we have not been brought near by the blood of Christ. We are yet in our sins — if Christ is not formed in our hearts as the hope of glory. Fearful case this! Alarming condition! The passage sets before us the dreadful doom of such. God will treat all such as he did Sodom and Gomorrah. He will rain snares upon them, fire and brimstone and a horrible tempest — this shall be the portion of their cup. The punishment of the wicked is from God. He who now bears with them — will fearfully punish them. The punishment of sinners will be sudden. It will come down upon them unexpectedly. They will perhaps die in a stupor — and leave the world like lambs. But in a moment, the storm of God's just and holy wrath, will come down upon them! The character of their punishment is terrible! Think . . .

of a storm of fire and brimstone,

of being taken and held fast in a snare, like the wild beast of the forest,

of being eternally exposed to a horrible tempest, without relief,

of a spirit of terror and alarm seizing upon you, taking possession of you, and holding you under its power and influence forever! The designation is fearful. "This shall be the portion of their cup!" This is all they will ever have. This they will suffer forever. This is their just, equitable, and eternal portion!

O what a terrible prospect lies before the sinner! Before every sinner who lives and dies in his sins!

Reader! I beseech you look well to your state. Examine closely into your conduct, and into the state of your heart. Do not trifle with your soul, with eternity, with your God! Your prospect is dreadful — if you die in your sins.

Here is the reason assigned for the punishment of the wicked. "The righteous Lord loves righteousness." He does not love to punish. He finds no pleasure in our sufferings. But he loves to do what is right. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of his throne. He will not show mercy — unless he can do it justly. He must to render to every one, his right. In Hell, the sinner only receives the due reward of his deeds. There is no passion in God — he only punishes because it is right. There is no fury in the Most High God — he maintains his dignity as much in punishing the offender, as in glorifying the just. He harbors no revenge in his bosom — but he will reward every one according to his works.

Hell is the manifestation of the calm, dignified, holy, righteousness of God. He does not delight in wrath — but he will not acquit the wicked. He will be just to every one of his creatures — and

equally just to himself. He will be true to the threatenings of his word — and true to his character as the faithful God. His conduct in punishing the guilty, will be consistent with his nature, his law, and the demands of impartial justice. Every mouth will be stopped. Every complainer will be silenced. Those who are punished most severely — will clearly see that they suffer only what they deserved; and that God would not be just — if he were to punish them less. Whatever a man sows in this world — he shall certainly reap in the next. Those who slight, neglect, or despise God's mercy in time — shall have judgment without mercy in eternity!

Sinner, is not this dreadful? As you love your soul, as you would escape the wrath to come — I beseech you to consider seriously this solemn subject. Prepare to meet your God! You must soon stand before him. And being thus warned, you cannot justly say that you were taken by surprise. However, pursue whatever course you will, God's mind is made up. He has said, "The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God." He will not call back his word. His methods are wise and holy. He now gives you space to repent. He spares you at present — but he will not do so always. When once the door of mercy is shut — it is shut forever! In vain then will you knock for entrance, in vain will you cry for pardon!

Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." The Lord warns you now, that he may spare you at the great day; and his word says, "He who takes warning shall deliver his soul." He will certainly fulfill his word:

his promise, if you seek him;

his threatening, if you despise him.

See then, that you refuse not him who speaks; for if they escaped not who refused him who spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaks from Heaven.

## 09 The Redeemer's Design

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### The Redeemer's Design

"Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust — that he might bring us to God." 1 Peter 3:18 Every sinner is unjust. He has not rendered unto God his due. He has not answered the end of his creation. His thoughts of God have been unjust. His conduct toward God has been unjust. His conversation about God has been unjust — he has not spoken of God that which is right. This is true of us all. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

We have sinned against our fellow men, and have been unjust toward them; but our greatest sins have been against God. We deserve his wrath. Our sins have aroused his displeasure. The consequence of our sins, if things had been allowed to take their course — would have been dreadful. Our condition must have been awful — if Jesus had not intervened for us. But he voluntarily undertook the sinner's cause. He came into our world to be the sinner's Substitute. He .

..

assumed our nature,

took our place,

was charged with our sins,

suffered in our stead,

and died in our place.

"Christ has once suffered for sins." His sufferings were unparalleled.

He suffered the most painful privations. He was the only-begotten Son of God. He had existed with the Father, in the possession and enjoyment of inconceivable happiness and glory. But he left that state. He gave up that blessedness. He came into the world. He was the son of a poor woman. He grew up among poor children. He learned and worked at the trade of a carpenter. He spent thirty years in poverty and seclusion. When he commenced his ministry he was dependant on his followers for temporal supplies. He testified himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests — but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." He experienced hunger, thirst, cold and weariness.

He suffered also from the violent, long-continued, and base temptations of Satan. For forty days at one time — without rest, food, or fellowship with man — he was plied with every powerful solicitation to evil, which Satan could invent. At the close of his life below, all the powers of Hell appear to have been let loose upon him, he endured, he suffered, he overcame all their arts and influences.

He suffered from shame and reproach. The slanders of his enemies, the reflections upon his Heavenly Father, and the contempt with which they treated him . . .

went to his heart,  
wounded his spirit,

and oppressed his soul. At length he cried out, "Reproach has broken my heart: the reproaches of those who reproached you, have fallen upon me."

He suffered the greatest agony of mind. When sin was laid upon him. When the cup of wrath was presented to him. When the sword of divine justice was drawn against him. When his Father frowned on him as the sinner's Representative — he was in an agony. His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. He was agitated beyond expression. His spirits were in a fearful storm. The blood oozed through his skin, and fell in large drops to the ground. His sufferings were then unspeakably great, inconceivably dreadful! In addition to the sorrows of his soul, he endured the greatest pain of body. He was dragged about from place to place in chains. He was struck by the hands of his crude and unfeeling creatures. He was crowned with thorns, which were forced into his temples. He was scourged with thongs and knotted wire. He was compelled to carry the heavy cross. His hands and feet were nailed to it. It was thrust into its socket with such violence, that his bones were dislocated. He hung suspended on that cross for six hours. His father hid his face from him. His enemies railed at him. Satan and his host assaulted him. The sorrows of death compassed him, the pains of Hell got hold upon him. At length,

having suffered the due desert of our crimes,

having emptied the cup of wrath,

having fulfilled all that was written of him in the Old Testament,

having made a full atonement for our sins,

having satisfied divine justice, and

having procured eternal salvation for all who shall believe in him

— he resigned his spirit into his Father's hand.

Never were any sufferings, like the sufferings of Jesus!

The purity of his nature,

the tenderness of his sensibilities,

the character he sustained, and

the hand from which those sufferings came

— all served to increase their acuteness! His sufferings were penal — the punishment of sin.

They were substitutionary — for our sins.

They were satisfactory — he suffered but once. There was no need of repetition, for now God can be just — and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.

"Christ has once suffered for sins — the just for the unjust." Jesus was just. The Just One. He did no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. But he took the place of the unjust. He became answerable for them.

"Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust — that he might bring us to God." The design he had in view, was "that he might bring us to God." We are all afar off. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Justice appeared to forbid our return to God — he therefore undertook to satisfy justice, and by so doing remove every legal impediment out of the way. He engaged to bring us back, he being our Shepherd and we his wandering sheep: therefore he bore our sins, endured the punishment of them, and made satisfaction for them in his own body on the tree. Jesus suffered to bring us to God, who is now seated on a throne of grace.

Reader, the design of the sufferings and death of Jesus was . . .

that we might be accepted of God,

that all our sins may be instantly pardoned,

that we confessing our sins, and pleading what he did and suffered — might be justified, and be treated as though we had never sinned,

that our God may call us his dear children, and indulge us as such, without compromising any of the principles of his government, or allowing any ground for reflection on his law.

What obedience was required of us — Jesus did.

What punishment we deserved — Jesus suffered.

What we need to reconcile us to God — Jesus procured.

What he procured — he now presents to us. The voice of the gospel to the sinner is, "Come unto God." My dear friend, your God is willing to receive you. He bids you come boldly to his throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help you in time of need.

If your sins stare you in the face,

if the thoughts of God's justice discourage you,

if conscience accuses you,

if Satan suggests that there is no mercy for you,

if ten thousand fears and doubts harass you —

turn from the whole to this precious truth, "Jesus has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Do you feel that you are unjust? It was for such he suffered. Do you see that your sins are numberless, and feel them to be a great burden? Remember that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Therefore he is able also to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them. Go to God by Jesus, that is, depending on his sacrifice and death, pleading his precious name, expecting to be accepted for his sake — and your God will receive you and grant you his blessing. Our God has a

throne of glory — and Jesus will bring us to that. He brings us to the throne of grace as sinners — to be pardoned, accepted, and blessed: and he will bring us to the throne of glory as saints — to be filled with his love, satisfied from his fullness, and glorified with him forever.

Consider the conduct of Jesus, how noble! How vast his love! How deep his sympathy! How tender his compassion! How great his condescension!

Mark the cause of our return to God. The Shepherd dies — that his wandering sheep may be restored. The Savior suffers — that sinners may come to God, and arrive in glory with certainty, safety, and honor.

Observe the safety of the believer: Jesus has suffered for his sins; he died in his stead; and he now lives that he may be forever glorified. Let us keep this great truth daily before our minds, it will surely . . .

strengthen our faith,

weaken our fears,

encourage our hearts, and

give us courage against our foes!

## 10 Look and Live!

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Look and Live!

"Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."  
Isaiah 45:22 There are two extremes in God's universe — Heaven and Hell; and we appear to be situated between them.

There are two opposite states among God's intelligent creatures — sin and holiness; and we are in one of them. Holiness is the only preparation for Heaven, sin qualifies for Hell; a sinner could not be happy in Heaven, and a saint would have no comfort in Hell. But sinners, as such, cannot enter Heaven — nor shall saints ever enter Hell. The passage of scripture at the head of this piece, is addressed to lost sinners. It is addressed to us. Let us consider it with seriousness and prayer. Observe,

First, the object to be obtained—salvation. This may include deliverance from temporal evils and earthly troubles — but it principally refers to the salvation of the soul.

Salvation is deliverance from the dominion of SIN. We are by nature under sin's power. It rules and reigns in our hearts. Like a tyrannical usurper, sin sways its scepter over all our faculties:

the understanding is blinded,

the conscience is stupefied,

the affections are carnalized,

and the will is perverted!

Sin has the power of a law within us, and we all yield to its authority.

Now, from this we must be delivered, before we can . . .

serve God acceptably,

be happy on earth, or

prepared for Heaven.

Salvation is deliverance from the vassalage of SATAN. We are all led captive by him at his will. He works in all the children of disobedience. He has seized our persons. He keeps possession of us by artifice and power. We are his slaves. His temptations being adapted to our circumstances and constitutions — we naturally fall in with them. It is only for him to suggest — and we embrace; to solicit — and we obey. He leads us into sin, and in the way to Hell, by his devices. From the bondage of Satan, we must be emancipated.

Salvation is deliverance also from the WRATH OF GOD. This we deserve. Our sins have aroused it. We are threatened with it. Hell is but a display of God's righteous wrath. Perseverance in sin

increases it, therefore sinners are said to be "treasuring up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done." Romans 2:5-6.

Secondly, the direction given. "Look unto me, and be saved!" Look away from everything else:

from your own inward feelings, and from outward works;

from religious services, and personal sufferings.

Look through all ordinances and means — to Christ alone. They cannot deliver. If you trust in them — you are undone. Nothing can remove the guilt of sin — but the blood of Jesus. Nothing can destroy the power of sin — but the Holy Spirit. Look therefore through the bible you read, the religious services you attend, and the prayers you offer — to Jesus alone. He says, "Look unto me!" Fix the eye on him.

Look intently, as the beggar does on the benevolent person from whom he expects to receive alms.

Look in faith, or believing that he will be as good as his word, and do as he has said.

Look and expect a full salvation as a free gift. He confers it as a favor. He gives it without money and without price. He bestows it on all who look unto him. No one can have a better reason to expect it than you have. He says, "Look unto me and be saved."

Look unto him continually. However guilty you may feel. However depressed your mind may be. However you may be tempted, tried, and harassed. Let nothing keep you from looking to him.

Look to him for all that you need. For righteousness to justify you. For grace to sanctify you. For wisdom to guide you. For strength to enable you to do, or suffer the will of God.

All that you can possibly require is in him. All is included in the word, "salvation." Look unto him, as the poor suffering Israelites did unto the brazen serpent, which Moses placed on the pole in the midst of the camp. They were all commanded to look, and every one that looked, lived! You are commanded to look, and if you look you shall live forever.

Thirdly, the parties addressed. "All the ends of the earth." In Jerusalem Jesus was first lifted up, and every Jew that looked unto him received eternal life. But the blessing was not to be confined unto the Jews, for Jesus is for salvation unto the ends of the earth. The Gentiles therefore at the extremities of the world, are bidden to look and be saved. This reaches to us. We are the very people intended. We should conceive of this matter, as if God were personally addressing us. To us is the word of this salvation sent. The ends of the earth extend to the East, West, North, and South. It includes all. There is no exclusion. No previous qualifications are demanded. No conditions are required. It is simply, "Look and live!" "Believe and be saved." Whoever will, may come and receive this invaluable blessing freely. All are bidden, and all should look.

Reader, sin has placed you at the very mouth of Hell; one stroke — and you fall in and must perish forever! But lying as you do in this dangerous position, the Lord calls to you, he is addressing you at this moment, he says most distinctly; "Look unto me, and be saved." You need not perish, for I can save. Look unto me, and you shall not perish, for I will save you.

Fourthly, the encouragement held forth. "For I am God, and there is none else."

"I am God." I am able to save — for I am omnipotent. My eye can see you. My ear can hear you. My arm can reach you. My grace can change you.

There is no difficulty in the way. I can save you with ease and with certainty. I will save you with pleasure, and rejoice in your deliverance.

"I am God," and have authority to save you, and to warrant you to look to me, and to be saved by looking. You are my creature. It is my law that you have broken. It is my justice that you have injured. It is against my government that you have rebelled. But I declare unto you, that if you will look unto me — that I will certainly save you.

"I am God," and I have wisdom to direct you; therefore listen not to Satan. Yield not to unbelief. Stagger not at the simplicity of the means. "I, the only wise God, say to you, my poor, sinful, foolish creature — that if you look unto me as I direct, you shall not perish — but shall have everlasting life."

"I am God," and this may answer for my sincerity. I am the God of truth. I mean what I say. My words are truth, and they are firmer than the pillars of Heaven. Heaven and earth may pass away — but my word shall not pass away. Can you not believe, when your God speaks? Will you not obey, when your God directs?

Ought you not to expect, when your God promises.

"There is none else" who can save you, therefore look unto me. My dear Reader, see the folly of looking anywhere, or to anything for salvation — but the Lord. He says, "I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Savior." See also the impropriety of laying down conditions of salvation, for unless you call the direction to look, a condition — there is none. It is simply, "Look unto Jesus, and be saved."

Fix your mind on the simplicity of the gospel method. How much like all God's works and ways. Here is nothing complex or difficult. It is simply, Look and live.

Observe also, the nature of unbelief. It is refusing to believe God's promise, and to obey God's direction. It is turning away the eye from him to someone, or to something else. He complains, "You have turned to me your back, and not your face."

What vast encouragement is here given to sinners — to every sinner who reads or hears this passage. And what an aggravation must it be to the torments of the lost, to think that by looking they might have been saved — but they would not! May this never be our painful reflection! To prevent it, let us look to Jesus; let us look and expect a cure; let us look until we are made whole and happy. Look and live is God's merciful direction!

## 11 The Character of God

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The Character of God "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy." Psalms 145:8

Nothing is more common than mistakes respecting the character of God. There are some who imagine him to be all mercy — and conclude that he will not punish sin as his word declares. Others look upon him as so stern and severe — that he will not pardon sinners as his gospel affirms. Both these views are wrong — but it is against the latter that this piece is directed.

Jehovah is Gracious. Grace is favor — favor shown to the vile and unworthy. The Lord is gracious to sinners. He shows himself favorable to them in a thousand forms. He showers down favors upon them. Favors the most costly, suitable, and enduring. That he is gracious, appears from his ancient thoughts. He has been thinking of sinners from eternity. Not how he may punish them for their sins — but how he may save them consistently with his character as a righteous God. His thoughts toward us have been peaceful. They arose in his heart, and correspond with his excellent nature, which is holiness, justice, and love. His graciousness shines also in his perfect plans. The plan of redemption, according to which he saves sinners freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The plan of his providence, according to which he provides for all his creatures, especially for those who seek his face and his favor. That he is gracious, is clear from the glorious provision which he has made for our pardon, peace, purity, and perfection. By the sacrifice of his Son, by the gift of his Spirit, and by the inspiration of his word — he has provided for our complete and everlasting deliverance from all evils, and for our introduction to the enjoyment of all that is good!

How gracious are his free invitations! Directed to sinners. To every sinner that hears his gospel. All are invited to come, to receive, and to enjoy the blessings of grace. They are unconditional. They are free for the vilest! They are sent to the reader of these lines, yes, my friend, the Lord says to you, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." But his amazing communications especially prove him to be gracious. He has given to millions. He has given the richest blessings — to the poorest sinners. He has never refused an applicant. He has always given . . .

pardon, to the guilty;

peace, to the troubled;

strength to the weak;

righteousness, to the ungodly;

and salvation, to the lost! No one ever sought him in vain. No one ever will.

Reader, God is gracious! He has the grace which you need. He will be favorable unto you, if you seek him. He will receive you graciously. He will bless you with all spiritual blessings. He will deliver you from all your fears, and confer upon you all that you can consistently desire.

Jehovah is full of compassion. His compassion is like his nature, it is infinite. It is impossible for a finite mind, even to guess at the extent of his infinite compassion. His compassions never fail. They are as tender, as strong, and as abundant as ever.

Compassion is for sufferers. Are you suffering from sin? Does its guilt oppress you? Does its powerful workings distress you? Go to the Lord in prayer, he will have compassion upon you. He will remove your guilt, by applying the atonement. He will relieve your distress, by enabling you to conquer? He can sympathize with you. He will. Are you suffering from Satan? Does he harass your mind? Does he paint alarming figures on your imagination? Does he distress you with wicked thoughts and vile suggestions? Carry the matter to the Lord? He will rebuke the enemy. He will set you at liberty. He will enable you to overcome him, by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his grace. Are you suffering from unbelief? Do you feel as if you would believe — but cannot? As if you could believe anything but the glorious promises of the gospel? They are so great and so good, that you imagine they cannot be for you. But they are for you. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners — and you are a sinner. God gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not perish — but have everlasting life. Only believe — and eternal life is yours. But you say, "I cannot." Then go and spread your case before the Lord on his throne. He is full of compassion. He will hear you. He will give you faith. By the power of his Spirit, he will enable you to believe unto the saving of the soul. Are you suffering from providence? Does it strip you, or try you in almost every possible way? Still the compassion of your God is infinite, and the dispensations of his providence, should drive you to the provisions of his grace. His promises are for your support. His throne of grace is for you to pour out your heart before him. Fly to that throne. Plead those promises. Appeal to his compassion. Expect and wait for his intervention — and he will bless you indeed. Are you suffering from the world? Its snares? Its persecutions? In Jesus, you are promised peace. In the compassion of your God you will find solace, refreshment, and relief. He will show compassion. He will have compassion like a God.

Jehovah is backward to punish sinners. "Slow to anger." He is angry only with sin — but he is always angry with sin. Yet he is slow to show it. Mercy flies like lightning — but wrath has leaden feet. Because he is slow to anger, he . . .

warns the hardened sinner,

rebukes the daring offender,

threatens the presumptuous transgressor,

invites the careless prodigal,

expostulates with the thoughtless creature, and

uses one means after another to bring them to his feet.

He could crush them in a moment — for his power is omnipotent. He might justly hurl them into Hell — for their transgressions are of a most aggravated character. But he spares. He reasons with them. He gives them space to repent. He says, "Repent and turn from your evil ways, so iniquity shall not be your ruin!"

He is justly angry. Justice fans his anger — but mercy cools it. He is always ready to bless.

Jehovah is of great mercy. This he shows to great sinners. It shines in their salvation. It appears also in the messages he sends them; in the manner in which he receives them when they turn and seek his face; in the means he uses with them; in the favors he confers upon them; and in the height of glory to which he raises them.

He is great in mercy. It is boundless. It is as free — as it is vast. Never does Jehovah appear more glorious, than when he is showing great mercy to great transgressors. He shows mercy like a God — in a god-like way.

Sinner, this is your refuge. It is open. It is strong. The Most High Jehovah is gracious — apply to him for grace.

He is full of compassion — go to him for sympathy.

He is slow to anger — fear not that he will drive you from his throne.

He is of great mercy — expect him to glorify it in your complete salvation. This is the great aggravation of our sin, that it is committed against such a God — a God so good, so gracious, so full of compassion, of such great mercy. O to see sin as God sees it, and to hate it as God hates it!

## 12 How Will it End?

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### How Will it End?

"For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" 1 Peter 4:17 The reception of the gospel involves a solemn responsibility. It is sent from God. It is intended not only to inform the judgment — but to demand the obedience of the heart. It requires not only attention — but submission. It commands all men, everywhere to repent.

It says: think again — for you have been thinking wrong. Your thoughts of God, of sin, of salvation, and of yourself — have been wrong; and therefore your feelings and your conduct have been wrong.

Think seriously — until you mourn heartily. Mourn over your sins, until you hate them, and loathe yourself on account of them. Nourish hatred to sin, until you carefully watch against it, and practically turn from it. The gospel commands you to believe. This is God's commandment, that you should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. This is the Savior's exhortation, "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the children of light." John 12:36. This is the complaint of some ministers, "They have not obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report." So that to obey the gospel is to believe it. Not only to credit its statements — but to embrace its promises, accept its provision, and walk by its precepts. The gospel requires us to confess the Savior, as it is written, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead — you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9-10. The gospel therefore requires every person who hears or reads it — to repent of sin, to believe in the Lord Jesus, and to profess his holy name. But how many there are who do not obey the gospel. They hear it. They profess to respect it. They tell you that they believe it. But they refuse to mourn for their sins. Indeed, they do not believe that they are in that fearful condition, in which it represents them. They have never spent one quarter of an hour in mourning because they have sinned against God. They do not love his law, and therefore they do not grieve that they have broken it. They do not regard his authority, and therefore they do not weep over their rebellion against it. They reject the Savior. At the least, they make light of his invitations, and go on just as if he had never sent them. They despise his threatenings, and act as if they had never heard of them. He is to them as a root out of a dry ground — in him they see no beauty to desire. They despise a profession of his name, and refuse to render obedience to his precepts.

Reader, has this been your case? Are you a penitent at the feet of Jesus? Do you embrace his promises, and place confidence in his finished work? Do you profess his name, and walk in his ways? Or, are you walking according to the course of this world? Are you satisfied with being as good as your neighbors? Are you at ease in a course of sin?

If so, seriously consider this solemn question, "What shall the end be? God will not have his gospel trifled with. The gospel is . . .

the offspring of his wisdom,

the proof of his grace, and

the kindest message he ever sent to his creatures!

If you slight the gospel — then you insult the author of it; and you cannot do this with impunity. Our God is a jealous God, and he will not hold you guiltless — if you trifle with his mercy. He may bear long with sinners — but he will not always bear with them. The day of vengeance is in his heart. The time will come, when judgment will begin. The end is coming. It is near. It may be very near to you.

"What shall your end be?" Ponder this question well. Dwell upon it. Prepare an answer to it.

What will death be to you? The end of all the means of grace. The end of all opportunity to escape. The end of all your false hopes. The end of all delusions. Oh! it is to many a fearful end.

What will the judgment be? The end of all vain excuses. The end of all false reasoning. Every covering will then be stripped off. Every excuse will then be exposed. Every soul will stand naked before God. What an end! What an awful end to many!

What will eternity be to such? Existence will never end. But hope will — comfort will — peace will — pleasure will.

Reader, if you die disobeying the gospel of Christ, you will eternally exist in a state of thought, without diversion. You will be full of gloomy, harassing, self-condemning, tormenting thoughts. Ever thinking — but not one pleasant thought will find a resting place in your bosom! Your thoughts will be occupied with the gospel you rejected, the mercy you slighted, the salvation you refused, the folly you displayed, and the Heaven you have lost.

It will be in a state of passion, without gratification. All your passions will be in full and powerful play. But they will be only like so many scorpions stinging you, or whips lashing you, or enemies tormenting you.

It will be a state of society, without friendship. Millions there — but all are enemies. Enemies to God and enemies to each other. Enemies maddened by despair. Enemies accusing, condemning, and eternally tormenting each other! No pity will ever be manifested. No sympathy will ever be displayed. O horrible company! The devil and his angels, with millions of lost souls suffering under the curse of God, and the weight of his just wrath!

It will be a state of enmity, without restraint. Enmity will . . .

be enthroned in every heart,

appear in every countenance,

speak with every tongue,

and break forth in every action! The sinner who has been his own enemy, and the enemy of God — will then be the enemy of all by whom he is surrounded!

It will be a state of accountableness without excuse. Each will feel that he was accountable — and is accountable. That God was infinitely merciful in time — and is only just now. That there is not the shadow of an excuse for the manner in which he . . .

treated the gospel,  
squandered his time,  
prostituted his talents,  
defied his God, and  
ruined his soul.

It will be a state of retribution, without mercy. The soul is only reaping in eternity — what it sowed in time. Every pang felt, every torture endured, and every despairing reflection indulged — has sin for its root! God is only rendering to man the due desert of his sins. Thus he must suffer — or God would not be just.

It will be a state of misery, without end. The worm that gnaws the vitals — never dies; the fire that consumes the comforts, is never quenched. The sinner is . . .

in a circle — around which he will ever travel;  
in a prison — from which there is no redemption;  
in a lake — which is without bottom or landing place;  
in a state of existence — which will never terminate or change!

O dreadful! O alarming prospect!

Dear reader, contrast what has been so faintly set forth — with your present happy circumstances. Millions are now in that dreadful state. For them there is no hope. To them, no message of mercy is sent. All is darkness, death, and black despair! But you have the gospel still. To you, is the word of God's salvation sent. Before you, the door of eternal life stands wide open. For you, the cleansing fountain is open, and the throne of grace is accessible.

Contrast the end of the lost — with the end of the Christian. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." In peace with God he lives. In peace with God and man he dies, and into peace he enters Heaven. He goes . . .

to the God he loves,  
to the place he desires,  
to the company he enjoys,  
to the employment he approves, and

to the pleasures which fill him with perfect satisfaction! And now consider the question and make up your mind about the answer. What will your end be — if you obey not the gospel of Christ? Ah! if you had an angel's powers — you could not describe it. It must be endured to be known; and it must be merited to be endured.

Flee from the wrath to come. Flee this moment. Flee from sin, from self, from Satan — and flee to Jesus, who says, "Him that comes unto me, I will never cast out." Now he will receive you graciously, pardon you freely, and save you for evermore; but by and by, he will say, "Depart from me into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Do not dare his justice — nor trifle not with his wrath!

## 13 The Fearful Encouraged

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The Fearful Encouraged "Is My hand so shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?" Isaiah 50:2

These words are an appeal to the discouraged, or the desponding. Many people give way to discouraging thoughts, and then the gloom of despondency spreads over their minds. However deeply we may feel, we should not give way to discouragement; much less yield to despondency. The gospel always bids the sinner to hope in God. The case may be trying — but it is not desperate. The condition of the soul may be alarming — but it is not hopeless. There is a remedy. A remedy which if applied, will reach the case. Man may be unable to help — but God can; what is too hard for the creature, the Creator can do with ease.

Perhaps you have recently been convinced of sin. You see the sinfulness of your past life as you never saw it before. You have sinned against light, against warnings, against the convictions of conscience, against solemn purposes which you had formed. Your whole life now appears to be a course of sin. You see that there is no excuse. You feel that guilty. You are condemned. You are ashamed to look up. Something within whispers, "It is all over. It is no use for you to try. There is no hope for you. The Lord has given you up. He will not show mercy to you!" You think this is probably the case. You are depressed and dejected. You feel that you are giving way to melancholy. To you the Lord speaks, to you he appeals, he asks, "Is My hand so shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?" I have saved such as you are. Can I not save such now? Why cannot I save you? But perhaps you are saying, "It is not so much the past — as the present. It is the present state of my heart that discourages me. It is so hard, it is like the adamant, harder than the flint. It is so cold and insensible, that scarcely anything makes an impression upon it. It is so fickle and unsettled — it roves from thing to thing, and wanders from object to object, nothing that is good seems to have power to attract and fix it. And what is worse than all, there is still a lingering attachment to some of my old sinful customs and courses. Surely no one ever found mercy of the Lord, who was just in my case! All the past is sinful, all the present is impure. If I look back — the sins of a whole life rise up against me! And if I look within — all is hard, cold, dark, and wandering! For me surely there can be no help in God. I dread the wrath of a just and holy God. I tremble at the very thought of appearing before him in judgment, which I shortly must. I am filled with the most painful doubts, and harassed with the most tormenting fears. Can there be hope for me?"

It is of you that Jehovah asks, "Is My hand so shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?" God asks you, "What do you think of me? What do you think of my power — is it omnipotent? What do you think of my mercy — is it infinite? What do you think of my word — is it true? Do you think that I have never saved such a sinner as you are? Or that if I have not — it is because I cannot? Would you limit my saving power, or my redeeming mercy? Do you think that I cannot redeem you from Satan — who has led you captive at his will? Or from sin — which has so long had dominion over you? Or from that Hell — which you have so richly deserved? What is

Satan — but one of your fellow-creatures? What is sin — but the transgression of my law, for which my Son has made an infinite atonement? What is Hell — but the expression of my wrath, the prison where impenitent transgressors are bound? Have I no power to deliver you . . .

from the guilt which burdens you,

from the fears which torment you,

from the unbelief which oppresses you,

from the danger which threatens you?" My friend, God can deliver you! He can deliver you with the utmost ease. There is nothing uncommon in your case. All you feel, is the natural effect of conviction, working in a mind not enlightened by the gospel. The power of God is unlimited. He can redeem you. He brought David up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. He delivered Jonah from the belly of Hell, when he cried. He will also deliver you. As vast as his power is — his love is equal to his power. His mercy is tender beyond description or comparison. It is mercy that speaks to you now, that appeals to you in this striking manner, that asks "Is My hand so shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?"

Beware how you limit the mercy of God, it is sinful to do so. Beware how you put the good news which the gospel brings, away from you. Rather plead with him as the Psalmist did, and say, "Remember, O Lord, your tender mercies and your loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to your mercy remember you me, for your goodness sake, O Lord. For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity — for it is great! Turn you unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; O bring you me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins." Psalms 25:1-22. Endeavor to take into your mind such views of God as he did, and let your thoughts dwell upon them. He says, "You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all those who call upon You. You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth!" Psalms 86:5-15.

These are the views you should take of the divine character. It is thus that God reveals himself to you. What cannot such a God do? To what may not his mercy extend? Who may not apply with hope? Hope, therefore in the Lord, for "with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." Psalms 130:7. But the appeal is just as applicable to a tried Christian, as to a desponding sinner, and such an one may read these pages. Beloved, it may be, that . . .

your foes are many and violent,

your trials are great and varied,

your burdens are heavy and oppressive,

your way is rough and dreary,

your heart is weak and fearful,

your faith is feeble and wavering,

your fears are many and painful,

your prospects are gloomy and trying,

and your heart sinks within you! You are ready to say, "All these things are against me!"

Now in these circumstances the Lord speaks to you, and he puts the question to your conscience: "Is My hand so shortened that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?"

You have read in my word what wonders I wrought of old, and for whom I wrought them. Now cannot I do again, what I have done once? Is my arm shortened that it cannot reach you? or weakened that it cannot defend, extricate, or deliver you? Because you are in trouble — must I have changed? "I am Jehovah, I do not change — therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed!"

Beloved, carry your trials to your God, cast your burdens upon him, appeal to his mercy, seek grace from him, and endeavor to exercise faith in his word. He can deliver you. He will deliver you. Yield not then to despondency — but rest on the simple, certain promises of his word. Your dejection will discourage others, and it dishonors your gracious God. Try you he will — desert you he never will. Your principles shall be put to the proof — but his promises shall all be made good. Look away therefore from all that depresses you, and look to the arm of your God. That can support you — and it will. It can rescue you, and your God will stretch it out for your deliverance. Never give way to despondency, or yield to despair, until you have good reason to conclude, that you are beyond the reach of the arm of God, or that he has no power to deliver you. Until then, trust in him at all times, and you will find him a refuge for you.

## 14 The Joyful Sound

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### The Joyful Sound

"Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound! They shall walk O Lord, in the light of your countenance!" Psalms 89:15 The allusion is to the trumpet of the Jubilee. Every fiftieth year this trumpet was blown, proclaiming liberty, restoration to forfeited property, and the full enjoyment of religious privileges. It prefigured and set forth the gospel, which is the most joyful sound ever heard by the ears of man. The gospel preacher is like a trumpeter, who publishes peace, pardon, reconciliation to God, and everlasting salvation. The prophet alludes to this when he says, "And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt — will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem." Isaiah 27:13. The gospel is a joyful sound — a joyful sound to sinners. To them it is suitable, for them it is intended.

It proclaims a release from slavery. We are all the slaves of sin and Satan. But now every one who believes in Jesus — is delivered from sin, and rescued from the power of Satan. Sin has no power or dominion over him. Satan cannot lead him captive at his will. The chains which bound him, are broken. He is sent out free.

It publishes a full discharge from all debts and demands. Sin is represented by a debt, as it lays us under the most solemn and awful obligation. Justice has a demand upon us. A demand which we can never meet. The law says, "Pay — or perish!" But the gospel assures us that Jesus has met and discharged all demands, so that every one that believes in him is justified from all things. All his debts are paid. All obligation to punishment is done away; and the believer is, in reference to his state — as though he had never violated the law, or merited the displeasure of God.

It assures us of a hearty welcome to the mercy-seat! There we may go and confess our sins, and obtain a pardon. There we may present our supplications and receive answers of peace. There we may bring our needs, and have them all supplied. God is on a throne of grace. He invites sinners, the vilest sinners to him. He bids them come boldly, that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. The gospel informs us that Paradise is regained, that our forfeited inheritance shall be restored. That there is . . .

rest for the weary soul,

solace for the dejected spirit,

comfort for the troubled and cast down, and

life — everlasting life, for all who are willing to receive it!

Precious gospel! Glorious glad tidings! Blessed be God for the joyful sound! It just suits our case. It

. . .

banishes our fears,

nourishes our hopes,  
brightens our prospects,  
anticipates our needs, and  
bids us to rejoice and be exceeding glad!

Dear reader, in this precious gospel, you will find . . .

all that you need;

all that you can desire;

enough to meet your case — be it ever so sad;

enough to cheer your heart — be it ever so gloomy;

enough to fill you with all joy and peace in believing.

"Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!"

They have heard it with seriousness and attention;

they have understood it as a message from God, to his poor, depraved, and rebellious creatures;

they have believed it, as worthy of their confidence, and demanding their credit;

they have approved of it, as just suited to their case, and adapted to make them both holy and happy;

they can distinguish between its free grace melody, and the hoarse legal notes of the law, or the flesh pleasing sound of human systems;

and they have acted upon it, as the rule of their faith and practice. Does it invite them to Jesus? To Jesus they go. Does it bid them come just as they are? They go without any preparation. Does it promise them pardon, peace, and eternal life? They expect these invaluable blessings, not because they in any sense deserve them — but because God has graciously promised them. Does it command them to renounce their own righteousness, and cease from trying to procure one by their own endeavors, and submit to receive, plead, and be accepted in the righteousness which God devised and Jesus wrought? They renounce all their own imagined goodness, they leave off at once, and forever attempting to recommend themselves to God by anything of their own, and gladly accept and heartily depend on the finished work of Jesus. In a word, does it require them to become little children, to look for everything in Christ, and be nothing, that he may be all in all? They readily sit down at his feet, look to him as the great mediator of salvation, and receive him as their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Reader, can you in these lines trace your own experience? Do you know the joyful sound? Do you look simply to Jesus for pardon, peace, righteousness, strength, and life eternal? Have you found peace in Jesus? Have you returned to your Father's bosom, and are you enjoying a Father's love?

"Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound." Yes, and they alone are blessed. All beside are under the curse. Many have never heard it; and many who have heard it have not embraced it.

They have made light of it, and so have increased their condemnation. But all who really know it, are truly blessed. Slavish fear is done away. They no longer view God as an angry judge — but they look upon him as a loving Father; they do not fear his wrath — but believe his love; they do not flee from him as a foe — but approach him as a friend. God smiles upon them. They enjoy the light of his reconciled countenance. His smile creates a present Heaven. A holy, elevating, transforming light shines upon them. God shines into their hearts, and gives the gladdening knowledge of his glory in the person of Jesus Christ. They walk unfettered in the way of peace. They walk with sanctified people, and with God himself. They press on toward the prize of their high calling. They travel homewards every hour of the day. They have a degree of solid happiness now, and they are anticipating full, complete, and perpetual happiness in a brighter and better world!

Reader, such is the gospel. It is good news for the vilest of men. It is glad tidings for the chief of sinners. It is a joyful sound, sufficient to make the most miserable happy, and the most wretched contented. Do you know it? Do you live under its influence? Does it cheer and gladden your heart in your present affliction?

Such also is the true believer's privilege. Do you enjoy it? Are you walking in the light of the Lord's countenance? Those who thus walk below, shall assuredly walk in the light of God's countenance above. Here we walk in the light of grace, there we shall walk in the light of glory. Grace and glory are essentially the same — they differ only in degree. O to know more of this precious gospel, and to walk more constantly in the light of God's countenance!

## 15 The Grand Object!

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The Grand Object!

"Lay hold on eternal life!"<sup>1</sup> Timothy 6:12 Who does not wish to live? Life is generally prized — it is the last thing we are willing to part with. There may be a few, who are so worn down by affliction and sorrow — that they may long for death. And there are a few, who are at times so filled with the love of God, and are so desirous of being with Christ — that they long to leave this world. But these are exceptions — most people value life. Who does not wish to live forever? We naturally shrink from the idea of annihilation. It is dreadful. But who would not wish to live forever in the possession of wealth, and in the enjoyment of happiness. This is the object set before us by the Apostle in this brief word of exhortation, "Lay hold on eternal life!" That is, lay hold of . . .

eternal felicity,

endless pleasure,

everlasting blessedness!

Eternal life is life beyond sickness, for "the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick."

It is life beyond pain, for "there shall be no more pain."

It is life beyond sorrow, for "sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

It is life beyond death, "neither can they die any more."

It is life in absolute perfection — or life in the enjoyment of . . .

perfect holiness,

perfect knowledge,

perfect love,

perfect liberty,

perfect peace and joy.

It is eternal existence in the presence of God, in whose favor is life, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

It is eternal life with Jesus, who is the center and source of light, holiness, and love.

It is eternal life among the greatest minds, the most lovely characters, who exist in the most glorious manner. This blessedness, is set before us as a prize to be won, as a crown to be obtained. It is held out before us by the gracious hand of God . . .

to attract our attention,

to inspire us with courage,

and to stimulate us to diligence. But it is in vain that we attempt to set forth the full excellency of eternal life! It includes . . .

all that God can confer upon us,

all that we can possibly enjoy, and

more than we can at present conceive or imagine! "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined — what God has prepared for those who love him!" 1 Corinthians 2:9 Let us consider the exhortation that is addressed to us, "Lay hold on eternal life." But how can we do this?

There is the doctrine of eternal life, as made known by Jesus — lay hold on that. We read that on one occasion Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him: Lord, to whom shall we go? you have the words of eternal life."

There is the promise of eternal life — lay hold on that. "This is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life." "God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son," "Truly, truly, I say unto you, He who believes on me has everlasting life."

There is the invitation of eternal life — lay hold on that. "If any man thirsts, let him come unto me, and drink. Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."

There is the exhortation of eternal life, lay hold on that, "Labor not for the food which perishes, but for that food which endures unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you."

There is Christ himself, who is "the way, the truth, and the life" — lay hold on him. He is God's unspeakable gift. He comes to you in the gospel, as he came to the Jews in the days of his flesh. He presents himself to you, and he must be either received or rejected. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Eternal life is thus set before you in the gospel. It is brought near to you. Lay hold on it. In order to this, read the word which brings it to light and presents it to you, with care, with attention, and with prayer. Think of it. No subject is of equal importance. It demands your most devout consideration. Believe the testimony: "This is the record," or testimony, "that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Receive this testimony into your mind. Give credit to it. Exercise confidence in it. Embrace it. Desire the blessing. For this purpose it is revealed and promised.

Read seriously, think deeply, believe heartily, and desire earnestly.

Pray for it. God will give it. It is the greatest thing he can give — and he will give it to every one who heartily seeks it. Set your heart upon it, let nothing divert your mind from it. Give up every thing for it. It contains in itself, more than everything besides.

Let your thoughts then dwell on eternal life, let your desires go out after eternal life, let your prayers ascend in the name of Jesus for eternal life, set your heart upon obtaining eternal life, at once give up everything that stands in the way of eternal life.

Look at the man who runs in a race: he prepares himself, he engages, he commences at the time fixed, he perseveres, animated by the hope of being crowned with success. The prize and plaudits of the multitude, reward his diligence, self-denial and courage — let this be your example. "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever." 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

Reader, eternal life is set before you. It is set before you as attainable. It demands your serious, your immediate consideration. It is a distant — but a distinct object — an object worthy your attention. If you are to possess it, you must, according to the figure just made use of — run for it; you must strive for it. "Strive," said the Savior, "to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24-25. Will you possess it? Will you try for it? Or will you despise the Lord's counsel and reproofs. Be not so foolish. But begin at once, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness," and all other necessary things will be added unto you.

Beware of Satan — he will try to deceive you, he will endeavor to catch away the good seed out of your heart, lest you should believe and be saved. Beware of the world — for it will bewilder, confuse, and hinder you. Beware of a cowardly spirit — but think, pray, strive, persevere, pursue your object, fail not, cease not, rest not, until you can say "Eternal life is mine!"

Vain man, your fond pursuits forbear,

Repent — your end is nigh!

Death, at the farthest, is not far;

Oh, think, before you die!

Reflect — you have a soul to save,

Your sins — how high they mount!

What are your hopes beyond the grave

How stands that dread account?

Death enters, and there's no defense

His time, there's none can tell;

He'll in a moment call you hence

To Heaven — or to Hell! Your body, now your choicest care,

Corruption shall consume;

But ah! destruction stops not there,

Sin kills beyond the tomb!  
Today, the gospel calls; today,  
Sinner it speaks to you!  
Repent — believe — at its command,  
And life and Heaven pursue.  
Rich mercy through a Savior's blood,  
Jehovah will display;  
Abundant pardon, peace with God,  
Is offered you today!

## 16 The Sinner's Doom!

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### The Sinner's Doom!

"The wicked shall be turned into Hell — and all the nations that forget God." Psalms 9:17

Everything depends upon character. It generally does so in reference to this world — and it always does in reference to the next. As the man is — so is his doom. "The righteous Lord loves righteousness, but he hates the workers of iniquity." Psalms 5:5. The righteous and the wicked are essentially different characters. The whole world comprises no more than these two classes. Who are the WICKED? All who are in love with sin. Every human being who really loves sin, is wicked. He may not love every particular sin — but if he loves any one sin, and lives in the practice of it — he is wicked. A man may not swear — but if he lies, he is wicked. He may not get intoxicated — but if he lives in the neglect of religion — he is wicked. It is wicked to withhold the heart from God — to prefer sin to holiness. Every one who feels at home in the world — is wicked. Saints have always been as strangers and pilgrims here. They have found the world to be unsuitable to them, and have lived looking for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. If the world can satisfy us, if we prefer its employments and enjoyments, to the service and enjoyment of God — we are ranked among the wicked. If we are living afar off from God, strangers to his presence, and satisfied at a distance from him — we are wicked. But the text denounces "all the nations that forget God." This is true of the heathen — but we cannot confine it to them. There are many in our own country, who live in forgetfulness of God. This will include all the prayerless. They profess to believe that God is everywhere present, that his omniscient eye is upon them, that his ear is open to them, that his omnipotent power could in one moment crush them — and yet they lie down at night, rise in the morning, and pass through the day — without ever lifting up the heart to him. They are never affected with the thought: God is near me, he is listening to me, he expects me to worship him, he requires the homage of my heart — but they live and act as if there was no God! God is not in all their thoughts. All such will be turned into Hell.

It includes the faithless. All who have not saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Who do not give credit to, place confidence in, and conform their lives to the word of God. Such forget God, and all such shall be turned into Hell. Every unregenerate person, lives in forgetfulness of God. Such may be moral in their lives; they may be amiable in their tempers — but forgetting God, they will be turned into Hell. They may be in the bloom of youth, or they may be venerable through age; but forgetting God — they will be turned into Hell. They treat God with contempt, they despise his mercy. They are guilty — and have no title to Heaven. They are unholy — and have no fitness for Heaven. They have no right to go to Heaven, and they have no qualification for the enjoyments of Heaven. What will become of them? "The wicked shall be turned into Hell — and all the nations that forget God." Their residence for eternity is Hell.

What is Hell? No figure drawn from the things of earth can fully represent it. No human language can set it forth. It is that place where sinners torment each other, and are tormented for evermore. It is that place where sin is allowed to develop itself without any obstruction. The sinner carries all

the elements of Hell in his own heart; and in that dreadful place, where he will be forever confined — they will burst forth and rage with indescribable fury! But many things are employed to give us some idea of it.

Hell is a prison. A prison, where millions of prisoners are confined. A prison, from which every element of happiness is excluded, and in which all that can make a sinner wretched and miserable, is found.

Hell is darkness. Outer darkness. Worse than Egyptian darkness. Darkness that may be felt. Damp, depressing, murky darkness. Where no pleasing object can be seen. Into which no ray of hope can ever penetrate.

Hell is fire. Unquenchable fire. Devouring fire. A lake of fire and brimstone. A broad, deep, flaming lake, into which lost souls are cast, and in which they suffer "the vengeance of eternal fire;" from which they hopelessly exclaim, "I am tormented in this flame!" The conscience like a lively, gnawing, never-dying worm, inflicts the acutest pain! It lashes, condemns, and fills the soul with bitter reflections, and ever charges home its condemnation upon itself. In that fearful place, devils are the chief tormentors, the withering frown of God rests upon the guilty spirit, and bleak despair reigns over every power of the soul. "The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever!" Revelation 14:11.

Hell is a bottomless pit — in which the sinner is forever sinking; the prison house of despair — from which no prisoner can ever be liberated.

O Hell! who can describe your horrors!

O eternity! who can set forth your extent! In Hell, the wicked are punished for the sins of earth — they are tormented for the crimes of time. The torment is universal — affecting every power of the soul and every part of the body. The torment is uninterrupted — not one moment's ease, not the smallest alleviation can be known. The torment is eternal — as endless as the existence of God, as lasting as the immortal nature of man. This is "the wrath to come." This is "the damnation of Hell." This is "the wages of sin." This is the end of the sinners flowery path — the termination of that broad road along which such thousands crowd.

Flee then, beloved reader, "flee from the wrath to come!" Hasten your escape from this dreadful storm and tempest! "Escape for your life, look not behind you, tarry not in all the plain."

But, is there any NECESSITY that sinners should be turned into Hell? Yes, there is — if they live and die in sin.

God's holiness renders Hell necessary. They could not live in his presence. His holiness could not allow them to stand before him, and it would occasion the most terrible sufferings if it could.

God's justice renders Hell necessary. Justice must see that every creature has its due. It will render to every man according to his works. If impenitent sinners were not punished — God would cease to be just. His character would be injured. His government would be imperfect. Justice will see to it that every one has his right — and Hell is the sinners right. The law of God renders Hell necessary. That amiable transcript of the divine nature, that lovely requirement of the divine will, demands obedience or punishment. It must be obeyed — or the delinquent must be punished. To

the obedient it presents promises — but to the disobedient only threatening! "Sin is the transgression of the law." Hell is the penalty to be endured by transgressors. While God's law is holy, just, and good; and men are polluted, unrighteous, and wicked — punishment is rendered necessary.

God's veracity renders Hell necessary. He has threatened unrepentant sinners with Hell. His threatenings are plain, positive, often repeated, recorded in his book — and are known to angels, devils, and men. How can God be true, if the wicked are not turned into Hell — when he has solemnly and repeatedly said they shall be? "Has he said, and shall he not do it? Or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Heaven and earth may pass away — but his word shall never pass away until all is fulfilled.

Man's sin renders Hell necessary. Every man sins voluntarily, knowingly, obstinately, perseveringly. He sins because he will. He sins because he is a rebel against God. He sins because his heart is enmity against God. He sins in the light, with the consequences placed before his eyes, and by so doing dares the Most High to do his worst. Awful thought! What a fearful thing is sin! But is it necessary that sinners should be turned into Hell? No! NO. There is a way of escape. There is a path to Heaven. The way is plain. The entrance to it is near. It is open, every obstruction has been removed. Jesus is the way. His precious blood cleanses every penitent sinner from all sin. His righteousness justifies the believing transgressor from every charge. His word invites the vilest of our race to his throne, and promises acceptance there. His mercy is infinite. His compassion never fails!

He calls to the sinner who is hurrying to perdition, and says, "Come unto me." He expostulates with the impenitent — who appears bent upon destruction, and says, "Why will you die?" He waits for the delaying, and say, "How long you simple ones will you love sin?" He offers a full and free salvation to whoever will, and has pledged that he will cast out none who come to him.

Reader, are you righteous — or wicked? One or the other you must be. If living in any sin, or in forgetfulness of God — you will be turned into Hell at death. "Consider this all you who forget God, lest He tears you in pieces; and there are none to deliver!" Psalms 50:22. Repent of your wickedness and pray God that your sins may be forgiven. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved: the gates of Hell shall be bound against you, and the gates of Heaven thrown wide open to receive you! No words can declare, no imagine can paint,

What rage and despair, what hopeless complaint,

Fills Satan's dark dwelling, the prison beneath,

With weeping and yelling, and gnashing of teeth!

Yet sinners will choose this dreadful abode!

Each madly pursues the dangerous road;

Though God give the warning, they onward will go,

They answer with with scorning, and rush upon woe.

How sad to behold the rich and the poor,

The young and the old, all blindly secure!  
All posting to ruin, refusing to stop;  
Ah! think what you're doing, while yet there is hope!  
How weak is your hand, to fight with the Lord!  
How can you withstand the edge of his sword!  
What hope of escaping for those who oppose,  
When Hell is wide gaping, to swallow his foes!  
How oft have you dared the Lord to his face!  
Yet still you are spared to read of his grace;  
O pray for repentance and life-giving faith,  
Before the just sentence consign you to death!  
It is not too late, to Jesus to flee,  
His mercy is great, his pardon is free!  
His blood has such virtue for all who believe,  
That nothing can hurt you, if him you receive!

## 17 Direction and Comfort

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### Direction and Comfort

"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6-7

All our misery is the consequence of our sin — and our sin is only chargeable on ourselves. We have sinned — we have done wickedly. We have destroyed ourselves. We are afar off from God — and living and dying thus, we are eternally undone. "Those who are far from you shall perish." But the Lord calls us to him. He says, "Seek me — and you shall live." His servants re-echo the exhortation, and say, "Seek the Lord while he may be found!" He may be found now. He is not far from every one of us. But if he is found — he must be sought. Every one of us should begin this moment to seek God. We should do so . . .

because he bids us,

because we need him,

because our happiness is involved in it,

because we must either seek him — or perish!

"Call you upon him while he is near." He is now on the throne of grace. That throne is everywhere, it is near to us. He is so near that he can hear . . .

the weakest call,

the feeblest whisper,

the movement of the heart toward him.

Let us then call upon him, and let us call until he answers us; let us seek — until we find, embrace, and enjoy him. Let us call upon him in private — from the bottom of our hearts, exercising faith in his word. Let us call until we become acquainted with him, and enjoy his presence and his love. This is the acceptable year of the Lord, it is the year of Jubilee. This is the day of salvation, the great day of atonement. God is near to us in Jesus, reconciling the world unto himself. He is on the mercy-seat, and he speaks to us by the gospel, in the most tender, inviting, and winning strains. Let us then know and improve our opportunity. But may anyone seek the Lord? Are all addressed in this way? Yes. "Let the wicked forsake his way." The word means the openly, the grossly wicked. The most hardened. The most depraved. The most desperate characters. It takes in the liar and the thief; the robber and the murderer; the profane and the prostitute; the drunkard and the swearer. It includes all classes of sinners — it excludes none — however depraved the heart, or ungodly the life; however degraded the character, or criminal the conduct!

Wicked man, God calls you to return unto him! He knows the worst of you. He has seen all that you have done. He has heard all that you have spoken against him. But . . .

though you have been notoriously wicked,

though your fellow-man may shun you,

though conscience may severely accuse you,

though Satan may suggest there is no hope for you

— your God calls upon you to return unto him! You have been restless in yourself, troublesome to others, and offensive to God; you have done as much evil as you could — still, God says, "Return unto me."

"Let the wicked forsake his way." Your course has been just the opposite to that marked out by God's holy law. You have seared your conscience, closed your eyes to the truth, rushed on in the path of folly and crime, and have deserved the hottest Hell. Your crimes have been provoking to God, they have merited the severest punishment, and if God had dealt with you as he justly might, you would at this moment be in endless torments! But now turn your back on your former courses. Turn from your companions in sin. No longer seek pleasure or satisfaction in the course of this world — but turn to your God.

"Let the evil man forsake his thoughts." There must not only be change of conduct — but a change of mind. You have been thinking wrong — as well as acting wrong. Your thoughts of sin have been wrong — you have thought sin to be a small matter — but it is the most serious evil; of all evils it is the most disgraceful and the most dangerous! Your thoughts of the world have been wrong; you thought it was worthy your affections and efforts, that it could satisfy and give you real pleasure; but it is empty, void, and waste. Your thoughts of God have been wrong; you have thought him to be very much such a one as yourself; but he is holy, just, and good.

Exchange your own thoughts for God's thoughts upon all serious subjects. Turn to the bible, and from thence learn what God thinks of people, courses, and things.

Perhaps you have thought, that salvation was in whole or in part, by works and sufferings of your own; but it is alone of grace through faith. You may have had unworthy thoughts . . .

of God,

of his beloved Son,

of his blessed Spirit,

of his holy law,

of his just government,

of his glorious sovereignty,

or of his gracious gospel —

if so, give up all these thoughts, nourish them no longer — do not allow them not to keep you from God. He is love. He is ready to pardon. Your present thoughts are injurious to yourself. They give Satan power over you. They will fill you with gloom. They lead either to presumption, or despair. They keep you from God. Therefore give them up, and endeavor to think as the bible directs you. Your own thoughts will harden your heart, they will lead you to limit the mercy and grace of God, they will fill you with confusion and distress. Return, return unto the Lord, listen to the inducements which are presented to you.

"He will have mercy upon him." What! upon that degraded sinner! Upon that degraded wretch! Yes! He will mercifully . . .

listen to his confessions,

receive his prayers,

accept his person, and

confer salvation upon him as a free gift.

He will have mercy upon him. His mind is made up to that. He will find pleasure in doing so, for he delights in mercy. He has had mercy upon the greatest sinners, and he will still do so. He had mercy on Jerusalem sinners — who mocked his servants, resisted his Spirit, and murdered his beloved Son! He has said he will have mercy — and shall he not do it? He has given us his word — and shall he not make it good?

Reader, if you are the greatest sinner in existence — if you return unto the Lord, then he will have mercy upon you. For your sins, the blood of Christ shall avail; for your salvation, the intercession of Jesus shall succeed. He will blot out your sins as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud; he will receive you graciously and love you freely.

"He will abundantly pardon." Apply to him in Jesus — for God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Apply to him for pardon — for the pardon of all your sins, for pardon in Jesus' name — and as far as the east is from the west, so far will he remove your transgressions from you. He will freely pardon, his pardon shall extend to the utmost limit of your sins. He will multiply pardons, he will pardon again and again, until pardon can be no longer needed. He will pardon like a God — perfectly, freely, forever! The moment you confess your sins and exercise faith in Jesus — from that moment every sin is pardoned. You are accepted of God in Jesus, with as much cordiality and love — as though you had never sinned! You will be henceforth treated as a child — a restored and beloved child. Every promise of the gospel will be yours. Every blessing of the better covenant yours. The fullness of Jesus yours! The kingdom of glory yours. God will be merciful unto your unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities, he will remember no more. In the righteousness of Jesus — you will be justified from all charges;

by the grace of God — you will be supported in all your trials; and

by the Holy Spirit — you will be conducted from grace to glory.

Sinner, seek then the Lord!

Wicked man, forsake your way, and return unto the Lord!

Unrighteous man, forsake your thoughts, and return unto God!

He is pledged to have mercy upon you. He will without doubt, instantly, freely, and forever — pardon all your sins. His ways are not as our ways, nor are his thoughts as our thoughts: but as the Heavens are high above the earth — so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts!

## 18 The Physician

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The Physician "Those who are whole do not need a physician — but those who are sick." Matthew 9:12 When the Lord Jesus was upon earth, he spent much of his time among the common people. He was often found visiting and teaching those who were considered great sinners. The self-righteous pharisees were offended at this, and they complained of it. "They said unto his disciples: Why does your Master eat with publicans and sinners?" In reply to their question, and in vindication of himself, Jesus said, "Those who are whole do not need a physician — but those who are sick." No sinner can be really whole — but the pharisees imagined that they were, and so do many now. Such feel no need of the Savior, nor do they really desire a saving interest in him. He is not suited to them. They may speak well of him, as many healthy people do of a physician; but they will not apply to him, nor can they prize him.

Jesus is the friend of sinners. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He is exactly suited to sinners, and he loves to be found among them. The world is one vast hospital. Jesus is the only physician in it; he has healed thousands, he will heal thousands more; but multitudes reject him, they imagine they can do without him; they think that they are whole, and therefore do not need a physician.

Sin is the disease of the soul. The sinner's state is a diseased state. He is sick — mortally sick. His sickness is hereditary. He inherited it from his parents. He brought it into the world with him. That is true of all, which was spoken by David of himself, "Behold I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me!"

Sin is increased by wicked habits. We go astray from the womb, speaking lies. We contract the habit of sinning, so that to sin becomes as natural to us as to breathe. The disease of sin is contagious. We contaminate others, and others increase our sickness. "Bad company corrupts good character." The progress of this disease is constant — it spreads daily — almost insensibly, and especially from neglect. It produces great weakness, so that the sinner cannot of himself, do anything really good. He must be united to Jesus, and receive the Holy Spirit, before he can do anything truly good. "Without me," said the Savior, "you can do nothing."

It not only makes us weak, but stupid — so that we become careless and foolish. We are dying of disease — but are unconcerned about it; there is a skillful Physician at hand — but we refuse to apply to Him!

Sin has destroyed all our moral beauty, and left us loathsome, unsightly, and wretched. It produces innumerable and horrendous pains, and surrounds us with sorrows, cares, and woes.

Sin brings us to death — not only separating the body from the soul — but separating the soul from God!

Sin is the forerunner of eternal and unmitigated weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

There is no sickness is like sin — yet this disease is universal. All are sick! "Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good — not even one!" Romans 3:9-12. This disease affects every part of man, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it — only wounds and bruises and putrefying sores!" Isaiah 1:5-6. Man is one mass of moral disease! Every power and faculty is disordered. All the elements of destruction are within himself. He deeply needs a physician, for he is dreadfully sick; so sick, that there is but a step between him and damnation! My dear reader, this is your state! The Holy Spirit has given your portrait in the passages you have just read! Can you recognize the likeness? If not — your eye is diseased! Do you feel alarmed at the representation? If not — your conscience is diseased! Are you determined at once to apply to the physician? If not — your heart is diseased! The plague spot is upon you! You are very far advanced in a moral and spiritual cancer — which is secretly hurrying you to eternal death and damnation! O may the Lord . . .

open your eyes — that you may see your dreadful state;

enlighten your conscience — that you may be alarmed at your condition;

and quicken your soul — that you may repair to Jesus and receive health, healing, and everlasting soundness from His hands!

Jesus is a physician. His work is to heal souls. He is every way qualified for His work.

He is a wise and skillful physician. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him — and He employs them for the good of souls. He has been employed in healing sinners for six thousand years — His skill has never been baffled, nor has one patient died under His hand yet!

He is a kind and tender physician. Not one harsh word is ever spoken by Him, to a poor broken-hearted sinner; nor does He ever refuse to attend to any case. His kindness is such — that He weeps with those who weep! And His tenderness is so great — that it is said in reference to all His patients, "In all their afflictions — He is afflicted."

He is a friendly and faithful physician. There is nothing forbidding or austere in His manner, nor does He ever deceive. Friendship has erected her throne in His heart, and built her mansion in His bosom; and He is ever faithful to His word, and to the poor sick sinner who applies to Him.

He is a willing and accessible physician. Willing to heal anyone who is willing to be healed by Him — and to go anywhere to perform His miracles of mercy. As when applied to of old, He said "I will come and heal him!" Just so now! He stoops to the beggar in the dust, and visits the needy on the dunghill. He is always ready at hand. You need no messenger to send and fetch Him — He is within hearing! He is nearer than anyone else — He can hear the softest whisper of the heart!

He is the great physician, no one can be compared to Him for qualifications or success.

He is the good physician, no one beside Him can be found — who so kindly, so freely, and so effectually heals every applicant! His blood is the true balm of Gilead, and He is the skillful physician there.

It is not only His work — but His delight to heal sin-sick souls! And He heals them all freely, certainly, and perfectly! Those whom He restores to health — will enjoy health forever. He makes every one of His patients immortal — and surrounds them with all that can make them holy and happy forever!

Blessed physician, heal my soul! Heal me perfectly! Heal me at once! Heal me in your mercy this moment, and preserve me in health forever! But many fall into the mistake of the pharisees. They imagine that they are in health; or at least, if not quite healthy, that they are not very sick. This is the very worst symptom of the disease. It proves that they are completely under sin's power; and while they remain in that state, they will never apply to the great physician. They feel secure, while the plague is in the heart. They despise the Savior, or at least, do not think that they need his aid; and therefore they do not call him in. They trust to their own remedies, and thus perish, in their own deceivings.

How lamentable — to die of disease, with the physician in the house, and to die simply because they refuse to apply to him, and prove his skill!

Dear friends, we are all either mortally sick — or under Christ's healing process. Which is it? If you are under the physician's care, then . . .

you have felt your sickness,

you have personally applied to him,

your heart is set against sin, and upon the possession of true holiness, which is health,

you are in some degree weaned from this present evil world,

and you come to the light of God's word, that your deeds may be reprov'd. Do you imagine that you are whole? I beseech you to seriously consider this portion of the word of God, "There those who are pure in their own eyes — and yet are not cleansed of their filthiness!" Proverbs 30:12. Are you not in the same condition as the church at Laodicea, the members of which said, "We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!" While in reality, they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked? Revelation 3:17. Do you deeply feel your diseased and disordered state? If so, allow me to recommend to you most earnestly this great physician. Jesus is both able and willing to heal you. He has healed such cases as yours — and He has some in hand now. He will heal you. His terms are, "No Money! No Price!" Are you healed? Then admire your physician's skill, and recommend him to every poor sick sinner you may meet with. Are you under His healing process? Then visit him often; carefully attend to his prescriptions; and look for the signs of returning health. Never rest satisfied, until you feel the love of God shed abroad in your heart, and the peace of God keeping your soul as in a garrison!

Physician of my sin-sick soul,

To you I bring my case;

My raging malady control,

And heal me by your grace!

Pity the anguish I endure,  
See how I mourn and pine;  
For never can I hope a cure,  
From any hand but thine.  
I would disclose my whole complaint,  
But where shall I begin?  
No words of mine can fully paint  
That worst distemper, sin!  
It lies not in a single part,  
But through my frame is spread;  
A burning fever in my heart,  
A palsy in my head!  
It makes me deaf, and dumb, and blind,  
And impotent and lame,  
It overclouds and fills my mind  
With folly, fear, and shame! A thousand evil thoughts intrude,  
Tumultuous in my breast,  
Which indispose me for my food,  
And rob me of my rest!  
Lord, I am sick, regard my cry,  
And set my spirit free,  
Say, will you let a sinner die,  
Who longs to live to thee?

## 19 Faith Necessary

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### Faith Necessary

"Without faith it is impossible to please God: for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6 "So we make it our goal to please Him." 2 Corinthians 5:9 "We instructed you how to live in order to please God." 1 Thessalonians 4:1 "That you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way." Colossians 1:10 Our principal business on earth is to please God. This is the grand end of our creation — we were formed to glorify him. This was the great design in our redemption — to show forth his praise. On this one object our attention should be fixed, to this end all our efforts should be directed. In every enterprise, our first inquiry should be — will this please God? And after every engagement, the point we should strive to ascertain is — Have I in this business pleased God? And if this is true — then how have we been living? Day after day has passed away — and we have never once thought about pleasing God. One engagement has succeeded another — but it has never been our aim to please God. In this we are truly guilty! And this, while it proves our depravity — also accounts for our unhappiness. We never can be happy, but as we have a well-grounded conviction that we are pleasing God.

Reader, has this been the object of your life? Have you been habitually aiming at this one end? Or, rather have you not entirely forgotten it, and busied yourself about almost everything beside?

"Without faith it is impossible to please God." We must believe: That God exists. That he is just what he has declared himself to be in his holy word — the infinite, intelligent, ever-present, almighty, just, holy, gracious, and glorious God. That . . .

his greatness is unsearchable,

his hatred to sin is eternal,

his justice is immutable,

and his mercy is infinite! That he cannot be merciful at the expense of his justice, or think lightly of sin in any of his creatures.

We must believe that his nature is one — but that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: that each person is equally, eternally, and immutably God; and yet there are not three Gods — but ONE GOD. This we can believe — but not fully understand. We must believe it, because God has revealed it; and we do not believe in the existence of the TRUE GOD, if we deny it: for "there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." We must believe that God created all creatures, that he supports all he has created, and that everything is designed in some way to promote his glory. We must believe that . . .

God is — or he exists in and of himself,

He has no equal,

He comprehends all things — but no one can comprehend him.

FAITH is confidence in God. Without some degree of confidence in him — it is impossible to please him. Distrust and suspicion always displease. We cannot please an earthly father if we distrust him — and nothing grieves a friend like suspicion and distrust. We must feel confident that God exists, and that he is gracious, merciful, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and in truth. The gospel is intended to awaken and foster confidence in God. Is his word true? Examine and see if he has not performed it. Is his nature generous? Read his word and mark what he has promised, what he has done, and what he has given to those who trust in him. Look at his providence, what kindness is evident, though we only see a part of his ways. Look at his promises, and see is there one good thing which he has not promised to bestow. Look at the gift of his Son, and say could he give a greater or a costlier proof of his love! Ask his people, they know him best, they have trusted in his word, and have proved his faithfulness and veracity. He cannot lay a firmer foundation for our confidence than he has laid. He cannot give a stronger proof of his love than he has given.

It is therefore impossible to please him if we distrust him — unless he can be pleased with our suspecting his kindness, disbelieving his word, and doubting his veracity. We must believe that God is love, that his word is true, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

None of us know him by nature — we must therefore seek to know him. We are all afar off — we must therefore come to him. Real religion is coming to God — and seeking to know, love, enjoy, and serve God. He bids us to seek him, and says, "Seek me — and you shall live." He invites us to come unto him, and says, "Come now and let us reason together." He will have us seek him diligently, as those who are sincere and in earnest. We must seek him in faith, believing that he is what his word declares, and will do what he has promised in that word. We must so seek him as to come to him — as to come to him on a throne of grace. We must come to him expecting . . .

that he will honor his word — by fulfilling it;

that he will honor his Son — by hearing and answering our prayers for his sake;

and that he will honor his name — by illustrating it in our experience, proving that he is still gracious, merciful, and abundantly good.

Thus coming to God — we please him. He is pleased . . .

with the credit we give to his gospel,

with the confidence we place in his promises, and

with our dependence on his faithfulness and truth. Being pleased with our approaching him thus — he will reward us. Not that our giving credit to his word, or placing confidence in his faithfulness, or coming to him to ask favors at his hands — can by any possibility merit or deserve anything. But to show that he is pleased with us, and approves of our thus coming to him — he will reward us by . . .

answering our prayers,

granting our requests,

manifesting himself to our souls,

and giving us joy and peace! My dear friend, have you faith in God? Do you know what he has revealed concerning himself in his word? Do you really believe what you there read? Are you diligently seeking him? Are you coming to him as a poor, lost, and ruined sinner — that you may obtain . . .

the pardon of your sins,

the justification of your person,

and the sanctification of your nature? Have you any confidence in God? Do you think he will hear you? He has said that he will. Can you trust him to save you? If you believe in his Son, he has promised to do so. Unless you . . .

believe what God has said,

renounce all dependence on anything and everything of your own,

look to Jesus only for salvation,

come to God in his name,

expect pardon, and on the ground of what he has done and suffered alone — you cannot please God.

He is pleased when you . . .

take him at his word,

come at his call,

expect what he has promised,

do what he commands, and

exercise confidence in his character and love.

You have been either pleasing God — or displeasing God every moment of your life. If you have lived without prayer, or if you have prayed, without relying on the finished work of Jesus alone for acceptance with God; then every action of your life — and every thought of your heart has been displeasing to him. He is displeased with you at this moment, and nothing that you can do will please him — until you renounce self, flee to Jesus, and come to him in his name for life and everlasting salvation.

## 20 The Proof of Spiritual Life

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The Proof of Spiritual Life "Behold he prays."Acts 9:11

Prayer is one of the first evidences that the soul is quickened from a death in sin — to a life of righteousness; it is one of the first effects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Real prayer is the breathing of the soul. No man is alive to God — who can live without prayer; and no one that truly prays — is dead in sin. Many use the form of prayer — who do not pray from the heart; many say the words of prayer — who never really pray.

Prayer is conceived in the heart. It is produced by the Holy Spirit. It indicates neediness. It expresses desire. In prayer, we realize that God is present. We believe that he has, and that he only has — what we want. We are urged to prayer by a sense of need, we are drawn to prayer by the sweet invitations and promises of God. The first prayer is always interesting. Angels feel interested in it. The Lord Jesus is interested in it. Our God and Father is interested in it. Saul of Tarsus had repeated many prayers before; the words of prayer had often passed his lips; for he was a pharisee, and the pharisees were noted for their long prayers; but he had never really prayed until now. He had never felt himself to be a lost sinner before. He never saw the need of pardon as he saw it now. He never realized that Jesus Christ was the Savior before. Now he feels that he is a lost sinner, and that there is no hope for him but in the mercy of God, which mercy flows only through the Lamb of God. To this, you must be brought, if you are not. There is no salvation without it. Wherever the Holy Spirit works, these effects invariably follow. The prayers of a convinced soul are generally short. They are always simple. They convey the feelings of the heart. The prayer of the publican is generally among the very first that is presented.

Conscious of sin,

sensible of guilt,

alarmed at danger,

fearing wrath —

the soul cries out, "God be merciful unto me a sinner!" The sinner needs mercy — and it is to sinners that God will show mercy. Mercy comprises all that the sinner needs, for if God has mercy on a sinner, he . . .

pardons his sin,

sanctifies his nature,

banishes his fears,

supplies his needs,

and saves his soul. A sinner cannot do with less than mercy — and he cannot ask for more. He is miserable — and it is only the exercise of mercy that will make him happy. The putting up of the prayer will not satisfy him, he must have it answered. He therefore goes to the Lord again, and again; he perseveres until the Lord speaks peace to his soul, and he enjoys the sense of pardon. From thousands of hearts this prayer has ascended, and in every instance it has found acceptance, and has obtained an answer. If you feel your lost condition, and have no words of your own — take the language of the publican, cry mightily unto God, and let this be your petition, "God be merciful unto me a sinner!" The brief prayer of the Psalmist in his distress, has also been the prayer of many since his day. "O Lord, I beseech you, deliver my soul." This is the language of earnestness. There is deep feeling in it. It implies a vivid sense of danger. It is strong crying. It is crying for salvation — for immediate salvation. It is full of meaning. It goes direct from the heart, to God. It seeks deliverance for the soul. Deliverance . . .

from the guilt of sin, which fills with fears;

from the power of sin, which hinders and weakens;

from the consequences of sin, which alarm and terrify.

It implies that the soul is willing to submit to God's method, to be saved in God's way. Here is no suggesting of terms, no bargaining; but like a drowning man, who feels that he is sinking for the last time, the soul makes a desperate struggle for deliverance. Only God can deliver a sinner. To him we must cry or perish. He is at hand, and is ready to save us. If we feel our need of deliverance — we have but to seek it, and he will deliver us. If you feel your danger, if you desire to be delivered from sin, to be saved with an everlasting salvation — make this prayer your own. Use it, as conveying the feelings of your heart, the desire of your soul; urge it until the Lord answers it, and you are able to say, "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah, is my strength and my song, he also has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:2 The prayer of David under the workings of penitence, has also just suited the case of thousands. Feeling the depravity of their hearts, aware of the impurity of their nature, conscious of their unfitness for Heaven — they have cried, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." A clean heart is one that is purified from guilt by the blood of Jesus; and cleansed from filth by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our hearts by nature, are all unclean. They are the most unclean things in existence! Nothing is so filthy, so impure, so loathsome — as the human heart!

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, but have never been washed from their filthiness." Such are laboring under a fatal delusion. They are strangers to themselves. They are blind, and see not their true condition. But the awakened sinner discovers that he is unclean, that his heart is unholy, and he desires to be thoroughly cleansed. He is not, he cannot be satisfied with outward reformation; he wants inward renovation. No promise in God's book suits him so well as that, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, I will cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them!" Ezekiel 36:25, Ezekiel 36:27.

"O Lord," he cries, "fulfill this precious promise in my experience. Give me the new heart, and take away the stony heart from me. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin. Make me holy — whatever I may suffer in the process." The clean-hearted person hates sin, shrinks from sin, and longs for entire freedom from sin — but if the heart is not changed, the only thing feared is punishment, and the only thing sought is happiness. No one ever uses the prayer of David heartily, and understanding its meaning — but those in whom the Holy Spirit is at work. He alone can give us such views of sin — as will lead us to hate it; and he alone can give us such views of our own hearts — as will prompt us to cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

There is another prayer, which has ascended from a multitude of people, since it was recorded in God's book. It is this, "Say unto my soul, I am your salvation." It is a prayer for assurance, for a sweet and soul-satisfying sense of our interest in God as the Savior. We should never be satisfied with a perhaps, or a faint hope — but we should seek a firm and well grounded persuasion, that we are "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." We may be safe without this — but we cannot be truly happy. In order to this, we must know . . .

that our sins are forgiven,

that we are at peace with God,

that we are accepted in the Beloved,

that God has begun in us a good work, and

that having begun it he will perfect it in the day of Jesus Christ. My dear friend, do not stop short of this. Do not rest satisfied without the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, that God is your Savior: that you are savingly interested . . .

in all that Jesus did,

in all that Jesus suffered,

in all that Jesus procured, and

in all that Jesus is now doing at the right hand of God.

God does by his Spirit, assure sinners of his favor, of their interest in Jesus, of their title to everlasting life. Seek this blessing. Seek it with that fervor and importunity which its importance demands. Seek it — but leave it with the Lord to speak with you, when, and in what way, he pleases. He is a sovereign, and while he always makes good his word — he acts sovereignly in doing so. Some are speedily assured that Jesus is theirs, and that they are his.

Others have to wait, watch, long, and pray for a long period before they enjoy the blessing. To some the Lord speaks by the preached gospel; to others by the reading of the Scriptures; others have the promise brought and applied to the soul with power; others while in prayer have the assurance produced — but they know not how; while others have the clouds gradually dispersed from the mind, a peaceful state of soul is produced, and confidence in God springs up, before which doubts and fears flee away. The blessing is well worth seeking. None should rest satisfied without it. Every one should make his "calling and election sure." My friend, do you pray? When

did you begin to pray? What led you to pray? What do you pray for? How do you pray? To whom are your prayers addressed? Through what medium do you expect them to be accepted? Do you ever receive answers to your prayers? Have you prayed today? within the last hour? These are important and searching questions. Do not lightly or hastily pass them over. Consider each of them separately. Let each of them have an honest answer. They are proposed for your good. They are calculated to produce a beneficial effect upon your mind. May the Lord bless them to you, and if you have hitherto been a prayerless sinner, may the information be now carried to Heaven by some observing angel, and may it be published before the eternal throne, that you have begun to pray; may admiring intelligences look down upon you with gratitude and love while they listen to the announcement, "Behold he prays!" But if you live without prayer — then you must die without hope. If you do not seek mercy now — you may be refused when you apply. The Lord may soon say of you, as he did of Israel of old, "When I called — they did not listen; so when they called — I would not listen! says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 7:13 . If you have not prayed, pray this moment, and you shall not pray in vain.

## 21 The Question and Reply

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The Question and Reply "What must I do to be saved?"

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ — and you shall be saved!" Acts 16:30-31

"What must I do to be saved?" This is one of the most important questions which can possibly be proposed. It is answered most clearly and satisfactorily in the gospel. But many never propose it. Others are long before they understand the answer given to it. Has my reader, ever proposed this question? Has he ever felt as the poor jailor felt? Is there no concern in the bosom to be saved from the wrath to come? What a melancholy state must an immortal being be in — who is daily hastening to another world, who is in imminent danger of everlasting destruction — and yet unconcerned! Who may be saved — but never gives himself any trouble about it! Who must eternally perish, if he is not delivered from guilt and condemnation, before death arrests him! And yet there are thousands in this state. At this moment, in this highly favored country, there are thousands who live and die without any serious concern about their soul's salvation! But whatever others do let us —

Attend to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" This implies that there is a sense of sin. That conviction has been produced. That the soul feels itself to be guilty, and consequently in danger of God's wrath and everlasting woe. Most people are occasionally visited with conviction of sin. Many stifle their convictions, or drown them in folly and worldly pleasure. A few encourage them. Then they deepen and become rooted. They produce concern. The soul is roused from its sinful slumber. It looks about and discovers its danger. It is alarmed, for . . .

the whole life has been sinful,

the nature is depraved,

God is holy,

eternity is near,

Hell is dreadful,

the commandment is exceeding broad,

and in deep anxiety the question is proposed, "What must I do to be saved?"

Salvation is now all-important. But ignorance is felt. How can the sinner escape? How can sin be pardoned? How can the sinner become holy? How can the soul who greatly deserves Hell, be admitted to Heaven? These are stirring questions, and they stir up the depths of the soul. Desire for deliverance appears. It deepens. It grows stronger and stronger. It becomes the ruling desire.

Fears spring up — numerous and painful fears: The soul fears that its sins are too great. That it has delayed too long. That there is a singularity about its case. That it is in vain to try. That God

will not have mercy upon such a one. That Christ could not have died for such a vile creature. That the promise is not for such. That the way of life is forever closed against such a one.

These fears are very distressing. They agitate and perplex the spirit. But in the midst of them, the anxious sinner cries out, "What shall I do to be saved?" But there is generally a little hope at the bottom. There may be despondency — but there is not despair. A gleam of light occasionally shines into the mind. The bare probability that salvation may be obtained, keeps the soul from sitting down in sullen gloom; and though the conflict may be severe, and the exercise sharp, the design is to bring the man to submit to God's method of saving sinners. To this, no one will submit — until taught of God. But where conviction has been felt, and anxiety experienced, where fear and hope have been for some time working in the mind — submission is produced and the sinner asks, "What shall I do to be saved?" He is willing to be saved in God's way. To him salvation is brought near, and the necessary information is given. Let us now,

Consider the Apostle's answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ — and you shall be saved." The eye is at once taken off SELF. It is directed to JESUS. The man wants salvation, and he is directed to a Savior. To one who is Lord of All. Who has all authority in Heaven and in earth. To whom all things are easy. To whom it is lawful to save the vilest transgressors. Who can pardon the greatest sins. Justify the foulest sinners. Save with an everlasting salvation, all who believe in his name.

He is directed to one whose name is Jesus, and who had that name given him, because his office, his work, and his delight is to save sinners. Who has saved millions. Who is now saving millions. To one who is the Christ — the anointed One. Who was anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit and with power, and thus officially set apart and qualified to save. He is directed to believe on him. To believe that there is a Savior. That Jesus Christ is that Savior. That he can save to the uttermost. That he can save him. And to trust in him — rely on him — exercise confidence in him — commit the soul unto him to be saved for evermore.

Reader, if you really wish to be saved. If you ask the question, "What shall I do to be saved" seriously. If you are truly in earnest. If you are willing to be saved in God's way. We will set that way before you as simply as we can. The first thing is, you must feel your need of salvation. That you are a lost sinner. That without a Savior you are eternally undone. That you cannot possibly save yourself. The second thing is, you must see that the way of salvation by Jesus Christ is just suited to you. Suited to you, because it . . .

saves from sin,

saves freely by grace,

saves in harmony with the perfections of God and the requirements of his law,

and saves for evermore!

The third thing is, you must discover that the Lord Jesus is all that you need:

that his blood can cleanse you from your sins,

that his righteousness can justify your person,

that his Spirit can renew your nature,

that his gospel can give you peace, and

that his power can keep you in this dangerous world. That you need all that Christ is:

you need him as a Prophet, to teach you;

you need him as a Priest, to atone for you;

you need him as a King, to rule over you;

you need him as a Mediator, to stand between a holy God and your sinful person;

in a word, you need him to be a complete Savior to you! To save you entirely, and to have all the glory of doing so. The fourth thing is, you must realize that you need the renewing of the Holy Spirit. That your nature must be renewed. That you must become a new creature, and that no one can make you what you require to be, but the Holy Spirit. This will lead you to pray earnestly and frequently, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!" The fifth thing is, an entire renunciation of SELF, and everything else as a ground of confidence — but the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Self must be renounced. Every false refuge must be forsaken. On Jesus alone, you must rely for acceptance with God, placing no more dependence on your prayers, or tears, or sufferings for acceptance with God — than you do upon your most heinous sins!

Finally, you must receive Christ as he is presented to you in the gospel. The testimony respecting him must be embraced,

the invitation to approach him must be accepted,

the promise of salvation by him must be trusted. This is the way — walk in it.

If you feel you need salvation;

if you see that God's way is suited to your case;

if you discover that Christ is all you that you need;

that you need the whole of Christ;

if you realize your need of the renewing of the Holy Spirit;

if you are ready to renounce all confidence in anything, and everything but Jesus

— then to you Christ is presented as God's unspeakable gift!

You are welcome to him. So welcome that you cannot be more so. Look to him, and to him alone;

trust in him, and in him alone;

place confidence in him, and in him alone;

commit your soul to him, and to him alone

— and eternal life is yours! You shall be saved. There is no doubt on this point. There is not the least ground for fear. If Jesus can save you, he will — and he is able to save them to the

uttermost, all who come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.

Reader, may this be your experience, and may you have to say —

With melting heart and weeping eyes.

My guilty soul for mercy cries;

What shall I do, or where flee,

To escape the vengeance due to me?

Until now, I saw no danger nigh;

I lived at ease, nor feared to die:

Enrapt up in self-deceit and pride,

"I shall have peace at last," I cried. But when O Lord! your light divine.

Had shone on this dark soul of mine.

Then I beheld with trembling awe,

The terrors of your holy law!

How fearful now my guilt appears,

In childhood, youth, and growing years,

Before your pure discerning eye,

How vile and full of sin am I! Should vengeance still my soul pursue

Death and destruction are my due;

Yet mercy can my guilt forgive

And bid a dying sinner live! Does not your sacred word proclaim

Salvation free in Jesus' name?

To him I look, and humbly cry,

O save a wretch condemned to die!

## 22 The Fountain Opened

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The Fountain Opened "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from all sin!" 1 John 1:7 This is good news for great sinners! There is a fountain opened for the greatest sinners, completely to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness. Salvation is not impossible, it is not difficult. Everlasting life may be obtained and enjoyed. The love of God to sinners is astonishing. He has provided a Savior. That Savior is his own Son. The only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He is equal with God in authority and glory. He is God — so his nature is divine. He became man, by taking our nature into union with his own. He took our nature that he might suffer for our sins, and make an atonement for our transgressions. He suffered in Gethsemane and on Calvary. He suffered the due desert of our sins. He died in our stead, that we might never die. His blood gave full satisfaction to divine justice. His blood laid a firm foundation for our faith and hope in God. It was sufficient to rescue us from death and Hell. It was accepted of God, on behalf of all who would at any time put their trust in it, build their hope upon it, and seek to be saved through it. Its merit is infinite. Its efficacy is everlasting. It is just adapted to our circumstances. It was intended for us. It is set before us in the gospel. It will procure the pardon of every sinner who pleads it. It will secure the present and everlasting justification of all who confide in it. Precious blood! It opens the door of hope. It provides for the acceptance of every penitent transgressor.

We are sinners. We have sinned against the law — and against the gospel. We do sin. Our sins are numberless. They are of a most aggravated character. They deserve death, the second death, eternal death. The sentence of death has been pronounced upon us. We are all by nature, under condemnation. There is neither hope nor help for us in ourselves. We cannot expiate our past offences, we can render no satisfaction to God for our crimes; we are therefore, if left to ourselves — eternally undone! Our best works are impure,

our very prayers need to be pardoned,

all our righteousness is as filthy rags!

We are . . .

guilty,

filthy,

diseased

and criminal! In ourselves, we are totally, entirely, and forever lost! But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanses us from all sin! ALL sin! The sin of our nature. Our secret sins. Our open sins. Our common every-day sins, and our extraordinary sins. Every sin, and every kind of sin. Sins before salvation, and sins after salvation. You can conceive of no sin, from which the blood cannot cleanse! There is only one sin pronounced unpardonable in the book of God, and for that pardon is never sought; for the remission of that — the blood of Jesus is never pleaded. The sinner who has committed that, is given up to the hardness of his own heart; and will either live in

open and daring opposition to God — or sink into the hardening horrors of black despair.

Reader, you never have committed a sin, from which the blood of Christ cannot cleanse you! If your sins were numerous as the stars of Heaven, or the sands on the sea shore; if they are aggravated as the sins of Manasseh, or Saul of Tarsus — the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse you from them ALL. Until we can measure infinity and eternity — we cannot measure the extent of the efficacy of the blood of Christ!

It was God in human nature — who made the atonement. It was the blood of that body in which dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead — that flowed to give satisfaction to divine justice for our crimes. The glory and dignity of his person — gave infinite efficacy to all that Jesus did and suffered! And all he did and suffered — was for every one who comes unto God through him. Yes, the moment we exercise faith in him, and rest simply and alone upon his precious blood for acceptance with God — we are treated as if we had done and suffered, all that Jesus did and suffered. He was our Substitute, he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, by the blood of his cross he made our peace, and every believer is justified in his name. Do you receive this fact, that the blood of Jesus Christ can cleanse you from all sin? It is God himself who testifies it. It is his witness to the perfection of Immanuel's work. He knows the utmost demerit of sin. He is well acquainted with all the evils that are in it. He alone knows them. But he knows also the value and merit of the sacrifice of Christ, and he assures you that the blood of Christ will cleanse from all sin! Can you question the knowledge of God? Can you doubt the veracity of God? Does he not know what the blood of Jesus will do? Has he not said that it will cleanse from all sin? Is he to be believed? Will you receive his testimony — or reject it? Will you listen to Satan — in preference to him? Shall your feelings be allowed to be a safer criterion than God's Word? Is unbelief to triumph, or shall God's testimony be received? Let God be true, let his word be received — and everything that would throw a doubt upon it, be sternly rejected.

Upon this your comfort depends. You never can enjoy peace with God — until you believe in the efficacy of the Savior's blood, and seek the application of that blood to your own conscience. There never was a sinner that it could not cleanse, there is not such a sinner now. There never was a sin for which it could not obtain absolution, or a stain which it could not eradicate — nor is there such a sin or stain now. Apply then to this precious blood at once. Apply in faith.

It will cleanse you completely.

It will cleanse you constantly.

It will cleanse you consistently with all God's perfections and requirements.

It will cleanse you eternally.

Place your confidence in the blood of Jesus, rely alone on his one sacrifice for sin — and you will instantly be acquitted of all charges before God. Yes, the just God will acquit you fully, freely, and forever! And he will do it, because he has received full satisfaction at the hand of Jesus who has become Surety for you.

O what comfort is there in this glorious truth for poor, guilty, condemned sinners! What endless consolation is here found for doubting, fearing, desponding creatures! And what a firm foundation is laid for cheerful hope and steady confidence, in sickness, suffering, and death? This is . . .

the balm of life,

the cure of woe,

the antidote of death and damnation! This is the sovereign universal remedy which heals all the diseases of the soul! But some are foolish enough to suppose, that they can go to Heaven without cleansing. This is impossible. Sin must be pardoned. It must be put away. Nor is the folly of those people less — who imagine that by some good deeds which they may perform, or some sufferings which they may endure — that they can procure the remission of their sins. There is pardon for sinners — but not on the ground of works, or of mere human sufferings — it is only through the blood of Christ. Everyone who understands the gospel, and enjoys salvation, will unite with the Apostle and say, "God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works — but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel!" 2 Timothy 1:9-10. Nothing that any sinner can do or suffer — can ever entitle him to the pardon of one sin, or acceptance in God's sight. Nor will God ever sanction the putting of the sinner's doings and sufferings — in the place of the perfect work and glorious sacrifice of his beloved Son. The experiment is most fearful — the result must be fatal! Not even faith or repentance must occupy the place of the blood of Christ; but faith must receive and rely on the testimony, while hope expects the blessing — because Jesus died.

Beware then, how you slight the blood of the New Covenant, or rest upon anything but the finished work of Christ. This is solid rock, but all besides is shifting sand. The object of a sinner's faith is the blood of Jesus, to this he must be constantly directed; and true gospel faith is denominated, "faith in his blood." Our one great plea before God is, Jesus died! He died for sinners; for sinners such as me! And our principal petition is: let his blood avail for me; for the sake of his sufferings and death — let my sins be pardoned, my sinful person be accepted, peace be imparted to my conscience, and my soul be saved. The only ground of a believer's confidence from day to day is the blood of Jesus! That though he fails in every duty, is often overcome by sore temptations, and is compassed with infirmities — yet the blood of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, cleanses us from all sin! This is our daily support. This is an unfailing source of comfort. This is our present boast, and shall be the theme of our everlasting song.

Precious blood of Jesus! Cleanse my soul from every stain, purge my conscience from every work that deserves death, consecrate my entire person to his service — who died for me and rose again! Be . . .

my solace in the seasons of sorrow,

my comfort on the bed of affliction,

and my confidence in the hour of death! On this blood alone I rely, and I recommend my reader, to rely on it too. It has cleansed millions of guilty, filthy sinners — and it will cleanse us from all sin. Let us put it to the test. Let us prove its efficacy. And let us do so at once. This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. No one ever applied to it in vain. Nor shall we. God at this moment is saying to us, "Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins are as scarlet — they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson — they shall be as wool."

Kind and gracious God, draw us by your Holy Spirit, and make us witnesses of the fact, that the blood of Jesus Christ your Son, cleanses from all sin. So will we admire your mercy, and praise your name forever! Could I the stars correctly count,

With crimson stain the sky;

My sins exceed the vast amount.

And wear a deeper dye!

Great is the mercy of our God,

Which blots them from his sight,

And powerful is my Savior's blood,

Which makes the crimson, white! His precious blood forever pleads,

To set the guilty free;

Before the throne the Savior spreads,

His hands for sinful me! This is my soul's eternal stay,

While Jesus pleads above,

I'll trust my soul, I safely may,

On Jesus' blood and love. His wounded hands, his bleeding heart,

That suffered on the tree;

Will not withhold — but sure impart,

The life I want to me! No guilty sinner need despair

Of life, while Jesus lives;

Behold the throne, see Jesus there,

His hand the blessing gives. This is indeed enough to cheer

The most desponding breast;

To banish all my guilty fear, And soothe my soul to rest!

What shall I render, Lord, to thee,

Who do my peace restore?

O! that I could more holy be,

And ne'er offend you more!

## 23 Counsel Given

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### Counsel Given

"I counsel you to buy from me . . .

gold refined in the fire — so you can become rich;

and white clothes to wear — so you can cover your shameful nakedness;

and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see!" Revelation 3:18

Many people are under the power of deception. They imagine their state and character to be very different to what they really are. They fall into this mistake, though they have the word of God in their hands, and the glorious gospel sounding in their ears. Take heed that you are not deceived, for multitudes are! This was the case with many at Laodicea. They imagined because they had professed Christ, were in the Church of God, and had the privileges of the gospel in abundance — that all was well. But they were sadly mistaken! They thought they were rich — that they were made for eternity. But they were not rich toward God. Perhaps they had wealth, learning, and gifts; but they had no saving grace, which constitutes the true riches. They considered their condition so good, that they had need of nothing. They thought if they were not saved — then who could be? They were not harrassed with doubts and fears, as many true believers are. They had no painful sense of need. No discovery of the imperfection of all that they did. They thought all was right. Alas! how many do so now. Death alone, it is to be feared, will undeceive many!

They knew not, that they were . . .

wretched — being under the sentence and curse of God's righteous law; miserable — exposed to numerous, fearful, and never-ending torments; poor — destitute of the riches of grace, and strangers to the work of God's Holy Spirit;

blind — not able to see the spirituality and demands of the law, the glorious provision of the gospel, and their own true state and condition;

and naked — stripped of original righteousness, destitute of any covering for the soul, and in a state that would uncover their shame before the throne of God. Nothing can be more fearful, than having to stand naked before the eye of a holy God — to be exposed and put to shame before glorified saints, and holy angels. Reader, what if you should be found naked at last! What if you should be exposed and put to shame, before assembled worlds! Examine yourself. Compare yourself with God's word. Listen to, and receive the counsel which the Savior gives you.

You are POOR — for you cannot meet God's requirements; you have nothing which will procure comfort for your soul in the sorrows of life and death; and you will find yourself poor when called to leave this world, and give an account of yourself before God's bar.

You are NAKED — for sin has stripped you and left you bare, so that you have nothing to screen you, nothing to adorn you in the sight of God.

You are BLIND — and therefore do not see . . .

the danger to which you are exposed;

the remedy provided for sinners in the gospel;

the hatefulness of sin; or the beauty of the Savior.

You are therefore by nature WRETCHED and MISERABLE — for if a man is poor, naked, and blind — then how can he be otherwise than wretched and miserable. He has nothing to enjoy. He has nothing to expect. All at present is painful — all in the future is distressing. This is just the sinner's condition. He has nothing suited to the nature, or that can satisfy the desires of his soul. He can expect nothing while in his present state, either in time or eternity. He is a poor, blind, naked creature. What a wretched case! What a miserable condition! But Jesus comes forward to counsel us. He knows our misery. He pities us. He remembers us in our low estate, for his mercy endures forever. He is the wonderful Counselor — the Friend that loves at all times — the Brother born for adversity.

He says, "I counsel you to buy from me." No one sells upon such terms as his — "without money and without price." Only feel that you need the blessings. Heartily desire to possess them. Come to him for them, and they are yours. "He fills the hungry with good things," but the rich and the self-righteous, are sent empty away. But what has he to dispose of? Just what you need! All that you need! You need not go anywhere else. Come to him for all.

He counsels you to buy from him "gold refined in the fire" — the best, the purest, the most valuable gold. This figure may set forth God's grace. The grace that sanctifies our nature. The grace that brings us into possession of the unsearchable riches of Christ. The grace by which we believe — and believing, claim all the promises of God, the privileges of the saints, and the glories of eternity. The grace by which we love — and loving enter into the enjoyment of present happiness, while we adorn the doctrine of God our Savior, in all things. The grace by which we hope — and hoping, are saved from despondency and gloom, and look forward with holy anticipation to the glory which shall be revealed. The grace which brings salvation — and is the root of every spiritual grace and moral virtue.

He counsels you to buy of him "white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness." This is Christ's glorious righteousness — his obedience unto death. It is called "the best robe." It hides every defect. It entitles to every blessing. It preserves from condemnation and eternal death. It fits us to appear before God with acceptance and pleasure. It gives present peace and joy to the wearer of it. When one in the days of old obtained it, and began to wear it — he broke out in the strains of joy and gladness, and sung, "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels!" Isaiah 61:10.

He also offers us eye salve, or the enlightening and healing influences of his Holy Spirit; which will purify the understanding, and enable us to perceive . . .

the glory of God,  
the beauty of the Savior,  
the way of salvation,  
the path of peace,  
the prospect of the saints,  
our natural condition, and

the complete remedy which God has provided for sin and sinners! In a word, Jesus counsels us to come and obtain from him, all that is necessary to make us rich, beautiful, and happy! He would have us really wealthy, suitably adorned, and fit for the enjoyment of God. My friend, Jesus has these things in abundance. He is ready to bestow them. To bestow them upon such as are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But application is necessary. He will have you apply to him. He will have you come to him, as the housekeeper goes to the market to obtain a supply for the famishing family. You must go with a determination to obtain. Not as one goes for that which is not valued, or which is not immediately necessary; but as one goes to get sight restored, the person clothed, and the promise of money made good. Thus going — success is certain. There can be no disappointment. His resources are infinite. His word is true. He is immutably faithful. He is in one mind, and none can turn him. He has supplied millions — but he has never refused one yet, nor will he do so in your case. Will you receive his counsel? It is wise, for it just meets your case. It is kind, for it flows from his heart, which is love. It is benevolent, for he only wishes you well; yes, no one so heartily wishes you well as he does. It is unselfish, for you will derive all the benefit. It is for your sake that he counsels you, for your receiving can add nothing to him.

Let me then beseech you to receive his counsel, to buy his blessings; and to plead before him in earnest prayer — the advice which he has given you. There are many who make light of it, as if unworthy of their attention and regard, of this he complains, "But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you!" Proverbs 1:24-28.

How fearful this will be! Unutterably fearful! O let us flee to Jesus. Let us seek and find a shelter in him. Let nothing short of a present pardon, and eternal salvation satisfy us. They may be had. We may have them now. Let us seek — and we shall find. Let us knock — and the door of mercy will be opened to us. Let us copy the example of the inspired psalmist, so shall we enjoy the same blessing which he did. He says, speaking to his God, "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said: 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' — and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him!" Psalms 32:5-6. O may the language of your heart be —

Savior, I take your kind advice,

While without money, without price,  
I come your grace to buy;  
Faith as the golden bullion pure, Which can the fiery test endure,  
And all my wants supply.  
I come to buy that richest dress,  
Your glorious spotless righteousness, The covering from above;  
To hide my sinful shame from view,  
And justify my person too,  
And fill my heart with love. That I may all things clearly see,  
The Spirit which proceeds from thee,  
The unction I implore:  
O might I now the blessing gain, The sight of you my Lord obtain.  
And never lose it more;  
Jesus, your Spirit now impart,  
To cure the blindness of my heart, My unbelief to chase,  
That I your unveiled face may see.  
And spend a blessed eternity,  
In ecstasies of praise.

## 24 Counsel Refused

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Counsel Refused "You ignored all my counsel, and would not accept my rebuke" Proverbs 1:25  
Sinners are lost, and need a Savior;

they are weak, and need strength;

and they are foolish, and need counsel. The Lord is the Savior, the Strength, and the Counselor — of all who believe him. But in nothing does the folly of the sinner appear more, than in his refusing to take God for his Counselor, or to listen to his advice. Yet he is always more ready to listen to anyone than to God, and to take any advice before that which God gives. God has condescended to counsel us, he does so still; but the generality of men ignore all of his counsel.

Yet it must be wise — for it is the counsel of the only wise God;

it is kind — for God counsels as a friend;

it is tender — for he counsels us a father does his children; and

it is important — for it refers to our present and everlasting welfare.

God might have allowed us to go on in sin and folly — and then have given us the just desert of our deeds; but instead of this, he has manifested the greatest kindness, the most marvelous condescension, and even now stoops to advise and counsel us!

He counsels us to avoid evil, the greatest evil, even SIN — that which will make us wretched in this world, and ten thousand times more so in the world to come. He cautions us against the temptations which lead to sin, and points out the way by which we may be completely delivered from it. He says, "Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way!" Proverbs 4:14-15. But this counsel is despised,

the path of temptation is entered,

the company of sinners is chosen,

the road to death is pursued, and

the kindness of God is disregarded!

He counsels us to secure the greatest good, even the salvation of the soul. He says, "I counsel you to buy from me . . .

gold refined in the fire — so you can become rich; and

white clothes to wear — so you can cover your shameful nakedness;

and salve to put on your eyes — so you can see!" Revelation 3:18.

He is willing to impart whatever you need. Though penniless — you may procure wealth, clothing, and wisdom. All that can render you safe, lovely, and happy; or in one word — to be saved with a glorious and everlasting salvation!

He counsels us to retain what is useful, most useful, as wisdom and prudence. He says, "Let your heart retain my words; keep my commandments and live. My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet!

He counsels us to keep company with the wise, the wisest of men. To make the saints our companions, who are the excellent ones, in whom is all his delight. He says, "Walk the ways of good men and keep to the paths of the righteous. For the upright will live in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the unfaithful will be torn from it!" Can any counsel be more wise, more kind, more tender, or more important? Yet the advice is generally neglected; it is all but universally despised. Therefore the Lord complains of us, he complains to us, he says, "You have ignored all my counsel." But who have done so? That prayerless young person, who lives . . .

as if there was no God in existence,

as if there was no Bible in the world,

as if no such counsel had ever been given. At night he lies down as thoughtless about his soul, as if he had no soul at all — as careless about salvation as if he needed it not. In the morning he rises equally thoughtless, rushes into the world, goes the round of business or pleasure — and thus treats God's counsel with contempt. But who have done so? That Sabbath breaker, who robs God of his time, his body of health, and his soul of salvation. One day out of seven, is divinely appointed, for the rest of the body, the refreshment of the soul, the service of God, and preparation for eternity. But this day is spent partly in bed, partly in frivolous amusements, partly in unprofitable company, or perhaps most of it in parties of pleasure. God counsels us to improve it, to enjoy it, to honor him by serving him in it — but the Sabbath breaker ignores all God's counsel. But who have done so? The men of business, who make their business their god; and to accumulate wealth, the great end of their existence. To them God said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also!" Matthew 6:19-21. But they rise early and stay up late, they scheme and plan, they labor and bustle through life — and the only object they have in view, is to make a fortune, or to rise in society. Thus they ignore all his counsel. But who have done so? The over-anxious ones, who are ever worried about the things of time, distracting and distressing their minds about what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and how they shall be clothed. The counsel of God to all such is, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own!" Matthew 6:31-34. Yet many are as anxious, as worried, as troubled — as if there was . . .

no God to care for them,  
no promise to secure them, and  
no account to be rendered by them!

Thus they ignore all his counsel. But who have done so? The impenitent sinner, who goes on in his sin, careless, indifferent, and hardened. No warning makes him tremble, no exhortation touches him with compunction, no invitation affects his heart; but he goes on in his course, as the senseless horse rushes into the battle! Yet the Lord has most solemnly warned him, he has most graciously exhorted him, saying, "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn, turn from your evil ways; for why will you die? Repent, and turn from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies; therefore turn and live! Ezekiel 33:11, Ezekiel 33:18, Ezekiel 33:30, Ezekiel 33:32.

Ah! thoughtless sinner, you are slighting the warning voice of mercy, you are trifling with the messages of tender love, you are heaping up wrath unto yourself against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God! You have ignore all his counsel. But who have done so? Look on that dying bed, see that poor emaciated form, listen to those bitter sighs and heavy groans! That poor creature has despised God's counsel, and is a fearful illustration of the truth of God's word! He was advised and cautioned — to him the Lord had said, "Hear now, therefore, and depart not from the words of my mouth, lest you mourn at the last, when your flesh and your body are consumed: and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me. The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly!" But he turned a deaf ear to the voice which spoke, he made himself like the deaf adder which stops the ear, which refuses to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely. He ignore God's counsel, and would have none of his reproof.

Reader, how is it with you? God has counseled you. He counsels you still; you cannot read his holy book, or hear a faithful gospel sermon — but God gives you counsel. He counsels you . . .

by the pen of inspiration,  
by the voice of every gospel preacher,  
by the example of every holy person,  
by the solemn dispensations of his providence,  
by the advice of judicious friends, and  
by the workings of conscience in your bosom.

God speaks once, yes twice — and man perceives it not. See that you refuse not him who speaks. He notices how you treat his counsel. His eye is upon you while you are reading these lines. He observes the effect which they have upon you. He will call you to give an account of the use which you make of them. Shall he have to say of you, "You have ignore all my counsel — and would none of my reproof!"

Remember, if you are guilty of such, conduct — you must assign a reason for it. You must meet him who counseled you, in judgment. He will soon summon you into his presence, and the period will soon arrive, "when everyone of us shall give an account of himself to God: for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ!" Romans 14:10, Romans 14:12. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done — whether it be good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord we persuade men!" 2 Corinthians 5:10-11.

O that I could persuade you! O that you would receive the counsel of God, and act upon it. The great day is coming. It will soon be here. The judge stands before the door! The sound of the last trumpet will soon be heard. You will soon be summoned to the judgment, and then if found unsanctified, you must be doomed to weep, wail, and gnash your teeth forever in hopeless despair! O that you were wise, that you understood and believed this; and, that you would consider your latter end!

Sinner, are you still secure?

Will you still refuse to pray?

Can your heart or hands endure

In the Lord's avenging day?

See his mighty arm is bared!

Awful terrors clothe his brow:

For his judgment stand prepared,

You must either break — or bow. At his presence nature shakes,

Earth affrighted hastes to flee,

Solid mountains melt like wax,

What will then become of thee? Who his advent may abide?

You that glory in your shame,

Will you find a place to hide,

When the world is enrapt in flame?

Then the rich, the great, the wise,

Trembling, guilty, self-condemned,

Must behold the wrathful eyes

Of the judge they once blasphemed! Where are now their haughty looks!

Oh their horror and despair,

When they see the opened books,

And their dreadful sentence hear!  
Lord, prepare us by your grace!  
Soon we must resign our breath;  
And our soul be called to pass  
Through the iron gate of death!  
Let us now our day improve,  
Listen to the gospel-voice;  
Seek the things that are above,  
Scorn the world's pretended joys!

## 25 The Alarm and Inquiry

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### The Alarm and Inquiry

"The sinners in Zion are terrified! Trembling grips the godless! Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isaiah 33:14

These 'sinners in Zion' represent the Church of God. The inhabitants of Zion were professors of religion. Likewise, many profess the Christian religion — who are not really Christians. They are strangers to the new birth. They have never passed from death unto life. Their opinions perhaps are changed — but their hearts remain just as they were. Their lives may be moral — but their hearts are not spiritual. They are enemies to God — though they profess to be his friends. They are rebels against the government of Jesus — while they profess to be his loyal subjects.

They are sinners in the most solemn place — and under peculiarly aggravating circumstances! Surrounded with gospel light — they go on in darkness. Commending the Savior with their lips — they withhold from him the heart. By professing Christ — they cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But by living in sin — they cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" They are not struggling with sin — but sternly attached to sin! It is not weakness which is the cause of their conduct — but inveterate wickedness. They are hypocrites — that is, they wear a mask. They pretend to be what they well know they are not. With their mouths they show much love to Christ — but their hearts go after their lusts!

Reader, it is a dreadful thing . . .

to be a hypocrite;

to be found among the Lord's people, while not really of them;

to profess Christ, and not to possess Christ!

You may deceive men — but you cannot deceive God. A mere profession may do when in health and strength — but it will not do for sickness and death. You may be bold and fearless now — but when God shall unmask you, and expose the nakedness of your soul — then you will be afraid, fearfulness and trembling will seize upon you suddenly. If you are indulging in any known sin, under a profession of religion — then you are a 'sinner in Zion' — and your state is most dangerous! The time is coming, when the 'sinners in Zion' shall be afraid. God has threatened them. He has threatened them with his sorest judgments. He is true and faithful to his word. His nature is unchangeable. You may change — but he cannot. His wrath is eternal — for it is his just displeasure against sin, it is his righteous opposition to the sinner. He hates all sin. But he especially hates deception. Hypocrisy is odious in his sight. He has pronounced the most dreadful woes against all such. They will not find any mercy at his hands — if they persevere in their hypocrisy.

They are generally afraid of trials — but how will they meet death? And if they are afraid of death, how will they stand in the judgment? How will they be able to lift up their faces before him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, who has been witness to all their hypocrisy, and who hates all the workers of iniquity!

Hypocrites are generally bold, conceited, confident, and daring — while things go smooth with them; but fearfulness will surprise them — -when death seizes upon them, or God calls them to appear before him in judgment. The Lord Jesus is coming. He is coming in power and great glory. He is coming to judge the world in righteousness. He is coming to render to every man according to his works. In the prospect of that day he proposes the most solemn QUESTIONS:

"Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire?" The element of fire is opposed to our nature. It inflicts the most dreadful pains. It is used by the Lord to represent the punishment that is to be inflicted upon all ungodly people. It is not merely fire — but consuming fire. Fire in its strength. Fire raging as it does when well fed with fuel. O how dreadful to be tormented in that flame! To be surrounded by that fierce, scorching, destructive element! Sinner! think of devouring fire, a lake of devouring fire — it is the due desert of your sins!

"Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Then, there are everlasting burnings! There is a fire that never shall be quenched! There are torments that shall never, never, never end! Yes, while God lives to punish, while the cause of punishment remains — the sinner must be punished! The torments of Hell will not purify. The lost are never sanctified by their sufferings in Hell. They will sin yet more and more — and justice requires that punishment should continue to be inflicted.

Impenitent sinners are to dwell with everlasting burnings. Hell is to be their unchangeable residence, their eternal portion. O what a dwelling! What a doom! What a destiny! And yet it is just — strictly just!

Let us then press home the question upon our consciences: "Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Can a question be more solemn? Is it not necessary? Ought it not to alarm us? Can we be justified in postponing the consideration of it, even for one hour? For one moment? My reader, are you a mere professor? Are you surrounded by such? God directs you to put the question to your own conscience, and to your fellows, "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" Ah! What if you should! What if your profession should end in this doom! What if your hope should prove like the spider's web? What if while you cry, "Peace and safety!" — that sudden destruction should come upon you? It may! It is possible. Is it probable? Search and look. Examine your heart. Examine impartially. Examine thoroughly. A mistake here is fearful, it is fatal, it may be irremediable.

Deceitful and deceiving professor — ponder these solemn questions. They are especially addressed to you. Every false covering will soon be stripped off. Your heart and your life will be laid bare — by the holy, sin-hating, sin-punishing God! We must sound the alarm! We would alarm you to prevent your ruin! We would be faithful — that you may be saved. Take heed that you do not eternally perish! Take heed that you do not persevere in hypocrisy — until it is too late. Do not even dream of redemption from the devouring fire, when once in it — or of the everlasting burnings being quenched! That is the greatest folly. It is an invention of the father of lies, to deceive your souls, and secure your damnation!

Now, you are under the reign of mercy; now, you are within sight of the cross; now, while the gospel invites you — confess your folly, deplore your criminality, sue for pardon, seek for sanctifying grace, and escape, escape, escape from the devouring fire! Flee, flee, flee from the everlasting burnings!!! But if you persevere in sin, if you continue to practice hypocrisy, I solemnly warn you, that you shall surely perish! Hell will be opened to meet you at your death, the fierce flames of damnation will curl around you, the doors of the horrid prison of despair will close upon you — and you will be lost, lost, lost forever! Your destruction will be your own act and deed — the effect of the course you have chosen, of the line of conduct you have pursued. Repent then and turn to God, so your iniquity shall not be your ruin. For, if you do not repent — it surely will. It deserves Hell. It demands punishment. It appeals to the justice of God, and its appeal will be regarded. A just God must punish the impenitent sinner. Hear then, the warning voice! Flee from the wrath to come. Hasten and escape from the consuming fire — from the everlasting burnings! Flee, flee for refuge, and lay hold of the hope set before you in the gospel. Life and death are set before you, therefore choose life that you may live — live and be happy forever!

Now hear the words of God, O man,

"Sinners among you all who can

With everlasting burnings dwell?

The wicked shall be cast to Hell!"

Hell is that woeful, dreadful place,

Where Jesus never shows his face;

Where sinners with devils must remain,

In hopeless horrors, endless pain!

God's wrath, without his mercy's there,

Wrath without mercy, who can bear?

How hot the fire, how huge the load,

Your sufferings show, O Son of God.

O man, let goodness make you melt.

Consider what the Lord has felt;

Repent, and to your Savior turn,

Who died that you may never burn! But if the Savior you despise,

And trust in vanity and lies;

Your doom is fixed — that doom is Hell,

You must with endless burnings dwell!

Tempests of angry fire will roll,

And beat upon your naked soul!

Then fly, at once, to Jesus fly,

And on his perfect work rely. His arms are open to receive,

All who in his dear name believe;

He loves to pardon, waits to bless

With all the riches of his grace!

## 26 Our One Business

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Our One Business "Prepare to meet your God!" Amos 4:12

Sinners have wandered from God. They have no disposition to return unto him. They desire him to let them alone. They are displeased when he comes near to them. They say, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of your ways!" They continue to wander farther and farther from him. They are as sheep going astray. "All we like sheep have gone astray — we have turned every one to his own way." We have turned our back upon God. We have closed our eyes to exclude the light of his glory. We have wandered on in darkness. But sinners and God must meet. This is plainly revealed in the holy Scriptures. The day is fixed. The hour is hastening. The arrangements are made. We are summoned to appear before him. The meeting will be most solemn. The most momentous consequences depend on it.

God and sinners must meet — it is necessary that they should. God will clear his character. He will refute the calumnies of his foes. He will cause every one of his enemies to face him. Each one shall answer for himself. Every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.

We must meet him — this is certain. Justice demands it. Truth has published it. Nothing can possibly prevent it. O how important it is, that we prepare for it! We are not prepared in our natural state — but prepared or unprepared — we must meet! But suppose we should be summoned in an unprepared state! The supposition is fearful. It is possible. It may be probable. If it should be, look at the difference between the parties meeting: A holy God — and a polluted creature. A just God — and a criminal. A jealous God — and a rebel taken in arms against him.

Consider too, the circumstances under which we shall meet. It will be a meeting of foes — sinners are enemies to God, and God will appear the enemy of the sinner who dies in rebellion against him. He will say, "As for these my enemies, who would have me to reign over them — bring them forth and slay them before me!"

It will be a meeting of the just judge — and a guilty criminal. One who has violated the best of laws, rebelled against the best of Sovereigns, and refused to be pardoned and reconciled when urgently entreated. The judge is bound by law to punish, and the criminal before him is a convicted rebel. What a dreadful meeting!

Every one should prepare to meet God. We cannot avoid the meeting, however much we may desire it; we ought therefore to set ourselves seriously to prepare for it. We must meet God, the question is: In what character shall we meet him? Shall we meet him as a friend — or a foe? Shall we meet him as a pardoned, restored, and beloved child — or as a hardened, perverse, and guilty criminal. You are called upon to seriously consider — in what character will you meet God? Be ready with your account which must be presented to God. If you die out of Christ — then you must account: For every sin. For every duty you have neglected. For every talent you have allowed to lie idle, or have put to an improper use. For time squandered. For a bible neglected. For a throne of grace despised. For the ministry of the word disregarded. For vain thoughts. For idle words. For

improper desires. For unlawful deeds. For the lack of exact conformity to God's holy law in thought, word, and deed. For a life of sin. For presenting to God a nature impure and unfit for Heaven. Is this the case? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself. But if it is, how can you answer for one sin of a thousand, or how can you give a satisfactory account for any one at all. What will you then do. Mercy will have left the throne — and stern impartial justice will fill it. You will be without excuse. You will be like the man at the marriage feast without the wedding garment, to whom the King, when he came in to see the guests, said, "Friend, how did you get in here — not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless!" The garment was provided and had no doubt been presented to him — but he refused it and chose to appear in his own clothing, contrary to the law of the feast, and therefore he had not one word to say. He could offer no excuse. The Lord has provided a salvation for sinners, it is presented to them by the gospel; they are invited, exhorted, and besought to avail themselves of it; they refuse, they meet God in an unprepared state, and what can they say? What excuse can they make?

Reader, when you meet God, expect him to be and do just as his word declares. He will appear as the just God, glorious in holiness — and will render to every one according to his works. He has informed you before hand, he summons you to appear before him, he commands you to prepare for the interview, even now his voice may be heard, saying, "Prepare to meet your God!"

Therefore if you are an unconverted sinner, repent. Have you been thoughtless? Think, for the subject demands it. Have you been careless? Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, for your case requires it. Have you been trifling with eternal realities? Beware, lest he take you away with a stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver you. Are you vacillating? Decide. Decide at once, for there is no time to be lost. Are you anxious? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Cast your soul upon him. Commit yourself unto him. He is able to save you. He is willing. He will save you. He will save you now. Are you a Christian indeed? Be diligent that you may be found by him in peace, without spot, and blameless. Then, in your case the meeting will be a blessed one. It will be a meeting of friends, who have for a time been separated — but who will never more be separated. It will be the meeting of a loving Father, with his beloved child, who has come home to reside with him forever. It will be a meeting between the Master and his faithful servant, whom he intends to reward for all his services on earth. It will be the meeting of the Savior — with one for whom he labored, suffered, and died, who has been saved by his grace, and is now come to share in his glory! Blessed, and glorious meeting this!

God is coming! We must soon meet him! We must meet him prepared — or unprepared; as friends — or as foes. We shall soon be commended and rewarded by him — or be condemned and punished with everlasting destruction. We are warned now — that we may escape then. We are exhorted to prepare — that we may be welcomed to his glory when he appears. Those only who are ready, will be accepted of him in that day: as it is written, "And those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast — and the door was shut!"

If unprepared, we shall be eternally excluded from his kingdom and glory. Be therefore ready, for in such an hour as you think not — your Lord will come. He says, "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Revelation 16:15. He is even now on his way, the distant rumbling of his chariot wheels may be heard. He comes, he comes to judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth. The

great day of wrath is at hand. The day of vengeance is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed has come. "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him!" Jude 1:14-15.

Hark! from the highest Heavens,

from the lowest Hell,

from the cross of Calvary,

from the Word of God,

from the open grave,

from the earnest preacher —

a voice proceeds, it is directed to you, it cries in solemn tones, "Prepare, Prepare, prepare to meet your God!"

## 27 The Inspired Testimony

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### The Inspired Testimony

"For you Lord, are good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all those who call upon you!" Psalms 86:5 The mind is naturally prejudiced against God. We have all wrong views of his character, and it is the design of Satan to foster and encourage such views. We can only know what God is, from his word. To that word we should therefore go, whenever we wish to understand the character, or the claims, or the disposition of God towards us. In this verse we have a very sweet view of God. David had been taught to know God in the school of experience. The Holy Spirit was his teacher. He had tried the word of God and found it true, and he gives us the result of his trials in his writings. He not only tells us that God is good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy — but to whom he is so, even to all those who call upon him. The characters are distinguished. They call upon God. Of men in general it is testified, that they do not call upon God. God is not in all their thoughts. They are strangers to prayer. If they use a form, they do not know what real prayer is.

Those who call upon God must know him. They must not only know that there is a God — but they must also know something of his nature and character. The knowledge of God lies at the foundation of all spiritual worship. They must not only know God — but also their need of him. That he only has what they need — and that he only can do what they require. If we do not feel that we need from God, what we cannot obtain elsewhere — we shall never truly call upon him.

There must also be faith in him. We must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Without faith — it is impossible either to serve or please God.

Real prayer is the soul's application to God. In prayer we apply to God for what we feel we need, and for what he has promised to bestow. Those who really call upon God, pour out their hearts before him; and make a personal application to him for temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings.

Those who call upon God aright — must be sincere. Prayer is rather the work of the heart — than of the head or tongue. God does not look so much at what we say — as at what we feel. Desire is the soul of prayer.

There must also be simplicity. Praying, is but a child pleading with its father. In prayer the more simple we are — the better. In this sense as well as others — we must become as little children.

There must also be earnestness. We must really mean what we say, ask for what we need, and ask as if we desired what we ask. Prayer is not eloquence — but earnestness. If we thus call upon God — we shall find that he is good. The Psalmist gives us the character of God, in speaking to God. His testimony is also a plea. "You, Lord, are good." God is essentially and eternally good. He is, The Good One. There is none good but God. He is the benevolent and beneficent One. He is good in himself, and delights to do his creatures good. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." But he is especially good to those who call upon him, to the soul

who seeks him. His goodness appears in nature, it is daily displayed in providence — but especially in grace.

He is "ready to forgive." There is no backwardness in God to forgive his worst enemies, as there is in us. He is ready, like the father of the Prodigal, who as soon as he saw his son in the distance — ran to him, forgave him, fell upon his neck and kissed him. He is always ready to forgive. He is at this moment. Reader, God is ready to forgive you. Nothing is necessary to dispose him to do so, he is naturally disposed to it. You need not a saint to intercede for you. You may go to him yourself, and go just as you are — and prove that he is ready to forgive.

He will forgive all kinds of sinners. He has done so. Old sinners, and young sinners. The great among men, as Manasseh; the lowest dregs of society, as the dying robber on the cross. The openly profane, as the adulteress in the temple; and the moral and gentle, as the evangelist John. There are no exceptions, for all are invited; none are rejected, for he will never cast out.

All manner of sins — he will pardon. If deep-dyed as scarlet, or glowing like crimson — he will make them like wool; and the foulest sinner — he will make whiter than the driven snow! That he is ready to forgive is clear, not only from the plain testimonies of his word — but from the provision he has made in the person and work of Jesus, for bestowing pardon in the easiest way, and on the most honorable principles.

He can be just while he forgives, and his justice would be obscured, to say the least, if he was to refuse to pardon any one who came seeking forgiveness for the Savior's sake. But he has not only devised a way, in which he can pardon the greatest sinners, consistent with his character for justice and holiness — but he has also sent us his gospel to inform us of this! And not only to inform us of this — but to stir us up to seek for pardon and eternal life, and to give us the clearest possible warrant to expect it, if we apply for it in the name of Jesus. In addition to this, he gives his Holy Spirit to convince of sin, unfold the gospel, reveal the Savior, and to lead the poor dejected sinner to him for pardon and peace! And to crown the whole, he has set before us in his word, innumerable examples; he has taken them from all countries, through all time, of every class of sinners — and for Christ's sake has freely forgiven them all trespasses! All that he requires of us as a qualification — is to feel that we are sinners, guilty, polluted and undone. All that he prescribes is, that we confess our sins and plead for mercy. All that he expects as a return — is contrition, and consecration to his service. He says, "Only acknowledge your iniquity." And "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "He is ready to forgive."

He is also "plenteous in mercy." The ocean of mercy is as full as it ever was. The sun of mercy shines as freely as it ever did. "God is rich in mercy." Abundant in mercy. His mercy is . . .

as vast as his nature,

as varied as the needs of his creatures,

as free as the evening breeze!

There is no lack of mercy in God — but there is a great lack of faith in us. His mercy is great unto the Heavens, and his truth reaches unto the clouds. Reader, whatever may be your case, whatever your circumstances — there is in God's mercy, just what will suit you. There is mercy . . .

to pardon your sin,  
to purify your heart,  
to cheer your spirit,  
to supply your needs,  
and to save your soul.

Apply for it, apply for it in the name of Jesus, ask the Lord to glorify his mercy in your present and everlasting salvation — and you shall find that he is plenteous in mercy.

Let us then be careful, that our views of God's character are consistent, that they are derived from his own word; for unless our minds are rightly informed — our hearts will not be rightly affected. Unless we have right views of God — we cannot have right feelings towards God. Let us endeavor, also to exercise faith and hope in God. Let us believe that he is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy; and then hope or expect to prove his goodness, enjoy the comforts of a pardoned state, and rejoice in the plentitude of his mercy.

Let us also speak honorably of God to others, if we meet with any who have harsh and unscriptural views of God, let us endeavor to correct them, and by all means in our power let us spread the good, the glorious news — that the Lord is good, ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy unto all those who all upon him!

## 28 The Assurance

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The Assurance "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!" Acts 2:21 The means of grace and salvation were once confined to the Jews — but the prophets predicted that the time would come, when the Son of God would be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And the Apostle Peter assured the multitude on the day of Pentecost, that this period had arrived, that the Spirit would now no longer be confined to the descendants of Abraham — but would be poured out on all flesh, and that whoever would call on the name of the Lord should be saved. This is good news for poor Gentiles. It is a message of mercy to all sinners. It is calculated and intended to raise hope in the bosom of the desponding, and to produce faith in the dejected and cast down.

Salvation is the greatest blessing that God can bestow! It is deliverance from the greatest misery — and exaltation to the greatest happiness. It is the greatest change in man's state and character that can possibly be effected. It is the greatest display of the wisdom, grace, and power of God. It is the very blessing that you need. The blessing which you must receive — or be eternally undone. It is a blessing for the present, for it is deliverance from the guilt of sin, which makes you miserable; from the power of sin, which makes you unlovely; and from the love of sin, which proves you to be God's enemy. It is a blessing for the future: it secures to you safety and happiness in time — and glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life when time shall be no more. It is a blessing which comprehends every other. If the man is saved — all good things are his. If the man is lost — nothing good is his. To be saved, is . . .

for the soul to be restored to health;

to be put in possession of unsearchable wealth;

to be raised to the highest honor; and

to be entitled to eternal glory. No word is as sweet as salvation, as no word is as terrible as its opposite, damnation. Reader, there is no intermediate between these two extremes. "The wages of sin is death," or damnation; "but the gift of God is eternal life," or salvation, "through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

You may be saved — for "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved!" But you may be lost — for "He who believes not shall be damned."

God has revealed himself by name; that is, clearly and suitably. He has told us what he is, what he requires of us, what he has done for us, and what he expects from us. He has brought out before us his two most glorious attributes in a variety of forms, his justice and his mercy. He is "the just God," yet "the Lord our God is merciful." He will not show mercy at the expense of his justice — but justice interposes no barrier in the way of our salvation, if we are willing to be saved by grace, through faith in Jesus. This is the point to which we need constantly be directed: upon this we should steadily fix the eye. Jehovah is a just God — and yet a Savior. Justice has got all its demands at the hands of Jesus, for every one who believes in his name. Mercy is extended to

every one who seeks it through the Savior's blood. God is . . .

gracious, to the unworthy;

merciful, to the miserable;

long suffering, to the rebellious;

abundant in goodness, to the poor;

true to his word, in every particular;

keeping mercy for thousands, who shall yet seek it at his throne; forgiving the iniquity, transgressions, and sins, of all who confess and seek pardon at his mercy seat; but he will never clear the guilty.

If the Savior is rejected, if man will trust to his own imperfect performances, if he is guilty of rejecting God's message, refusing his mercy, despising his Son, and trifling with his truth — then he must perish. God will not clear him by pardoning his sins, or imputing to him the righteousness of his Son; he will hold him guilty, and punish him accordingly.

God has revealed himself most fully, and most clearly, in the person of Jesus. Yes, so correct is the representation given of the Father by Jesus, that he could say, "He who has seen me — has seen the Father." In Jesus you may see . . .

what God is,

what God approves,

what God requires, and

what God will do.

Study Christ — if you will know the Father. He is the express image of the Father. The faithful and exact likeness. The name of God is in him. He is God's name embodied, and presented in full before the eyes of men.

God may now be approached by sinners without fear. They may call upon him. They may call upon him by name. They may call upon him for the greatest of all blessings, salvation. They may call upon him for salvation, and expect it as a free gift. They may call upon him, persuaded that it is not in his nature to refuse them, because he has given the promise, that "whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved." God will hear every one who cries to him. "His ears are open to their cries." If they seek him in Jesus — they must find him. If they seek to be accepted and blessed, through what Jesus has done and suffered — they are sure to be received with favor and obtain what they seek. He will attend to the prayer of all such, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer." Prayer is calling upon God. It is crying to God. It is pleading with God. It is asking favors of God.

"Whoever shall call upon the Lord, shall be saved." All distinctions are now completely leveled. You are as welcome to Jesus, as you can be. You are as welcome to approach God's throne, to call upon his name, to seek salvation at his hands, as any one who ever came. "For there is no

difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him." Nor can any one seek in vain, if he seeks with sincerity of heart; if he is in earnest in his pursuit of the blessing; and if he proves his sincerity and earnestness by his perseverance. Our earnestness should be in proportion to the value and importance of the blessing; as therefore no blessing is half so valuable or important as salvation — we should seek it with greater earnestness and determination of soul. My friend, God alone can save. He can save you. He has pledged himself to save all that call upon him. His word cannot be broken. He cannot be unfaithful. He will therefore save you, if you call upon him to do so. You are, therefore, placed in the most solemn and interesting circumstances imaginable. Salvation is brought near to you. You are not far from the kingdom of God. You have destroyed yourself — but there is help for you in God. You are exposed to eternal damnation — but eternal salvation is set before you. It may be obtained by you. It is to be had without money and without price. The terms of the promise are the most definite imaginable: "Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The promise is as positive as it is definite. Whoever will, may call upon the name of the Lord: and whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Nothing can be plainer. Language cannot be more simple. The feeblest intellect can understand it, and the most depraved character is included in it.

Exclusion is not the act of God — but the crime of man. God excludes no man, for the message of the gospel is to every one; but many exclude themselves, and their doing so, flows from their unbelief. God says, "Come!" But man says, "I will not!" God says, "Whoever shall call on my name shall be saved." But man says, "I will not call upon your name." And yet some of these people profess to think it hard — if they should be punished for their sins. But he who will not be saved, when God is willing to save him freely — certainly deserves to perish, and thus reap the fruit of his folly, and endure the desert of his criminality. May the Lord preserve us from such glaring inconsistency, and give us grace for obedience to the faith.

Reader, what do you think of this assurance? Is it not encouraging? Can anything more clearly show that God is willing to save sinners? To save you — if you call upon him? And if you refuse to do so, and go on in your sin, and perish at last — will it not be just? Could you reasonably complain? Would not your own conscience condemn you if you did? Seek then, the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.

## 29 The Best Advice!

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The Best Advice!

"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God!" 1 Chronicles 22:19

You have neglected this important matter too long. It ought to have occupied your thoughts, and have engaged your mind long ago. The knowledge of God is necessary to your peace, holiness, and happiness. All men are ignorant of him by nature. They are "without God." They know him not. They love him not. They believe him not. They are alienated from God by wicked works. This was your state once, if it is not now. Your present afflictions call upon you with a loud voice, to seek the Lord. They say, "Seek the Lord while you may be found, call you upon him while he is near!" "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God!"

You are exhorted to "seek the Lord your God." He created you by his power. He gave you your being at first. You would have never existed, but for him. It was his sovereign wisdom and power, which formed you.

He preserves you by his providence. All your supplies are from him. He holds your soul in life. He has kept you from sudden death, and preserved you from ten thousand dangers. You had long since sunk into the grave — but for his preserving goodness.

He visits you by his gospel. In his word God comes near to you. He speaks to you. He sets before you your state, points out your danger, invites you to Jesus, and promises salvation to all who believe in his name. He is near you now. He has visited you on this sick bed. He sent you this little book. He speaks to you at this moment. He counsels you in kindness. He warns you in love. He waits to be gracious unto you. He strives with you by his Spirit. You have felt conviction. You have been alarmed at your state. You were afraid to die and appear before God. You found that you needed something which you had not got. You were stirred up to think. You were prompted to seek the Lord. This was the striving of the Holy Spirit. It was God at work upon your soul. He will judge you by his Son. He has fixed the day. He has given you notice of it. He has commanded you to prepare for it. Your indictment is drawn up. The witnesses against you are ready. It is only the long-suffering of God that keeps you in the land of hope, within reach of mercy, under the sound of the gospel.

"Now then, set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God!" Seek him with earnestness, for your souls salvation is at stake. Nothing is of half so much importance to you as this. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Strive, even to agony. Set your heart upon it. Make it your one business. Throw all the energies of your soul into it. You cannot be too earnest.

Seek him with sincerity. Formal service is rejected by God. To seek with the mouth without the heart, is hypocrisy. You must feel the importance of the matter. You must realize its solemnity. You must from your inmost soul desire to know, possess, and enjoy God above everything else.

Seek him with determination. Let nothing divert you from it. Satan will try, he will entice you with a thousand things. But resist the devil — and he will flee from you. Your carnal friends may endeavor to divert your mind from the subject — but yield not to their solicitations. It is for your life. Your happiness or misery in eternity depends upon your seeking or neglecting the Lord in time.

"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God!" The present is the proper time. Are you young? Youth is the very best season. There are more encouragements given to the young to seek the Lord than to any other. Are you more advanced in age? The greater reason there is, that you should not delay one moment, lest your heart become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Now while you are afflicted, seek the Lord. Perhaps this affliction was sent on purpose to give you time, and to stir you up to this important duty. Seek the Lord now while mercy waits, and may be obtained; while Jesus pleads, and will not cast out; while the gospel trumpet sounds, and encourages you to expect pardon, peace, liberty, and eternal life; while the refuge is open to receive you, into which you may run and be safe; while the Spirit is promised, and is given to every one that asks; while salvation is bestowed without money and without price; now while under the joyful gospel sound.

Seek the Lord now . . .

before sin hardens you;

before Satan blinds you;

before the world gets entire dominion over you;

before God says, "Let him alone!"

before the judge says, "He who is unjust — let him be unjust still; and he who is filthy — let him be filthy still."

"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God." You have delayed quite long enough. You have now a fine opportunity. You have the greatest possible encouragement. You may never have such a season again. My dear friend, upon what is your heart now set? Is it simply upon restoration to health, or deliverance from your present affliction? This is but a secondary matter. May the Holy Spirit now set your heart to seek the Lord with a steady, fixed, and unwavering determination. Upon what is your heart likely to be set forever? If it is not set upon seeking the Lord now — then it will not be set upon glorifying the Lord in eternity. If you do not seek the Lord in time — then you cannot enjoy him in eternity. If you are not made holy in this world — then nothing can make you happy in the next. Begin then from this moment, and seek the Lord with all your heart and soul. Or if you have begun to seek him, persevere steadily and earnestly until you find him.

## 30 The Savior's Ability

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### The Savior's Ability

"Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost, those who come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them!" Hebrews 7:25 This is a most precious portion. It has cheered many a drooping heart. It is full of the richest consolation. Jesus ever lives. He is a great High Priest. He has, by offering up himself as a sacrifice for sin, made an infinite atonement, on the ground of which the vilest may be saved. There are no limits to its efficacy. No case can now be desperate. No sinner need, or should despair. There is pardon through the blood of Christ. Pardon for the vilest! Pardon for every one who feels he needs it, and who is willing to be pardoned for the sake of what Jesus has done! To doubt this, is to doubt the truth of the gospel. To fear that God will not pardon a sinner, who applies to him in the name of Jesus — proves that we do not understand the gospel, or that we do not believe it. Jesus can save to the uttermost of human guilt. He has saved the chief of sinners, and by so doing has proved that he can save all who come unto God by him. All things are possible to him, for he is God; the salvation of sinners is especially his work, as he is God-man. That he may save sinners to the uttermost, and save them for evermore — he died in their stead and ever lives to make intercession for them.

Suppose the worst case you can. Suppose that someone could be justly charged with all the sins, of all the sinners in London; with all the sins of thought, of word, and of deed, committed in London in fifty years. If that one were to come to God by Jesus, could he save him? He could. He could not only save him — but save him easily, honorably, and so as to bring eternal glory to God by his salvation! If you, reader, were that sinner, and if you felt your sinful state, were conscious of your guilt, though ten thousand fears may arise in your heart, and the most gloomy doubts possible harrass your soul; yet if you go to God by Jesus — he would save you immediately, and save you for evermore. He can save any sinner without an exception, who applies to him, and he will save all such. His precious blood cleanses from all sin.

"He is able to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him." By nature every sinner is afar from God. Sin is turning the back upon God, and running away from God. The sinner, like the prodigal is in a far country. He is gone astray like a lost sheep. But in order to his coming to God, he is quickened by the Holy Spirit. He discovers his true state and condition. He thinks. He feels. He fears. He scarcely knows what to do. He comes to himself. His thoughts are directed to God. The gospel meets his case. A desire for reconciliation to God springs up in the soul. He would not only be pardoned, and so be saved from Hell; but be reconciled to God and walk in friendship with him — and so be prepared for Heaven. He is made willing to come to God in his own way. That is, in the way set forth in the gospel. Not by works of his own performing — but by faith in the perfect work of Christ. Not by the ceremonies of the law, or the assistance of a human priesthood — but by Jesus Christ alone.

Those who come to God by Christ, come believing his gracious promise, and encouraged by his most free invitation; they come confessing their sins, and acknowledging that they deserve

condemnation; they come seeking for salvation through Jesus Christ. They plead his blood, they trust in his merits, and expect to be accepted and saved only for his sake. Self is entirely renounced, and Jesus alone is trusted. They have no confidence in anyone but him, nor do they expect anything from God, but through him. He is the way by which they pass into the presence of God. He is the plea which they use before God. He is the great High Priest, whom they entrust with all things pertaining to God. They come out of self, away from sinners, and draw near to God. For such he is mighty to save, almighty to lead them to Heaven. For all who come unto God by him — Jesus ever lives to make intercession. He presents himself before the Father for them. He points to Gethsemane and Calvary, and like the High Priest of old — he presents the blood which he shed, before the mercy-seat. He lifts up his nail-pierced hands, presents his wounded side, and thorn-crowned brow — and, as it were, says, "For that sinner I suffered on earth! For that sinner I bled and died! In that sinner's salvation I feel the deepest interest. Father, forgive his sins, blot out his transgressions, listen to his prayers, grant his requests, and for my sake — save his soul. I have obeyed the law which he violated, I have suffered the penalty which he incurred, I have shed my blood for his salvation; and now honor me — by saving him!" For all who come unto God by him — Jesus desires and asks for the pardon of all their sins, that they may enjoy peace with God, that they may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and that they may receive a full salvation. His desires are always gratified, his requests are always granted, and consequently all who come unto God by him are saved.

He knows every one that comes to God by him. Not one can possibly escape his notice. He observes . . .

every eye which is directed to his cross;

every heart which desires salvation in his name; and

every suppliant who pleads with God for his sake. As he knows such — so also he feels the deepest interest in them. He can get glory by their salvation. They are the seed promised him. He views them as the reward of his sufferings and death. He is nearly related to them, for having taken their nature, he is become their Brother. He therefore feels for them, a brother's love; and pleads for them, with a brother's earnestness.

He is solemnly engaged for all such:

they are the sheep, of which he is the Shepherd;

they are the parties, for whom he is an Advocate;

they are the sinners, whom he came to save from their sins.

He will be glorified in them on earth now, he will be glorified in them when he comes again a second time, and he will be glorified in them for ever. He ever pleads for them, and he always prevails. He cannot intercede in vain. The Father always hears him. He only pleads for what God is pleased to bestow, and therefore there can be no doubt of success. All who come unto God by him shall be saved, let their character, condition, or circumstances be what they may. My dear friend, are you coming to God? Are you coming to God as a poor lost sinner? Are you coming to God for pardon, reconciliation, peace, and holiness? Are you coming to God by Jesus, by Jesus alone? Do you renounce all other ways and methods — and seek to be heard, accepted, and

saved — for the sake of Christ alone? If so, you have turned your back upon the world. It has lost its charms; it no longer has power to attract, fascinate, and bewilder you. Your eye is fixed upon the cross. That is the object which attracts, affects, and suits you.

You seek salvation only through the blood of Christ. Your heart reposes on the promise of God. The promise that your sins shall be pardoned, that your prayers shall be heard, that your needs shall be supplied.

But, if you are not coming to God — then you are going from God.

If you are not coming to God by Jesus — then you are going from God with Satan.

If you are not in the way to Heaven — then you are in the way to Hell.

If you do not come to God by Christ now — then you will be driven from God by the sentence of Christ soon.

If he does not save you now, while he is on the throne of grace — then he will adjudge you to everlasting destruction, when he is seated on the throne of his glory.

Come then to God — to God by Jesus — to God for a present salvation — and everlasting life is yours! He waits to be gracious unto you, he is exalted to have mercy upon you. He is ready to receive you this moment — to pardon your sins, to justify your person, to introduce you to his Father, and to fill you with all joy and peace in believing. If Jesus does not save you, no one else can — but he will not, unless you come unto God by him.

## 31 The Enemy Entreated!

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### The Enemy Entreated!

"We beg you in Christ's stead — be reconciled to God!" 2 Corinthians 5:20 The kindness and love of God toward man is so great, that we sometimes feel it difficult to believe the statements of scripture on the point. If God had been willing to listen to a penitent sinner — if he had been willing to be reconciled to him upon any terms, it would have been a great thing. But such is his love, that he has come down to us in the person of his Son, he has done all that is necessary for our honorable reconciliation to himself, he has sent his servants with the kindest message which he could prepare, and does now by them entreat us to be reconciled unto him. The ministry of the gospel, is the ministry of reconciliation. It is intended to bring about our reconciliation to God, and to lead us into the enjoyment of his favor and love. By it, God invites us to himself, promises that he will not impute our trespasses unto us — but that he will receive us graciously, love us freely, and save us for evermore! "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we beg you in Christ's stead — be reconciled to God."

You are by nature the enemy of God. Your heart is enmity against him, you are not subject to his law — but you live in open hostility to his government. If you doubt this, or feel tempted to deny it, just attend seriously to the following enquiries. Do you know God as your Friend and Father? Has he been revealed to you as such? Are you familiar with him? Is there any fellowship between God and your soul? Do you believe that God speaking in his word? Do you read the bible as the very word of the eternal God? Do you feel while you are reading it — that God is speaking to you? That his testimony respecting the fearful state of sinners, refers to you? That his description of sin, refers to your sin? That his threatenings are directed to you, as long as you remain impenitent? That his invitations are to you? Do you believe him when he promises eternal life to every believer, and threatens with eternal fire every unbeliever who lives and dies in sin? Do you love God as a Father, a kind, tender, loving father? Have you confidence in his kindness and love? Do you render a cheerful obedience to his precepts? Do you know what it is to enjoy his presence, and do you value his presence more than money, finery, friends or worldly honor? Are his people the objects of your love, and your chosen companions? Do you view things as God views them? Do you choose what he chooses, and hate what he hates? In a word, are you like-minded with God, and walking with him in holy fellowship?

If so, you are reconciled to God. But if you are a stranger to the experience of these things, however amiable your temper, however moral your life, however highly you may be esteemed by your friends and relatives — then you are an enemy to God: and "we beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God."

Attend carefully to this affectionate and earnest exhortation. Be convinced of your true state before God. Fix your eye upon your criminality and guilt, as the enemy of a God so great, so good, so ready to forgive. Pray the Holy Spirit, to give you a clear and correct view of your state and character at this moment. Come before God with a frank confession, lay out your whole case

before him, conceal nothing from him — but let him hear your whole case from your own mouth.

Let your confession be accompanied with earnest prayer. Pray that your sins may be all pardoned, for the sake of what Jesus did and suffered. Pray that your heart may be renewed, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray that you may be brought into sweet and holy fellowship with God. Hope in his mercy — while you plead at his throne. He has said, "I will receive you!" and he will be faithful to his word. He has told you, by his servant John, that "if we confess our sins — he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. He will therefore forgive your sins, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness — when you humbly confess them at his throne of grace. Hope therefore "in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." Let nothing henceforth satisfy you — but the witness in your heart, that God is at peace with you. That he has forever put away your sins, that he has received you into his favor, and is pleased with you as a Father with his restored child. He accepts just such sinners as you are, through Jesus, and treats them with unutterable kindness and love. He will accept you in Jesus, and treat you as a dear and tenderly beloved child!

God beseeches you to be reconciled — what stupendous condescension is this! We also beg you in Christ's stead — be reconciled to God. As though we went down upon our knees, and with imploring earnestness, as one pleading with another to abstain from what would assuredly prove his ruin — we beg you to be reconciled to God.

"We beg you." It is the language of love — of kind tender hearted love.

"We beg you." It is the language of pity — of soft, melting, condescending pity.

"We beg you." It is the language of concern — of deep, abiding, intense concern.

"We beg you in Christ's stead." As his representatives. As his sent ones. As those who deeply sympathize with him in his love to immortal souls. In the stead of that same Jesus who once invited sinners personally in the land of Judea — who exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come — who wept over those who rejected his message, refused his mercy, and cruelly sought his blood — who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God — who prayed for his very murderers while their hands were dyed with his blood — who ever lives at the right hand of God, to make intercession for all who come unto God by him — who will soon come to judge the world in righteousness, and consign all his enemies to endless torments! In his name, by his authority — we beg you to be reconciled to God.

He has commissioned us to do so, he has commanded us to do it, and he has promised to be with us in this work, even unto the end of the world.

Dear friend, are you the friend — or are you the enemy of God? Are you at peace with God — or are you in rebellion against him? If the latter, I beseech you to be reconciled to him. He imposes no hard conditions. He requires nothing that is unnecessary or unreasonable. He only requires you . . .

to submit to his authority,

to confess your sins,

to appeal to his mercy,

to rely on the atoning blood of his dear Son, and

embrace the salvation which he has set before you in the gospel. In one word — to be saved by his grace. To accept of salvation as a favor, a free gift, a proof and pledge of his infinite love. Resist no longer — but yield yourself unto God. Flee . . .

from sin — to the cross,

from self — to Jesus,

from danger — to God, who is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. God speaks to you, by his own holy word, by your present affliction, by the voice of friendship, and by this little book, and he says, "Be reconciled to God!"

## 32 The Savior's Inquiry

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The Savior's Inquiry "Do you believe on the Son of God?" John 9:35

It is difficult to conceive of a question of greater importance than this. It concerns us all. It is to be addressed to every one. It demands attention. It requires serious consideration.

Reader, will you give a few minutes to its consideration? Do not pass it by as common-place. But concentrate and fix your thoughts upon it. You may never yet have given it the attention it deserves. Read, and may the Holy Spirit bless what you read to your eternal welfare. Consider —

1. The OBJECT of faith. "The Son of God." Do you believe that there is a Son of God? One who possesses the nature of the Father — who is equal to him — exactly like him? Who has every divine perfection? Who claims every attribute that is essential to Deity? Who is the brightness of his glory — the express image of his person — or exact resemblance of his substance? Do you believe that the Son is God? That he is infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent? That he is distinct from the Father — yet every way equal to the Father — being God over all, and blessed forever? Do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God? That in him dwelt all the fullness of the godhead bodily? That He who appeared in time — existed from eternity? That though human — he is at the same time naturally, essentially, and eternally divine? That in him there are two distinct natures — humanity and divinity? That the natures are united; distinct — and yet connected; so connected that what is done by the one, may be ascribed to the other; and yet so distinct, that the godhead is not the manhood, nor the manhood the godhead? This is the great mystery of godliness — God was manifest in the flesh. God and man are united in one person — and that one person is Jesus of Nazareth. Do you believe that the Son of God is Lord of all? That he created, upholds, claims, disposes of, and rules all things by his power, wisdom, and benevolence? That he has all authority in Heaven and in earth? Do you believe that as Lord of all . . .

he is the Savior — the only Savior;

that his sacrifice, is the only atonement;

that his obedience, is the only justifying righteousness;

that his gospel, is the only glorious good news; and

that his Spirit, the only source of life, light, and holiness? Do you believe that he can save to the very uttermost? That he does save certainly and honorably? That he is ready to save all who apply to him? That he will save every poor sinner who ventures on him?

Such is the object of our faith. Thus Jesus is set forth in God's holy word. Do You believe on him? Consider,

2. The faith required. The gospel is a statement of facts — of facts which immediately concern us, of facts conveyed in simple terms, and illustrated in a striking and impressive manner. They more

particularly relate to Jesus — what he is, what he said, what he did, what he is pledged to do. Have you carefully read those facts? Have you seriously considered them? Have you received them as coming from God, as written under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Do you credit the facts? Are they in your estimation, true — literally and strictly true? Do you feel persuaded that they are the very truth of God? That they are worthy of your regard and acceptance? Do you receive the testimony as from God? Do you embrace the message as directed to you? Do you feel confident that the Savior is just what holy scripture declares him to be? Can you venture your immortal soul on what he has done and suffered alone — for acceptance with God and everlasting life? Is the language of your heart addressing him,

"Other refuge have I none,

Hangs my helpless soul on You!"

If so — then you truly believe on the Son of God — for faith is the hearty persuasion of the truth of the gospel, and the confident expectation of the blessings which it promises. Now the gospel reveals a Savior; a Savior who can save every sinner; a Savior who pledges himself to save every sinner who comes unto him; a Savior who promises pardon, peace, and everlasting life — to every one who gives credit to, and exercises confidence in, his word. If therefore you understand the facts and give credit to them; if you receive the promises and place confidence in them, you must expect to receive the blessings promised, and thus giving credit to the word, exercising confidence in the word, and expecting the blessings promised to every believer — then you have peace with God, you have joy in God, and out of gratitude devote your life to his service. Do you thus believe on the son of God? Let us, 3. Put the question to several characters. My Young Friends, do you thus believe on the Son of God? The eye of some young man, or some young woman, may pass over this page. Allow me most affectionately to ask you — do you now, at this moment, in the way described above — believe on the Son of God? You must believe — or you cannot enjoy peace with God, you cannot be happy, you cannot be safe. If you do not believe — then you are condemned already. You are like a prisoner convicted of crime, sentenced to death, offered a pardon — but refusing to accept it! As though the bondage of sin, the slavery of Satan, and the disappointments of the world — were better than the peace, joy, and satisfaction which Jesus bestows! Dear young friends, think, think seriously, believe on the Lord Jesus — and you shall be saved.

Timid Soul, do you believe on the Son of God? You are afraid to be confident, you dare not say that you do. But why not? To you is the word of God's salvation sent. You must believe — or disbelieve it; receive — or reject it. Do not look . . .

at your unworthiness — for that is no bar;

at your vileness — for it is no objection;

at your numerous and aggravated sins — for they form no obstacle;

but embrace the gospel, venture on Jesus, trust in him alone — and everlasting life is yours!

Reader, whoever you are, or whatever you may be, allow one who longs for your salvation to ask you: Do you believe on the Son of God? Do you renounce all other confidences? Do you listen to his word? Do you look to his cross? Do you plead his name? Do you hope to be saved alone by

his blood? Do you obey his blessed precepts? Or, do you ignore all his counsel, and trifle with his love? If so — then trifle no longer, neglect no longer, this moment throw yourself at his feet, from your heart this instant cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Do you believe on the Son of God? Then profess him. Be not afraid or ashamed to own it. Tell his church. Attend to his institutions. Be buried with him by baptism into death, and after his example walk in newness of life. Do you believe on the Son of God? Then commend him. Speak of him to sinners. Tell them of his love. Inform them of his power. Point them to his cross. Lead them to his house. Ask them to bow with you at his throne. Do you believe on the Son of God? Then steadily trust in him amidst all the storms of life. Take up your cross and follow him. Share with his people in their crosses and comforts, in their conflicts and conquests. Live upon him, and to him in time — and then you shall live with him, and be like him forever.

## 33 The Proper Time!

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### The Proper Time!

"The Holy Spirit says, Today!" Hebrews 3:7

Matters of importance, as they demand — so they should have our first attention. As nothing is of half so much importance as the salvation of the soul — then nothing should be attended to so promptly, seriously, and diligently. And yet the generality of people are for putting off the concerns of the soul to some indefinite period in the future. Many of our young people hope to be converted at some future time; they intend seriously to consider divine things by and bye — but they are for putting off. They say with their tongue that it should be done; but they say by their conduct — not now! My dear young friends, I beseech you to give a few minutes to this solemn subject. You must be saved — or lost! You may be saved now — but if you put the subject away from you at present — you may perish without hope. "The Holy Spirit says, Today!" What do you say? Consider.

1. WHO it is that speaks to you. It is the Holy Spirit, who is the author of scripture, the giver of life, and the glorifier of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a person. He thinks, speaks, works. He is a divine person — naturally, essentially, and eternally divine. One with the Father and the Son; equal to the Father and the Son in dignity, majesty, and glory. He is a present person. His eye is upon you while you read these lines. He notices your thoughts and feelings. He is observing whether you will treat this message with respect — or whether you will ignore his counsel, and reject his word. He demands attention, he deserves reverence, he expects obedience. He is deeply interested in your salvation — therefore, he speaks to you, strives with you, impresses the truth on your heart, convinces you of sin, prompts you to prayer, pleads with you by his servants, and is grieved when you resist his operations. His nature is love, his work is absolutely necessary to your salvation, his grace is sufficient for you, and he is ready to help you. You will sin against him — if you refuse to listen to and observe his loving word — but it is peculiarly dangerous to do so. He now speaks to every sinner who reads this book, and he says, "Today!" Observe then,

2. WHAT he says. He says, "Listen to God's voice, bow before his throne, yield at his command, accept his invitation, embrace his beloved Son — and so flee from the wrath to come!" And he says, "Do this now, today, this moment!"

What a contrast there is between the counsel of the Holy Spirit, and the advice of Satan — he says, "Tomorrow, next week, at some convenient season." Between the admonition of the blessed Comforter, and the solicitations of sin, the present evil world, and your own carnal heart — these all combine to induce you to postpone the matter, to put it off, and put it off again, and so continue to put it off — until the door is shut, and God swears in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest!

How different also, do some professors talk. If they speak of the conversion of sinners, their icy hearts send forth in freezing strains, the expression, "It will be in God's time." If they speak to sinners, it is with a tone and manner which would lead one to imagine that they are not serious at

all! My young friends! Do not be misled! Avoid that temptation which has so often overcome you and led you astray; escape that snare which is laid in your path by the enemies of God and your soul's salvation; choose whom you will serve. Who shall be your Master — Jehovah, or Satan? In what service will you employ yourself — holiness, or sin? Which path will you take — the narrow way to Heaven, or the broad road to Hell?

Young woman, today refuse that solicitation to be the companion of the ungodly, the friend of the enemy of Christ, the associate of those who are hastening to perdition. Procrastinate no longer. You have often been convinced that you are wrong — you have felt impressed with a sense of the importance of the things of God — you have purposed that you would repent and turn to God. Decide at once. Go alone, throw yourself on your knees before God, give yourself to the Savior at once! Delay no longer. Frame no more vain excuses. Let not Satan again lead you captive at his will. Say not, "Tomorrow," for the Holy Spirit says, "today." My dear young friends, it is a solemn thing to trifle with the Holy Spirit when he speaks to you, and he speaks to you now.

"Today if you will hear his voice — harden not your heart." To do so is to provoke God, therefore the apostle adds, "For some when they had heard, provoked him." "They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore "he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." (Isaiah 63:10.) What a fearful case! What a solemn warning! You must now submit, or refuse to obey — yield yourself to God, or rebel against his authority. You are shut up to this alternative. There is no escaping. Which, then, will you do? To whom will you listen? To Satan? To the evil world? To vain companions? To your own depraved heart? Or, to the Holy Spirit? Who is wisest? Who is kindest? Who is most deserving of your regard?

Today, the Holy Spirit says, "Come and take of the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17.) Tomorrow, he may say, "It is a people of no understanding, therefore he who made them will show them no favor." Today, he says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Tomorrow, he may say, "My people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. SO I GAVE THEM UP unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels!" (Psalms 81:11-12.)

## 34 The Relationship

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The Relationship "My father's God." Exodus 15:2 The children of godly parents are peculiarly favored; they have so many privileges, enjoy so many blessings, and are surrounded by so many inducements to seek the Lord. But their responsibility is equally great. If they do not improve their privileges — they abuse them. If the blessings they enjoy do not soften the heart — it becomes harder by the perversion of them. If they are not induced to seek the Lord, they wander farther and farther from him. My dear young friends, I feel peculiarly solicitous about you. I ardently long for your salvation. I want to see you as the joy of the church, and the ornament of the congregation. Allow me very affectionately to direct your attention to your "father's God." That father may be still with you earnestly seeking your salvation, or he may be now in Heaven happy with God. Let me, First, notice your father's conduct toward his God.

He worshiped God — not with the lip only — but with the heart. His worship was adoration. It was the ascent of the soul. He prayed, pleaded, and praised the Lord. Worship was his relief, his solace, his delight. The closet was his banqueting-room, and the throne of grace was his paradise. Do you worship your father's God?

He trusted in God. He carefully read his word — firmly believed his promises — committed his soul into his hands — rested on his faithfulness — and found joy and peace in believing. Do you trust in your father's God?

He loved God. His religion was not characterized by fear — but love. He loved his perfections, his people, his courts, his word, and his ways. Love stimulated him to holy activity, and cheerful obedience. Do you love your father's God?

He enjoyed God. His religion was happiness. The thoughts of God cheered him — the presence of God filled him with delight — and the prospect of being forever with God, made him triumph over death. He was happy in God. Do you enjoy your father's God?

He obeyed God. Obeyed him from the heart. Obeyed him openly, cheerfully, and without reserve. His obedience was filial. It was constant. It was acceptable. Do you obey your father's God? Allow me now, Secondly, consider the kindness of your father's God to him.

God MANIFESTED himself unto him. Your father knew God. He perceived his character and glory. He felt his love. He realized the light of his countenance. He had an inward, spiritual, transforming manifestation of God to his soul. This distinguished him from others, gave a reality to his religion, and made his face to shine. Has God ever manifested himself to you?

God LED your father. This kept him from running into sin, falling into snares, and losing his way. Your father asked counsel of his God, and he received it. He was led by the right way to a city of habitations.

God FED your father. It was God who gave him all his temporal mercies, and sent him all his spiritual supplies. He gave him food to eat, and clothing to wear. He fed him with the bread which

came down from Heaven.

God TRIED your father. But it was only to . . .

test his principles,

exercise his graces,

purify his nature,

endear his promises,

stimulate him to prayer, and

make him fit to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

God always HEARD your father when he called upon him, relieved his distresses, cheered his spirit, and delivered him out of his troubles.

He was a God to your father, and he has or soon will receive him to his kingdom and glory. Is your father's God yours? Does he lead you, feed you, try you, and hear your prayers? — Is your father in Heaven? If so, let me,

Thirdly, show you what your father would now do for his God if he could. He would recommend him to you. He would speak to you of his glorious perfections, of his precious promises, of his provision for the needs of sinners. He would speak to you of the incarnation, labors, sufferings, and death of his beloved Son. He would bear testimony to his goodness, grace, condescension, and faithfulness. He would assure you that no life is so happy, or so honorable as a life spent in communion with God. He would urge you to avouch the Lord for your God, and to do so immediately.

Allow me to speak for him. Would you delight your father's heart — would you answer the end of all your father's care — would you secure your own present and everlasting welfare — then choose your father's God for your God! Go worship at his throne. Go appeal to his mercy. Go offer him your heart, just as it is. Go commit your soul to Jesus. Go and consecrate yourself to his service and praise. Look to the blood of Jesus, that will ensure you acceptance. Plead the promise, that will secure you the blessing. Yield yourself unreservedly to his will, and he will graciously receive you. To encourage you to do this, I will remind you,

Fourthly, of the conduct of your father's God toward you. He has ever been your friend. He is your friend now, though, if you are living in sin — you are his enemy. He gives you the same invitations as he gave your father. He bids you come to him. He assures you that he will give you rest, bestow on you living waters, in a word, make you wealthy and happy. He makes you the same promises. He promises to receive you graciously, to love you freely, to save you immediately, and to bless you eternally. He bids you come to him for all that you need — for body and soul — for time and eternity. You have every encouragement to seek, enjoy, and find your father's God as your portion.

Remember, if you sin, it is against your father's God; and it would grieve your father's heart, if it could be grieved. If you refuse to take the Lord for your God, you reflect upon the soundness of

your father's judgment, who preferred a saving interest in God to all things beside. You throw a doubt upon your father's testimony, who declares that nothing is to be compared with having the Lord for our God. You question the consistency of your father's conduct, who made . . .

the knowledge of God — the object of his pursuit;

the word of God — the rule of his life;

the glory of God — the end of his actions; and

the enjoyment of God — his highest happiness.

Dear young friends, think of your father's God, seek him while he may be found, obey him from a principle of love, follow on to know him that you may be happy, and make the eternal enjoyment of his love the highest object of your ambition. Believe in God, call upon God, walk with God, aim to honor God — and you shall, with your father, eternally enjoy God! Your father's God invites you, he calls you to him with more than a father's love. He says, "Come unto me." He calls to you among the multitude, now you are mixed up with the ungodly, and his kind words to you are, "Come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty!" 2 Corinthians 6:17-18.

## 35 The Appeal

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The Appeal "How can you say, 'I love you,' — when your heart is not with me?" Judges 16:15

Here is a good man in a bad place. A saint sanctioning a sinner in her crimes. A Nazarite of God, united to a harlot. The deliverer of Israel, taken captive by one of Israel's foes. Bad company is always dangerous. Samson suffered severely for it. What is here recorded is for our warning. It cries, "Beware of tampering with temptation! Be watchful — or you will be overcome! Never trust your own strength. See the strongest man taken captive by the weaker vessel." But we are not going to dwell upon Samson's folly, or upon Delilah's treachery. We take the words apart from their connection. They contain an important truth, and would befit better lips than hers who first uttered them. Let us consider them as addressed to us — as addressed to us by the Lord Jesus. Surely, in the present day, there is much cause for Him to say to many of us, "How can you say, 'I love you,' — when your heart is not with me?" The words suppose —

First, a profession — a profession to love the Savior. This implies that we have heard of him. Yes, the blessed gospel has proclaimed the glad tidings of a Savior to us. We have heard . . .

of Jesus,

of the glory of his person,

of the greatness of his love,

of the riches of his grace,

of the depth of his sympathy,

of the perfection of his work,

of the constancy of his care, and

of his readiness to save all that come unto him.

It implies, also, that we have thought about him. And who has not, that has often heard the gospel? Hear the gospel — and not think of Christ! Impossible! We have thought of him. We do think of him. Oh, that we may ever think of him, and do so with reverence, satisfaction, and joy!

It implies that we have felt interested in him. That is to say, that our minds have been affected, and our spirits engaged, with what we have heard and read of Jesus. There are too many uninterested hearers; but those who say, "I love you," must have felt some interest in what they have heard of his person, work, and love.

Also, that we have decided to profess him. Many hear of him, think of him, feel some interest in him, who do not decide to profess him; they stop short of this mark. It is an important thing to profess Christ: some do so too hastily, and some are too backward in doing so.

It implies, also, that we have spoken to him, and of him. We speak to him in prayer. We speak of him to his friends and foes. We speak of him to recommend him to others, or in order to be recognized as one of his friends ourselves. He who calls upon Jesus in the closet, should speak of Jesus to the church — for every praying soul should confess him. If we really love him, we ought to profess him. But too many say, "I love you," as Judas did — with their mouths they confess him — but by their works they deny him. Therefore,

Secondly, a proof is required, even that the heart is with him. He who has the heart — has the man, notwithstanding his profession.

If the heart is with Jesus — then the thoughts will be with him. We shall think of him frequently, with interest and with affection. Our thoughts will be often gathering round his person, and be feeding themselves on his word. We shall think of him,

as the child does of its play,

as the school-boy of his holidays,

as the lover of nature of beautiful scenery,

as the hungry man of his food, and

as the poor, way-worn traveler of his home.

If the heart is with Jesus — then our desires will be with him. We shall desire to know him more, enjoy him more, honor him more. We shall desire . . .

to possess him,

to be like him, and

to be with him. Our desires will be like wings to the soul, to carry us to him. With one of old we shall say, "With my soul have I desired you in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek you early."

If the heart is with Jesus — then our affections will be with him. We shall prefer him to all others. We shall fear to offend him, and seek to please him. He will stand out from all our friends, relations, and beloved objects, with bold prominence, and we shall say, "Whom have I in Heaven but you, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside you!"

If the heart is with Jesus — then our confidence is with him. It is of this Delilah complains; she was not trusted. If our heart is with Jesus, we shall trust him with all our secrets — we shall place confidence in his word. To him we shall repair in our troubles, and spread them before him. To him we shall look in our difficulties, and expect him to deliver us out of them.

If the heart is with Jesus — then our all is with him; for all follows the heart.

If, therefore, our hearts are with him — we shall yield to his will. He will be our Lord. His word will be our law. Our hearts will often say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."

If the heart is with Jesus — then we shall work for his glory. Our motives will not be legal — but evangelical. We shall not be idle or indifferent. To honor him will be a pleasure, and to bring glory

to his name, will be a sufficient recompense for the severest trial.

If the heart is with Jesus — then we shall give to his cause. We shall feed his poor, and support his ordinances. Love him — and not give to him! Can we say that the heart is with him — and withhold the purse from him! Strange delusion this!

If the heart is with Jesus — then we shall speak to defend him. We cannot hear him reviled — and not be wounded; nor hear his foes, speak against him — and not say a word for him. Where is the affectionate wife who would have her husband reproached — and not stand up in his defense? And shall nature do more than grace? Shall we vindicate a worm, and not have a word to say in defense of God incarnate? Shall we defend an earthly friend — and not stand up for our glorious Savior?

If the heart is with Jesus — then we shall habitually seek to please him. This will be our main object, our principal business. The one question will be: Will this please my Savior? Oh, my reader, if we did this more, how different would our conduct be!

If the heart is with Jesus — then we shall enjoy the beloved object. Love is always a source of happiness, if it fixes on a worthy object. Our happiness below is to know and love Jesus — and our happiness in Heaven will be to see and love him forever. The more we love him — the happier we are. If we do not enjoy him — we cannot be happy. Let us now —

Thirdly, present the appeal. "How can you say, 'I love you' — when your heart is not with me?" This may be urged against many hearers of the gospel, who would wish to be thought lovers of Jesus. The undecided, who are ashamed or afraid to confess him — who have never given up the world and questionable customs — with what force it applies to them! The worldly-minded professor — how pointedly it applies to him! The self-seeker and lukewarm church-member — how applicable to them! The backslider — what a sting it carries for him! My dear reader, is it applicable to you? Do you say to Jesus, "I love you?" If so, is your heart with him? Are your thoughts, your desires, your affections, your confidence with him? Do you . . .

yield to his will?

work for his glory?

give to his cause?

speak to defend or recommend him?

seek to please him?

enjoy him as the object of your love?

Examine your heart. Search into your life. Let the appeal sink down into your soul.

Lost sinner, yield your heart to Jesus! He asks it. He deserves it. He will sanctify it. He will fill it with grace, and fit it for glory.

Waverer, fix your heart on Jesus! He only is worthy of your highest love. Think of him. Call upon him. Surrender to him. Make this your prayer, "Unite my heart to fear your name."

Christian, keep your heart with Jesus! By frequent meditation. By constant fellowship. By steady faith. By determined conflict. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Savior, fill each of our hearts with your love! Manifest your love to us: shed abroad your love in our hearts, and then shall we love you, because you have first loved us. Oh, to love Jesus supremely, constantly, increasingly! May we never have reason to question our love to him, or give others occasion to do so! Reader, do you love the Savior? Did you ever seriously use these words —

"And have I, Christ, no love for thee,

No passion for your charms?

No wish my Savior's face to see,

And dwell within his arms! Is there no spark of gratitude

In this cold heart of mine,

To Him whose gen'rous bosom glowed

With friendship all divine! Can I pronounce his charming name,

His acts of kindness tell;

And while I dwell upon the theme,

No sweet emotion feel?

Such base ingratitude as this,

What heart but must detest!

Sure Christ deserves the noblest place

In every human breast! A very wretch, Lord, I should prove,

Had I no love for thee;

Rather than not my Savior love,

O may I cease to be!"

## 36 The Admonition of Wisdom

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### The Admonition of Wisdom

"Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Proverbs 1:23 The advice of a Father should always be received with reverence; especially if that father is remarkable for wisdom, experience, and love. Here the Holy Spirit speaks to us by a father — and that father, the wisest of men. Solomon addresses us as his children, and does so with affection, earnestness, and concern for our welfare. But there is something peculiarly affecting, in the admonitions of a wise, kind-hearted, and venerable mother — and here wisdom assumes the character of a mother, and speaks to us with more than a mother's love. Both father and mother addresses us, "My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother." A father teaches us — and a mother lays her commands upon us. By wisdom we are not to understand a divine perfection — but a divine person. It is Jesus, the personal wisdom of God, who addresses us, and speaks to us with a mother's voice, with a mother's love. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him. He is the wisdom of God, and the power of God. All things are delivered unto him by his Father, and he speaks to us and says, "Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you."

What has he done? He has reprov'd us. He has reprov'd our past conduct. "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?" Simplicity here, is not artlessness or simple-mindedness — but sin. The simple one is not a simpleton — but a sinner. We have loved sin. We have lived in sin. We have enjoyed sin. We have had a greedy appetite for sin — drinking it in as the thirsty ox drinks in water. For this he has reprov'd us, and for this he still reprov's. So also, for scorning at his word, or treating it lightly, or with silent contempt. This we have done. We have laughed at some portions of it, tried to make ourselves witty with others, and treated the whole of it with unfitting neglect; and thus as fools we have hated knowledge.

We have refused the advice of Heaven, and rejected the counsel of wisdom and love. He reprov's our present course also — the way of folly in which men in general are walking, which conducts to disgrace and ruin. He has reprov'd us . . .

by his word, when we have read it;

by his ministers, when we have heard them;

by conscience, that inward monitor, when we have been oblig'd at times to listen to it;

and also by various dispensations of his wise and holy providence.

What does he require of us? That we turn at his reproof. We have turned our backs upon him, closed our ears to him, and daily wandered farther and farther from him. But he has not given us up. He has not cast us away. He still pursues us with his word, and overtakes us by his afflictive dispensations.

Every chapter we read,  
every sermon we hear,  
every pain we feel,  
every loss we sustain,  
and every funeral we see,  
cries, "Turn at my reproof!"

Turn your face — look at me and listen to my word.

Turn your ear — attentively consider and receive my counsel.

Turn your feet — leave the way of sinners and enter on the path of life.

Turn your heart — give up the objects which engross and captivate it, and present it to me as my undeniable right.

Turn, and turn immediately; let there be no delay.

Turn, and turn heartily; let there be no reserve.

Turn, and turn completely; for half measures will never do.

"Turn at my reproof."

What does he promise? "Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

"Behold!"

What grace is manifested!

What condescension is displayed!

What sincerity is exhibited!

What certainty is here! There is no doubt, no perhaps, no uncertainty. "Turn, and I will pour out my Spirit unto you." I will pour it out upon you — as the plentiful rain upon the earth. I will pour it out freely — as I give the refreshing showers of Heaven. I will send the Holy Spirit directly from my throne, immediately from my heart. I will give you my Spirit . . .

as the Spirit of wisdom — to teach you and make known my ways unto you;

as the Spirit of power — to enable you to do my will, and to strengthen you with strength in your souls;

as the Spirit of grace — to sanctify you, to teach you to pray, and to help your various infirmities;

as the Spirit of adoption — crying, "Abba, Father!" in your hearts, unfolding my paternal character, and making you happy in my love. In a word — as the Spirit of love, power, and of a sound mind; to work in you both to will and to do of my own good pleasure. That as Jesus, is engaged to do

everything without you which is necessary for salvation; so the Holy Spirit, shall do everything within you — making you his temple, his pleasant residence, and his home forever.

"I will also, make known my words unto you." I will unfold to you their meaning, making you wise unto salvation. I will apply them to your heart, and sanctify you through them. I will fulfill them in your experience, and you shall find them to be true and faithful. Not one jot or one tittle of them shall fail, until all has been fulfilled to you.

Well, friend, will you listen to this admonition? It is now, by the providence of God, addressed to you anew. God is at this moment speaking to you, His eye is upon you, his ear is open to you, he says, "Will you attend to it?" "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live! And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." This may be a solemn crisis with you. From this moment, God may say, "Let him alone!" "My spirit shall not always strive with man!" Will you embrace the promise? It is placed fairly before you. It is within your reach. It is a promise of just what you need, and of all that you need. It is the promise of the Holy Spirit, whose province it is to . . .

quicken the dead,

teach the ignorant,

help the feeble,

guide the perplexed,

comfort the sorrowful,

lead to the Savior,

apply the atonement, and

bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. The Holy Spirit . . .

produces faith,

excites hope,

generates humility,

works penitence, and

sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is the author of all true holiness, and inward religion. Without the Holy Spirit — you must perish; but receiving and possessing him — you are saved with an everlasting salvation. But if you will not listen to the admonition, if you will not embrace the promise — then will you perish in your sins? This question is unnecessary, You Must! But perishing under your circumstances will be very dreadful. With wisdom admonishing you, with God promising his Holy Spirit to you. This is just your case. God says, "Turn at my reproof," and you must either turn — or insolently say, "I will not!" Do you dare do this? I would hold you to this point — you must turn, or die: you must obey God, or perish. Every excuse is now completely cut off.

You cannot plead weakness — for God promises you the Spirit of power off.

You cannot plead ignorance — for God promises you the Spirit of wisdom off.

You cannot plead unholiness — for God promises you the Spirit of grace.

You have no excuse. The way of life is set before you — therefore choose life that you may live. The way of death is set before you — avoid it that you may not die eternally. God is sincere. God is in earnest. God has made up his mind. He will not call back his word, and he has said in the following verses, which you cannot hear too often, or ponder too seriously if you are rejecting the truth. "But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke — I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes!" Proverbs 1:24-31 God now calls to you — will you refuse.

He stretches out his hand to you — will you disregard it?

He counsels you — will you ignore his counsel?

He reproves you — will you harden yourself against it?

If so, God will not pity you in your calamity; he will not sympathize with you in your fears; he will not appear for you in your distress and anguish. You may then call — but he will not answer. You may then earnestly seek — but you shall not find. You will then perish in your own deceivings, and throughout eternity the thought will sting your soul like an adder, "This is the fruit of my own way, this is the result of my own devices!"

If, therefore you have any fear of God,

if you have any dread of Hell,

if you have any love to yourself,

if any desire for eternal happiness —

then hear the Lord while he speaks,

attend while he warns and promises,

obey while he exhorts, "Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you!"

## 37 The Godly Man's Prayer

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### The Godly Man's Prayer

"Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him."

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto you in a time when you may be found: surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come near unto him." Psalms 32:6

Every Christian loves the book of Psalms, because in that book the believer's heart is laid open, and his experience is set forth in the most simple and expressive manner. The longer he lives, the more he discovers that real religion is the same in every age. He feels at home with David. He has sweet fellowship with him. He derives instruction, encouragement, and comfort from him. This psalm is one of peculiar excellence, for here:

the blessedness of a pardoned state is described,

how to arrive at that state is pointed out, and

how the pardoned should conduct themselves is set forth.

David was convinced of sin, he was burdened with guilt, he was troubled and bowed down greatly, he went mourning night and day. But he found no relief. At length, he confessed his sin over the appointed sacrifice with sorrow, and he immediately obtained pardon and enjoyed peace. Then he declares that this course would be pursued by every godly man, and that pursuing this course — pardon, peace, and safety would be enjoyed.

How is a godly man distinguished from his fellow-men? He is renewed in the image of God. The image of God was lost by sin; so that we cannot trace one feature of the divine likeness in an unconverted man. He is the likeness of Satan. But in regeneration, the image of God is renewed, which stands in righteousness and true holiness. The godly man has a righteous principle implanted in his heart, so that he hungers and thirsts after righteousness. He is sincere, and longs, pants, and prays for holiness. If he could be pardoned, without being made holy — it would not satisfy him. If he could be justified by the righteousness of Jesus, without being sanctified by the Holy Spirit — he could not be happy. Holiness is the element and desire of his soul. The godly man is guided by the will of God — and this is the will of God, even our sanctification. He searches God's word to know what he requires. He visits God's throne of grace — to obtain grace which will enable him to do what God commands. His prayer is, "Teach me to do your will." His desire is, to walk blameless in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord. The godly man is favored with the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has taken possession of his heart. He is the temple of the Spirit, and under his influences and operations — he is conformed to the Lord Jesus. The godly man is admitted into the service of God, where he serves the Lord without slavish fear, actively doing his will. The godly man is set apart for the enjoyment of God, for the Lord has set apart him that is godly for himself. The presence of God is his Heaven. Without this, he cannot be happy —

with this, he cannot be miserable. He is deeply concerned for the Lord's glory. He perceives that this is the great end of his existence, and for this he desires to live. The very idea of glorifying God is to him delightful, and nothing makes him hate sin more, than the fact that it dishonors God. The godly man denies ungodliness and worldly lusts, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. And if he does not feel that he can adopt the Apostle's words as his own, he longs to do so, "So that now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain!" Php 1:20-21.

Such is a godly man, are you one? Does your heart, your experience, and conduct at all correspond with the above? You are either godly — or ungodly. Search and see, for the matter is of the first importance. But further, a godly man prays to God. His prayer is conceived in his heart. It is the utterance of his desires before God's throne. If he lives — he must pray, for he cannot live without. Prayer to him is not merely a duty, it is the spontaneous acting of a spiritual nature within him. He prays for pardon. He is convinced of sin. He feels guilty. He desires an honorable acquittal. The godly man looks to Jesus. He places his dependance on his vicarious sacrifice. He pleads his precious blood. He seeks a present pardon. A felt pardon. Nor will he rest satisfied until he can say with David, "You forgave the iniquity of my sin." Many profess to pray for pardon — but all ends in mere words. They have no deep sense of need, no ardent desire to possess the blessing. They do not feel that they must be pardoned — or perish. In their instance, it is not the condemned malefactor applying with all possible earnestness to the Sovereign for a pardon — but the mere courtier giving expression to an unfelt sentiment. The godly man is in earnest. He pleads as for his life. His sense of sin is vivid and deep, and he cries, "For your name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity — for it is great." He prays while God may be found. There are seasons when God will not hear. Then sinners may cry — but it will be in vain. That is not the case at present. "Now is the accepted time." God is on the throne of grace. The High Priest is there with the precious atoning blood. The incense of his merits perfumes the holy place. He ever lives to make intercession for all who come unto God by him.

If therefore we go in the name of Jesus, if our dependance is placed on his one offering alone, if we plead for pardon on the ground of what he has done and said — then God for his sake, will forgive us. "Now is the day of salvation." Pardon may be had, and every godly man will pray for it — until he obtains it. His prayers spring from the grace of God. The Lord has poured upon him the Spirit of grace and supplication, therefore he looks unto Jesus whom he has pierced, and seeks for the forgiveness of all his sins in his name. The godly man is SAFE. "Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him." There may be floods of temptation, trials, and troubles — but they shall not so come near unto him — as to destroy or injure him. When the old world was destroyed by the flood, Noah and his family were safe, the waters came not near unto him. And in the great final conflagration — the believer will be safe, for it shall not come near unto him. A hiding place, a secure retreat will be found for him, and his God will say, "Go, my people, enter your rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until his wrath has passed by. See, the Lord is coming out of his dwelling to punish the people of the earth for their sins. The earth will disclose the blood shed upon her; she will conceal her slain no longer." Isaiah 26:20-21. A dreadful time is coming, for "The present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." And "The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by

fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare!" 2 Peter 3:7; 2 Peter 3:10. And what will become of the godly man then? Will he be safe? He will, for Jesus will appear. "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever!" 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.

Thus you see the godly man will be safe, for the destruction shall not come near unto him. There will be a flood of wrath, for God has threatened it. The honor of God requires it. The crimes of men demand it. The immutability of God renders it certain. But the godly man will be above it. He will be perfectly free from it!

Here observe, all godly people seek the Lord — and all who seek the Lord in sincerity and truth are godly people. They cannot rest without a pardon — and therefore they seek it until they obtain it. They are safe at all times and in all places, from curse and wrath. They alone are truly blessed, and their blessedness is inconceivable great, unspeakably glorious, and eternal! When others perish — they will triumph. They will be shouting, Hallelujah, while others are suffering the just but tremendous wrath of God, as it is written "After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.' And again they shouted: 'Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever!'" Revelation 19:1-3

Let us therefore seek the Lord. Let us apply for pardon through the Savior's blood. Let us seek and apply until we are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 38 The Savior's Object

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The Savior's Object "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save those who are lost!" Luke 19:10

Zaccheus the Jewish tax-collector, appears to have been a great sinner. His curiosity was excited by what he had heard of Jesus, and he was desirous of seeing him. As he was to pass near where he was, he ran and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up, called him down, went to his house, brought salvation to him, and accounted for his conduct in so doing, by saying, "The Son of man has come to seek and to save those who are lost." This passage is full of encouragement to poor sinners, to all who desire salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. He did not come into the world to call the righteous — but sinners to repentance. His eye was upon sinners, his heart was upon sinners, his thoughts were engaged about sinners — and his one fixed determined purpose was, "to save sinners."

Here is man's natural condition pointed out.

He is LOST. Lost, for he is a criminal under sentence of death. His crimes are great, they are numerous, they are aggravated; and the justice of God has passed the righteous sentence of condemnation upon him.

He is inexcusable, for he has sinned against Heaven and before God. He has sinned against light, though frequently and kindly warned, knowing that the end of his course was death.

He is helpless, his crime has generated disease, in consequence of which he can do nothing aright, nothing good, nothing that will recommend him to God. He must be saved by another, or perish forever.

He is lost — like the sheep that has left the fold, wandered into the wilderness, and is exposed to beasts of prey and a thousand other dangers.

He is lost — like the poor slave pining in the dungeon without light, pure air, or wholesome food; before whom there is nothing but the horrors of starvation and a lingering fearful death.

He is lost — like an exile, perishing in the land of strangers unpitied, uncared for, and in the greatest destitution.

He is lost — like the prodigal in the distant country, far from his father's house, and sent to feed the swine.

He is lost — like the mariner fast asleep on the top of the mast in the midst of a dreadful storm — there he lies careless and unconcerned, the sport of the winds and waves, while the yawning gulf below is just ready to swallow him up!

He is lost — like the careless traveler, who passes heedlessly along, though a dreadful precipice is just before him and a band of hardened murderers behind him. "Evil pursues sinners."

He is lost — like the new-born babe, cast out into the open field without anyone to pity, or do anything for it.

He is lost — like the corpse that lies corrupting in the tomb, dead in trespasses and sins; or like the dry bones in the open valley, which the prophet Ezekiel saw.

O sinner, sinner! Your is a miserable case. You are in a most dangerous condition. No image will accurately set forth your danger, no language describe your state. You could not be in a worse condition — unless you were in Hell!

You are DEAD. Dead to God. Dead in sin. Doomed to everlasting woe! But there is good news for you. The gospel brings glad tidings to you. Hear, believe, embrace Jesus — and your soul shall live.

Here is the Savior's object. "The Son of man came to seek and to save those who are lost!" He came from the celestial world. He came from the bosom of his Father. He came from the throne of glory. He came into our world. He took our nature. He appeared in the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man. He came unsolicited, undesired; of his own infinite love and grace, and he came to seek and save us. As the shepherd goes after the wandering sheep,

as the philanthropist seeks the emancipation of the perishing slave,

as the father runs to meet his prodigal son,

as the friend endeavors to prevent the destruction of the careless traveler

— so Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. He sought out sinners personally when here below, and he still seeks them out by his word, his ministers, his providence, and his Spirit. He seeks them — for they never seek him until he has done so. "The Lord looks down from heaven on the entire human race; he looks to see if anyone is truly wise, if anyone seeks God. But no — all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!" Psalms 14:2-3. Can language be plainer? Can any fact be stated more strongly? Not a single person seeks after God. And when we were all in this case, Jesus came to seek us. As he had said by the prophet, "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search and find my sheep. I will be like a shepherd looking for his scattered flock. I will find my sheep and rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day!" Ezekiel 34:11-12.

He came to seek us — that he might save us. Save us from . . .

the desert of our crimes,

the sentence of divine justice,

and the wrath of God forever! In order to save us, he spared no expense. He thought nothing too hard. He became our Substitute, to do what we had not done, could not now do — and he obeyed the whole law for us perfectly, gloriously. He became our Sacrifice, and suffered and died in our stead — to expiate our iniquity, to make atonement for our sins.

Upon him the curse of God alighted,

by him the wrath of God was endured, and

in his death God was reconciled and pleased.

He is now ascended to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the Holy Spirit as promised, he exerts his power and brings sinners to repentance.

He saves sinners, and he does it graciously — in the most free, generous, and befitting manner.

He saves cheerfully — there is no reluctance. He never appears backward — but in the most ready cheerful manner he saves the vilest of the vile!

He loves to save sinners.

He lives to save sinners.

He rejoices to save sinners.

It is his very glory to save sinners.

He saves eternally. If the soul is once truly committed to him or if he once undertakes our cause — he will never relinquish it. Every sinner, who trusts in his blood, who ventures on his word, who depends on his perfect work, may say with the Psalmist, "The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me! Your love, O Lord, endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands!" Psalms 138:8.

Beloved friend, do you know that you are a lost sinner? Do you feel that your danger is imminent? Do you perceive that without Jesus — you must perish forever? Do you realize the dreadful doom of the sinner who dies without a saving interest in Christ? O that you did! O that the Holy Spirit would now open your eyes to your danger, and quicken you to feel your condition! But do you desire to be saved? May the Lord be praised, if this is the case. The Lord has done great things for you, if you really desire to be saved by the Lord Jesus. He came on purpose to save sinners. That is, to do just what you require to be done. Just what you desire. He came to save the lost. Without him you are lost — and will be lost forever. But by him you may be saved with an everlasting salvation, so that you shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end. He came to save just such sinners as you are! Sinners, who have nothing to bring to him as a price or a plea. Sinners, whom no one else would notice, much less die to save! Sinners, who are as weak as water, viler than the earth, and unworthy of his regard. "Herein is love, not that we loved God — but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins!" 1 John 4:10. Has Jesus found us? If so, let us cleave unto him, walk closely with him, and endeavor to glorify him. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good!" Titus 2:11-14. May you know him, commit your soul to him, enjoying a present salvation by him, and in the midst of opposition and suffering, say with the apostle, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Timothy 1:12.

## 39 The Savior's Will

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### The Savior's Will

"For a will is in force only after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives."  
Hebrews 9:17

People who have property and riches, in the prospect of death, have long been in the habit of making a will, and bequeathing their riches, according to their pleasure, among their relations and friends. The will of the dead is considered sacred, and the executors are expected to perform their duty with fidelity and care. The Lord Jesus Christ being in possession of unsearchable riches, and intending to bestow them upon a variety of classes of character; before he left this world to go unto the Father — made a will, and has left behind him a will containing legacies of incalculable value! These legacies are payable upon application at the proper court, to each and every person entitled to them. The characters entitled are described, and the blessings to which they are entitled are stated with great clearness and perspicuity. The will is now put into our hands that we may . . .

make out our claim,

apply for the blessings, and

enjoy the blessings—to the praise of him who has blessed us in his will.

1. The first class of beneficiaries, are those who have been guilty of crimes against the law, government, and majesty of God — who deserve to die, who are under sentence of death, and exposed to eternal wrath! All such characters discovering this to be their true condition, feeling alarm at their danger, and being willing frankly to confess their crimes — are promised a free, full, and everlasting PARDON!

Jesus purchased a right to pardon, and in his will expresses his determination to give the pardons which he procured — to the vilest of the vile! If any man reflecting upon his conduct, surveying his thoughts, and examining his heart — finds that he has been a traitor from the beginning, and that even now his heart is the dwelling place of every abomination — yet even to such, a free pardon is promised upon confession! Through the infinite grace of the testator unto all such, is proclaimed "forgiveness of sins, and by Him, all who believe are justified from all things!" He says, "I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned against me! He who confesses and forsakes his sin — shall find mercy!"

He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness! He has willed the pardon, and it shall be enjoyed upon application — not on account of anything felt, feared, or done by the applicant — but solely out of his great love, rich mercy, and sovereign favor! Are you then, my reader — a poor, sinful, wretched, condemned sinner? Are you filled with fears of Hell, and trembling at the wrath of God? Are you desirous of escaping the curse, and enjoying the favor of Jehovah? Are you willing, heartily to confess your guilt, and his justice in your condemnation? If so, then you are one of the people named in the will of Jesus, there is a certain

pardon for you! But do not give way to fear or doubt, nothing can be plainer than that you are warranted to expect to be forgiven all trespasses for Jesus' sake! The Father honors the will of Jesus — when he pardons such as you; and the Spirit glorifies the Savior when he delivers that pardon to the praying soul!

2. Another class of beneficiaries, are those who are stripped of self, and find themselves wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. To them — Jesus wills the gift of his perfect **RIGHTEOUSNESS!** He labored to fulfill the precept of the law, and died to pay its penalty; that he might produce a righteousness which would justify God in justifying an ungodly sinner. This righteousness is infinitely glorious, and answers all the claims of law and justice! It honors the divine government, and exalts the possessor to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life! It is all that the law can demand, and just what a sinner needs. This righteousness was Jesus' own working, and was therefore his own personal property — and he wills to every ungodly sinner who believes on his name. His Father is well-pleased with it, and has agreed that it shall be imputed to all, and be worn by all who have believe, without any difference. This garment which is ever new, always available, and the perfection of beauty — is freely bestowed upon all who renounce their own good works — and are willing to venture entirely, and without reserve, upon Jesus' word and work, for life and salvation. But it is only willed to the naked, the poor, and the destitute; and it is willed to all such. If you therefore feel that you are destitute of a righteousness; discover the absolute necessity of one for justification before God; and hunger and thirst for this blessing, as the hungry man for food — then for you it is intended, and to you it will certainly be given! You shall receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, that you may reign in life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Only believe — and this legacy is yours!

3. If any are troubled in mind on account of sin, or distressed with the perplexing circumstances of this earthly life, and make application in his name at the throne of grace — unto them Jesus has left the legacy of **PEACE**. "Peace I leave with you — My peace I give unto you." Tranquility of mind, flows from . . .

receiving his work,

believing his word, and

entrusting all our concerns to his care.

He invites us to commit all unto him by faith, in prayer — and to leave all with him — as with a wise, kind, and faithful friend. And so acting, he assures us that peace passing all understanding shall keep our hearts and minds. He does not wish that any who believe in him — should be anxious, distrustful, or troubled with cares. He therefore provided for all their needs beforehand — and appointed every day's portion according to the day; and requires them to live and walk by faith; believing that he can and will supply all of their needs.

He bids them not to worry about food, clothing, or life; nor to look forward to tomorrow with alarm, or fear; but to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, with the assurance that every necessary good shall be added unto them. To set their hearts at rest — He has willed them a sufficiency for every day and all their days! This enables them to rejoice in God, and in all things to aim primarily at his glory. Is his word true? Then it ought to be trusted! Is he faithful? Then we ought not to doubt! Was he ever proved false? Why then should we fear?

He will keep in perfect peace — all whose minds are stayed on him, because they trust in him.

Jesus is over all, possesses all, rules all, and directs all! And he bids us to cast all of our cares for body and soul, for time and eternity — on him; assuring us that he will care for us. He gave his life for us — and he will not withhold one good thing from us! He will give us his peace — and we receive the legacy and enjoy it, to the praise of his grace.

4. To those who feel weak, timid, and fearful; those who have . . .

foes to face,

difficulties to encounter,

corruptions to mortify,

temptations to resist,

trials to endure, and

troubles to pass through

— he has left this valuable legacy, "My GRACE is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in your weakness." His grace, his strength — are to be employed for us, and to be used by us. The same grace which made Paul what he was, and by which all the martyrs triumphed — is left as a legacy to us! The legacy is payable Now, and the proclamation from the high court of Heaven runs thus, "Come boldly to the throne of grace — that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need!" His grace enables you . . .

to conquer foes — sin, Satan, world and self;

to overcome difficulties — however numerous or peculiar;

to resist temptations — however powerful, well-timed, or deceitful;

to endure trials — with fortitude, courage and patience; and

to pass through troubles — without fear or distrust.

All things are possible to grace — and grace is willed to us! By grace, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. We can do nothing good, or acceptable to God — without grace! But we can do all things — through Christ strengthening us! Our strength lies in absolute dependence on the word, presence, power, and faithfulness of God! Our weakness and falls are from that spirit of independence which at first led man from God, and constantly prompts us to endeavor to do without him.

If we abide in Jesus, if we venture, trusting only to the power of a present God — we cannot fail! But though as strong as Samson, if we venture at anything alone — we shall fall as foully as Samson did. It is not by human might, that the Christian runs the race set before him — but it is by the Spirit of the Lord Almighty!

Grace is willed to us by Jesus, and Jehovah will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly. He has willed to all of his family, "All things which pertain

to life and godliness." No man is required to live godly at his own expense; everything necessary is prepared, promised, and bestowed by Jesus. A godly life is a life of self-denial, and dedication to the Lord; his person is to be daily offered up as a sacrifice to God. His private interests are merged in the interests of his beloved Lord. It is for him to exhibit to the world — the Spirit and graces of his Savior, and thus live to his glory, who died for his sin. All spiritual blessings, and every temporal mercy which is necessary — is bequeathed to him! Seeking the Lord, he shall not lack any good thing. His Heavenly Father knew what he would need — and provided for him accordingly; and Jesus has assured him that applying to the Father in his name — he will bestow needed grace upon him.

We apply for what Jesus purchased, and receive by grace, all that God has promised. Our present portion of temporals may be scanty — but it is sufficient; and better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great revenues without it. The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it. Our Savior in his wisdom has apportioned to his people enough, enough for their real welfare — though perhaps not enough to gratify their pride, or please their carnal imagination. He teaches us both how to abound and how to suffer need. He either sanctifies our poverty — or gives us more. He gives more grace, he gives liberally and upbraids not.

We are traveling to the place which the Lord our God has promised us, and we only need our traveling expenses; and these we shall assuredly receive! And if our fare is coarse, our bed hard, our habitation uncomfortable, and our society unpleasant — it can be so but for a little while, for soon the command will come, "Arise and depart — for this is not your rest — for it is polluted!"

5. Finally, our Lord has willed us an INHERITANCE, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading! It is laid up in Heaven for us. It is a house not made with hands, in a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It is an eternal weight of glory. To introduce us to our inheritance — he will come himself! And to satisfy us with it — he will abide with us forever!

One branch of his will runs thus, "Father, I will that those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." In this inheritance, all will be purity, peace, activity, and glory! Jesus will be forever honored, and we shall be forever delighted and satisfied! Our sun will no more go down, neither will our moon withdraw itself — for the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended. The people shall be all righteous, and they shall inherit the land forever, that Jehovah may be glorified! To this we are fast hastening, every moment brings us nearer! So shall we allow ourselves to be much affected, by any of the trials along the way? Shall we be much cast down, on account of the difficulties of the road? Rather, let us lift up our heads rejoicing — for our redemption draws near. We have willed to us an immeasurable and eternal inheritance — and we are on the road to take possession of it! Let us then be sober and vigilant, that we may be found of our Lord in peace, without spot and blameless. Let us . . .

submit to his wisdom;

walk by his directions;

depend on his veracity; and

imitate those who through faith and patience, now inherit the promises. In a very little while — Jesus will come back for us!

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is!" 1 John 3:1-2.

## 40 The Father's Will

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### The Father's Will

"My Father's will is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him — shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day!" John 6:40

Sinners are sometimes led to take harsh and unscriptural views of the Father, as if he did not possess the same love, and feel the same interests in them as the Son. But this is highly improper, for the Scriptures inform us that "God is love," and that the glorious scheme of salvation originated with him.

If sinners are chosen to salvation — it is by the Father.

If Jesus is sent into the world to save sinners — it is by the Father.

If the Holy Spirit is sent to regenerate the heart — it is by the Father. And Jesus here bears testimony, "My Father's will is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him — shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day!" The blessing promised, is eternal life. This was forfeited by Adam — he closed the way of life upon all his posterity. He brought death into the world — and all our woe. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," and sinners have no right or title to eternal life. Jesus, as the second Adam has opened a new and living way into the holiest. The first Adam was death to all his seed — the second Adam is "the life" to all his seed. Therefore he said, "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Eternal life includes . . .

a life of grace in God's favor — and a life of glory in God's presence,

a life of obedience to God — and of the enjoyment of God,

a life of renovation below — and of perfection and glory above,

a life in union to Christ's person — and in the possession of his love.

Eternal life is just that which the soul pants for, which will satisfy the cravings of our nature, and yield us perfect happiness forever! Eternal life is God's richest gift — and man's best inheritance! O may we know it, possess it, and enjoy it forever!

It is to be obtained by seeing the Son, and believing on him.

The object to be seen, is Jesus, the Son of God. Who was once the man of sorrows, and familiar with grief. Who was despised and rejected by men; and who is despised and rejected by multitudes now. The Son of God is man — for he was made in all points like unto his brethren; but he is also God — for he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He is God and man in one Christ. God was manifest in the flesh.

The act by which life is obtained, is seeing or perceiving that Jesus is the Son of God. Many saw him with the bodily eye in the days of his flesh, but were none the better for it — for they had no perception of the glory of his person, or the design of his coming into our world. John who was saved by him said, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Now we must perceive thus of Jesus:

that he is the Son of God,

that he is full of grace and truth,

that he is anointed and appointed to save sinners,

that he can save us,

that there is salvation in no other.

We must perceive that he is the sole object of a sinner's trust, and be so affected by the sight, as to exercise confidence in him, renouncing all other. The light in which Jesus is seen — is communicated by the Holy Spirit. He shines upon the word that reveals him — and shines into the heart, that it may see him. As Paul speaking of his own experience said, "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And accounting for some despising and rejecting the gospel, he says, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Corinthians 4:6. The organ by which Jesus is seen — is faith. Faith is the eye of the soul. Faith sees him who is invisible. Faith brings the soul and the Savior together. Without faith, we see no beauty in Jesus — but to every believer he is altogether lovely, and unspeakably precious! The medium through which Jesus is seen — is his word and ordinances. Here Jesus is revealed. His likeness is presented to us. The gospel is full of Christ. The ordinances set forth Christ. And if we have faith, we see Christ — in every doctrine, in every promise, and in every institution of the new covenant. The effects of this sight are various. If we see the Son — we shall trust in him, or place our entire dependence upon him for life and salvation. We shall exercise unlimited confidence in him, and our confidence in him will lead us to imitate him. He who confides in Christ, will long to be like Christ; and his constant prayer will be that he may be transformed into the image of Christ. When Christ is thus seen — eternal life is certain. We have the most solemn pledge, the most sacred assurance given us. There is the Father's will, purpose, or intention. He wills eternal life to every believer in Jesus. He has purposed that all who trust in the Savior shall be saved. He intends to confer the kingdom of glory on all and every one who sees the Son and believes on him.

Then there is the Savior's character, he is "the Just One." He stands pledged by his word to confer the blessing. He is "the Faithful and True Witness," and will never deceive one who receives his testimony. The resurrection secures the favor. "I will raise him up at the last day." We shall be raised by Jesus. We shall be raised like Jesus. We shall be raised to be glorified with Jesus. He who raises us up from the dead — will confer on us eternal life. Yes, he will raise us up on purpose to do so.

Dear friend, Christ is the one object to which we must look. We must not look into our hearts, or at our sins, or to anything we imagine that we can do. But we must look to Jesus only. It does not matter what we see — if we do not see the Son. It does not matter what we do — if we do not believe in Jesus. There is no salvation — but by perceiving the Son and believing on him. Life or death comes by looking.

Eve looked at the forbidden fruit, she lusted for it, she took it, and she died. Achan looked at the golden wedge and the Babylonish garment, he coveted, he took, and he died. The Israelites looked at the brazen serpent, they believed in its divine appointment, they proved its efficacy, and they lived. No one sees Christ, who does not believe on him, for seeing and believing on him are the same thing: even as believing on him, and receiving him are.

Eternal life is sure to every believer. He has the commencement of it already, and he shall soon have its consummation. "He who believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he who believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36.

Every believer is a sheep of Christ — but every unbeliever is disowned by him. To the one endless life is certain — but the other is rejected, as he said, "You believe not, because you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand!" John 10:26-29. The Savior's work is but the carrying out of the Father's will.

What the Father purposes — the Son performs.

What the Father ordains — the Son accomplishes.

Believing is the proof and evidence that we are given to Christ. Believing is coming to Jesus — but no man can come unto him unless the Father draws him. But all that the Father gives him, shall come to him, and him that comes he will never cast out. If therefore I come to Jesus, the Father has drawn me; if the Father has drawn me, he has given me to Jesus; and if the Father has given me to Jesus, he will never cast me out.

Friend, have you felt your need of Jesus? Have you perceived that he is just the Savior that you need? Have you believed on him? Is he the object of your trust, confidence, and reliance? Are you coming to imitate his conduct, while you depend on his precious blood?

If you are not imitating Christ — you do not believe on him;

if you do not believe on him — you have never seen him;

if you have never seen him — you are dead in trespasses and sins;

and if you are dead in trespasses and sins — you are under God's wrath and just condemnation. This brings the subject to a solemn point, and demands our most serious consideration, and self-examination. O Holy Spirit, search us, try us, quicken us, lead us to Jesus, show us his glories, and give us eternal life through his name!

## 41 A Mistake Corrected

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### A Mistake Corrected

"If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets — they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead!" Luke 16:31 The ordinary means by which God converts the soul, is his own word. But many who are not at all affected by the word, imagine that if something uncommon was to take place — they would be converted. This is a mistake, and a mistake which is corrected in the passage before us. The rich man was now in Hell. He had sought relief for himself in vain. He pleads for his five brethren, he desires that Lazarus may be sent to them to warn them. Abraham replies, "they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." He objects, "Nay father Abraham — but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." He is silenced with this, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets — they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead!"

Reader, you have not only Moses and the prophets, you have also Jesus and the apostles; and yet perhaps you imagine that if something extraordinary was to take place, you would be persuaded. Beware of this, it is one of Satan's delusions, it is a snare in which many souls have perished! Take heed lest you be led away with this error of the wicked One, and rue your folly too late.

Moses and the prophets speak to you. Unto you is the word of God's salvation sent. The holy messengers, the inspired servants of the Most High, speak to you. They described your state. They tell you . . .

what you are by nature,

that you are depraved, polluted, and under condemnation,

that God is angry with such as you every day,

that your present course is the direct way to Hell.

They warn you of your danger. Most solemnly do they assure you, that the wicked shall be turned into Hell — that the end of these things is death. Most tenderly do they expostulate with you to turn you from your course, and prevent your ruin. They exhort you . . .

to repent,

to think of your folly and criminality,

to be sorry and grieved over your sins,

to turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.

Hear them cry to you, "Turn, turn — for why will you die!" "Repent and turn from your evil ways, so iniquity shall not be your ruin."

They invite you to the Savior. They lift him up before you, as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness. They point and cry, "Look unto him and be saved!" "Ho, every one that thirsts — come to the waters; and he who has no money — come; yes, come buy wine and milk without money and without price!"

They hold up examples to caution you:

Cain, who slew his brother and perished in his sins.

Esau, who sold his birth-right, and found no place for repentance.

Judas, who sold his Lord, and went to his own place.

Ananias and his wife, who lied to the Holy Spirit, and died at the Apostle's feet. The whole world of the ungodly, who were destroyed with the flood. The cities of the plain, whose Hell began on earth. The Israelites in the desert, who for unbelief were shut out of Canaan. The Jewish nation, which died of famine, pestilence, and the sword, for their sins against light and against mercy.

They hold up examples also to induce you to reflect, repent, and turn unto the Lord:

Abel, whose sacrifice was accepted.

Joseph, who was delivered and honored.

Manasseh, who humbled himself in his affliction and found mercy — along with a company too numerous to mention.

These things were written for your admonition. They are intended to persuade you. The design of the holy Scriptures is to persuade sinners. Do you look at them in this light? Have you been in the habit of viewing them thus?

They persuade you to be thoughtful — to think of . . .

God, his character, claims, and conduct towards sinners;

the law, its nature, demands, and threatenings;

yourself, your conduct, the state of your heart;

your doom, if you live and die in sin;

time, its brevity, and design;

eternity, its extent and solemnity;

the Savior, and his love;

Satan, and his work;

Heaven, and its glories;

Hell, and its horrors!

They persuade you to shun temptation. Temptation to trifle . . .

with the soul and its salvation,  
with Jehovah and his mercy,  
with sin and its consequences,  
with evil men and their influences,  
with error and its effects!

They unite to cry as with one voice. Do not trifle with temptation — avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it.

They persuade you to avoid danger — the danger . . .  
of grieving the Holy Spirit, lest he become your enemy,  
of provoking God to give you up, as he did Israel of old,  
of provoking the Savior to depart from you, as he did from the Gadarenes in his day,  
of perishing in your sin.

They persuade you to escape Hell. They tell you . . .  
that there is such a place,  
that it is unspeakably dreadful,  
that nothing on earth can correctly set forth its horrors,  
that thousands are there already,  
that sin is the direct way to Hell,  
that every obstinate sinner must experience it,  
that it is your just desert,  
that you may sink into it at any moment,  
that there is no deliverance from it but by Jesus Christ,  
that none will be delivered by Jesus — but those who repent of sin, and believe in his precious name.

They persuade you to enter the way to Heaven. They speak of . . .  
the glories of the place,  
the happiness of the inhabitants,  
the duration of their joys, and  
the possibility of your sharing in their bliss.

They tell you there is a way from earth — to Heaven: from the spot where you stand — to God's glorious high throne. That it is an open way, a free way, a way opened on purpose for sinners, for such sinners as you are. They say, "Enter in at the strait gate. Flee from the wrath to come." And pointing to Jesus they cry, "This is the way — walk in it." They persuade you to rise to the highest honor, as every believer does. For we are all the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ. And if children, then heirs — heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. What an honor to be God's beloved child! To be the heir of the infinite Jehovah! To be a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ! But this honor have all his saints!

If you disregard the persuasions of Moses and the prophets, you would disregard the greatest miracle: for you would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. This is asserted by one who knows our nature thoroughly, and who has watched the working of miracles upon the mind, in thousands of instances. Besides, the mind is changed by conviction, not by surprise. We are influenced by motives, not by prodigies. There is a suitableness in the holy scriptures — but none in a visit from the dead. The one is God's ordinance, the other is not.

You have therefore the means of conversion in your hands. That bible which you neglect, has been the means of converting thousands. It has persuaded many to turn . . .

from sin to God,

from self to the Savior,

from the road to Hell, to the path that leads to Heaven. The ministry of the gospel which you neglect, has been a savor of life unto millions. Why should it not be to you? For you the word of God was written, for you it has been translated into your own mother tongue, for you it is now printed and put into your hand! You have been taught to read it — but will you refuse to peruse it, or perusing, refuse to be persuaded by it. For you the ministry of the gospel was instituted. To you the servants of Christ are sent. For you they plead and pray, to you they wish to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, with you they would expostulate and plead: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men!" 2 Corinthians 5:10-11.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we beg you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20. We beseech you therefore, to read God's book — it was written for you. Divine providence has put it into your hand, and you are responsible for the use you make of it. That word will judge you at the last day. Consider its contents as able to make you wise unto salvation. This was the apostle's opinion of it, therefore he said to Timothy, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Beware of thinking that if something uncommon happened, it would persuade you; for if you refuse to hear God speaking to you in his word — then it is not likely that you will listen when he speaks

by his works. Surprised you may be — but converted you would not be. You may be filled with wonder — but you would not be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. If those five brethren were inexcusable, because they had Moses and the prophets — then what excuse can there be for you, who have the scriptures of the New as well as the Old testament? If God would not work a miracle to persuade them — is it likely that he will do so for you?

## 42 The Atonement

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### The Atonement

"In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the Lord, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty." Leviticus 6:7 The Scriptures are full of Christ — not literally — but typically. Here Christ is set forth in a variety of ways — but especially as the great high priest, and atonement for sin. Man sinned, God was injured, and required satisfaction. If it was demanded of the man himself, he must suffer forever; for the sufferings of a sinner, can never make satisfaction for sin. But God devised a way in which satisfaction could be given to divine justice, and the sinner be honorably and eternally saved; it was by sacrifice. This was set forth by the sacrifice of lambs, rams, oxen, doves, and goats: they were substituted for sinners until the great sacrifice appeared. Here we find God appointing sacrifices for different kinds of sin, as for the sins of ignorance in the fourth chapter; for sins of inadvertency, in the fifth chapter; and for more deliberate or willful sins in the sixth. Here proclamation is made, that pardon for all sin may be obtained — but it must be by blood; the priest must make an atonement for the sinner before the Lord. Let us notice: The OFFICE referred to. The priest, one of the tribe of Levi, of the family of Aaron, appointed, anointed, and fully qualified to officiate at the altar. The priest typified the Lord Jesus, who is the great high priest of our profession. He was separated from his brethren, or chosen out from among the people, to act for them. It is in reference to him and his separation to office, that the Father speaks, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found the Beloved One, my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. My hand will sustain him; surely my arm will strengthen him." Psalms 89:19-20. Isaiah 42:1. The levitical priest being separated, was anointed with holy oil, which was typical of the Holy Spirit; but Jesus received the Spirit in all his fullness to qualify him for his work. Hence we read, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord — and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth." Isaiah 11:2-4. This took place on the banks of the Jordan when Jesus was baptized, as it is written, "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said: This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16-17

Shortly after this, "He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them: Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4:16-21

Thus Jesus was separated from all others, and duly qualified for the office of the priesthood. His holy human nature, with the virtues and graces that adorned it, answered to the glorious and beautiful garments of the priests under the law, and being accepted of God for the work, he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.

Let us glance at His WORK. "The priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord." A victim was required, the trespass offering of old was a ram without blemish; but Jesus gave himself. His whole person was substituted for the persons of his people. He gave his blood for theirs, his life for theirs. He is the one great sacrifice for sin.

"He offered up himself." Under the law, the officer laid his hand on the head of his victim, confessing his sins over it, and his guilt was transferred to it, and therefore it was put to death. In like manner our sins were laid on Jesus — our guilt was transferred to him. We sinned — and he became the sacrifice for our sins. Hence the prophet says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him, the iniquity of us all. He bore the sin of many." Isaiah 53:6; Isaiah 53:12. And so the Apostle, "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we are healed." 1 Peter 2:24.

It was the blood, or the death of the victim which made the atonement. "It is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul." Levit. 17:11. The beast was slaughtered, his blood was carried into the holy place, it was presented to God, it was sprinkled before God, and so pardon was procured. Jesus died — the just for the unjust. His blood was shed on Calvary. He has carried it into Heaven. It is before God. It has obtained eternal redemption for us. It cleanses from all sins. The priest bore the blood, or the life of the victim into the holy place and presented it to God for an atonement, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and Jesus has entered into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Hebrews 9:24. He has given full satisfaction to God, for all the sins, of all who believe on him. He has made an atonement, the merit of which is infinite, and the efficacy of which is eternal. The influence of it extends to all times, and all places, securing a complete and eternal pardon for all who rely on it and plead it before God. The result is, all manner of sin and blasphemy is forgiven unto men. Not simply because God is merciful — but because Jesus died; and dying put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Pardon flows only from atonement. If Jesus had not become our substitute, he would not have been a sacrifice; if he had not been a sacrifice, he could not have made an atonement; and if he had not made an atonement, our sins could never have been forgiven. But through the sufferings and death of Jesus, all sin is pardoned; and pardoned forever.

It is, as though it never had been. Completely blotted out as a debt, and forgiven as a crime. As the cloud is dispersed by the sun and wind, so the guilt of sin is chased away by the atonement. As the stone cast into the depths of the ocean is lost sight of, and gone forever — so are the sins for which Jesus shed his precious blood. Every one is pardoned who lays his hand on the victim, and confesses his sins with sorrow over it.

Faith is the hand which we lay on the head of Jesus, and penitence always accompanies the frank confession of sin. The pardoned sinner is entitled to all the privileges of the Church in the wilderness, and a portion in the land of promise beyond the Jordan.

Reader, have you been convinced of sin? Do you see the need of a sacrifice for sin? Do you perceive that you can never atone for your sins by anything you can suffer, or by anything you can do? If so, rejoice, for atonement has been made. Guilt, the guilt of every broken-hearted sinner, of every simple-minded believer in Jesus — is gone, and gone forever. God has cast it behind his back. He has thrown it into the depths of the sea. He has passed by it, and will not notice it. He has covered it, and covering has concealed it, with the perfect work of his beloved Son.

God is peaceful. He is the God of peace. He is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, He invites the vilest sinners to come unto him, and promises to pardon all their sins, and completely change their characters. "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18. "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins." Isaiah 63:25.

Every believer therefore is safe and happy; happy in state, and should be happy in feeling. If sin is pardoned — then what can harm us? If sin is pardoned — then what should cast us down? Every believer is in a pardoned state; for him Jesus lived — for him Jesus died — for him Jesus intercedes at God's right-hand — for him Jesus will soon come the second time, without an offering for sin, unto his complete salvation.

Let us then look to Jesus as our great high Priest. Let us remember that his blood is our atonement. Let us expect the pardon of all sin for his sake. Let us renounce everything as a plea before God, or as the ground of our acceptance with God — but Jesus and his precious blood. He has made an atonement for us before the Lord, and all our sins shall be forgiven — and every trespass shall be pardoned forever.

## 43 A Precious Promise

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A Precious Promise "I will remove from you your heart of stone — and give you a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:26 The promises of God are calculated, and intended, to inspire the most desponding with hope. They just meet our case, they engage for just what we need. They are exceeding great and very precious. Though this promise literally refers to the Jew, it is applicable to the case of the Gentiles, and is intended for our encouragement. Hence the apostle says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Galat. 3:13, 14. The promise may be claimed and pleaded by us, and if so, then God will certainly fulfill it in our experience.

Consider the agent working. "I will remove from you your heart of stone — and give you a heart of flesh." This no one could do but he who created us at the first, and he engages to do it. It is Jehovah who speaks, the God of Abraham, the wonder-working God of Israel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great physician of souls. To him all things are possible. To him all things are easy. He says, "I will work and who shall hinder it." I can take away the stony heart, for I am infinitely wise. I may give the heart of flesh, for I have all authority. I will do it, for I have determined. Authority, power, and love unite in the renovation of the sinner. Nothing short of omnipotence can change the heart, and the Omnipotent One will do it.

Observe the operation to be performed. "I will remove from you your heart of stone." Here is an intimation of a fearful disease. The heart is turned into stone. This is the case with every sinner. His heart is hard and unyielding, like the heart of Leviathan, as we read, "His heart is as firm as a stone; yes, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone." Job 41:24. You may speak of the terrors of the law — but there is no beneficial impression. You may set forth the tender mercies of the gospel — but it refuses to yield to their influence. It is like the adamant, or the rock of flint. The stony heart is senseless and inactive — as the apostle speaks of some, "Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more." Ephesians 4:19.

There is no sense of shame, or they could not live in sin. There is no proper feeling of danger, or they would actively endeavor to escape it. They are "as still as a stone" in reference to spiritual things, however active they may be in temporal things. The stony heart is cold and repelling. Never warmed with love to God, or softened by the many mercies received. If the bible is read, all within is cold. If the gospel is heard, no lasting impression is made. Preaching to such is like plowing upon a rock — until God exerts his power. The stony heart is dry and barren, there are no tears of penitence, no fruits of righteousness there. One rock gave forth streams in the desert — but the stony heart never does; it must be removed and a heart of flesh be given. The stone always tends downwards; it is with the sinner's heart, as it was with the Egyptians of old. "They sank into the bottom as a stone." Exodus 15:5. There is no buoyancy about it, it cannot ascend to God. Earth is its element, and the dust its place. It grovels — but never ascends. It is not sensible of its own

hardness, of its many sins — and of God's infinite, stupendous, and unmerited love. It has no right feeling toward God, toward man, toward itself, toward the righteous law, or toward the everlasting gospel.

Reader, your heart by nature is a stone, it is hard and unyielding — it is senseless and inactive — cold and repelling — dry and barren — it always tends downward, it is even degraded below the mineral creation! O that you saw it, that you felt it — for then there would soon be a deliverance from it! A divine operation is necessary. The Lord must take away the stony heart, and give the heart of flesh — or completely change the character. This is done by the quickening energy of the Holy Spirit. A new life must be imparted. A new creation must be wrought. A thorough change must be effected. The heart must be softened, its nature must be changed. Life is imparted in one moment — but the softening of the heart is a gradual work. It often takes a long time before it appears. The change is effected by little and little. The soul being quickened, the heart being softened — divine teaching is experienced. The person begins to learn the truth. The eyes are opened to see the true state of the heart, the fearful desert of sin, and the need of an Almighty Savior. God's true character is revealed, the way of salvation is made known, and the path of destruction is avoided. The heart of flesh is given, which is tender and susceptible of impression. So that little sins are felt, fears are easily awakened, and strong desires after spiritual things spring up. The soul is very sensible of sin, and mourns over it. It is humbled under it, and seeks most earnestly to be delivered from it. There is a holy fear of God's displeasure, a trembling at God's word, and a yielding to divine reproofs. The iron sinew is gone from the neck, and the covering of brass from the brow. The person bows before the Lord, and is modest before his fellow-men. He is teachable, and reads God's word in order to learn his will. He is obedient, and desires to perform the whole will of God from the heart. The man is a new creation.

He was darkness — but he is now light in the Lord.

He was dead — but he is now alive unto God.

He was afar off — but he is now made near by the blood of the cross.

He was haughty — he is now humble.

He was obstinate — he is now yielding.

He was ignorant — he is now acquainted with God and enjoys peace.

He was a stranger — he is now a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. The heart of stone is gone, he feels, he enjoys, he rejoices in divine things. The heart of flesh is given, he is easily impressed, deeply affected, and habitually yields himself unto God as one that is alive from the dead.

Friend, what is the state of your heart? Is it stone, or is it flesh? If it is flesh now — then it was stone once. If you are not sensible of a change — then it is stone still; and if it is, you are in an awful state. Examine into your real state before God — your heart is either stone or flesh: which is it? Does God's word affect you? His threatenings, do they awe you? His invitations, do they allure you? His promises, do they cheer you? His precepts, do they please you?

Does the love of God melt you? Are you struck with it, affected by it, and do you feel constrained to love him in return? His love is wonderful. It often appears to be too good, and too great to be true.

Has it appeared so to you? Does his beauty attract you? Jehovah is infinitely beautiful, he is altogether lovely. If our eyes are opened, if our minds are enlightened, if we see Jehovah in Jesus — then we cannot but admire him, adore him, love him, and long to be like him. Have you ever felt this? Have you ever been affected thus? If you have a heart of flesh — then . . .

God's threatenings will alarm you,

his precepts will regulate you,

his glory will charm you,

his grace will consecrate you to his service, and

the Lord Jesus will be the grand object of your desire, love, and esteem.

If your heart is flesh — then God made it so. Man could not do it. You could not produce the change yourself. God did, therefore he humble. Lay low before the Lord. Admire his grace. Adore his sovereign goodness. Listen to the language of the Apostle, "For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have — that you did not receive? And if you did receive it — why do you boast as though you did not?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

If you have not experienced this change, be convinced that you need it, for you never can be saved without it. There are no hearts of stone in Heaven, nor will one ever be allowed to enter there. Illness will not change the stone to flesh. Death will not effect the necessary change. It is the grace of God, and the grace of God alone — that can do it. Therefore plead the promise. Be earnest with God. Cry unto him incessantly until your heart is softened, and your nature is made like the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Unless you are converted, and become as little children — you shall not enter into the kingdom of God." Matthew 18:3. Are you still indifferent? Do you perceive no danger? Are you under no concern? Are you crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace? If so, I solemnly warn you — that you must have this promise fulfilled in your experience, or you will surely perish. He who has made the promise, says to you in reference to it, and all similar promises, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8

## 44 Provision for Trouble

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Provision for Trouble "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him." Nahum 1:7

We constantly need to have the Lord's true character brought out and placed before us; for we forget what he is; and therefore forget to make use of him in seasons of trouble and trial. Whatever we suffer, and whatever we need — is intended to lead us to the Lord, that we may find him to be our friend, our father, and our all-sufficient portion.

Creatures constantly deceive, or disappoint us; we never find in them all that was expected. But we always find the Lord to be more than we thought, and ready to give us more than we anticipated. If we had the Lord always before us, if we realized his presence, if we expected him to do as he has said — then we would rise superior to our trials, and live above our fears.

"The Lord is gracious and full of compassion: he knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust. Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who put their trust in him." Here we see,

What the Lord is in himself. "The Lord is good." He is benevolent, wishing all his creatures well. He is beneficent, constantly doing them good. He opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing. "The Lord is near unto all them that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear him — he also will hear their cry, and will save them."

God is naturally good, and delights in doing good.

He is sovereignly good, and therefore he showers blessings on his foes.

He is perfectly good, doing good in the most perfect manner.

He is eternally good, and will do his people good forever and ever. No one is good as he is, therefore Jesus said, "There none good but one, that is God." He is the very opposite of cruel — creatures may be cruel to each other — but he cannot be cruel to anyone. He is the opposite of selfish — his creatures may be selfish — but not himself, for he delights in mercy and rejoices over his people to do them good. He is the opposite of unjust — every one's rights are respected; and in doing good he always acts in strict accordance with justice. The Lord is good — The Good One. He has always been good to us; and he will make all his goodness pass before us, if we seek his face, trust his word, and keep his glory in view. His goodness is infinite. If we survey it, if we fix our minds upon it — then we shall be affected with its vastness, as the Psalmist was when he exclaimed, "O how great is your goodness, which you have laid up for those who fear you; which you have wrought for them that trust in you before the sons of men!" But let us notice,

What he will be to his people. "A stronghold in the day of trouble." Troubles will come — we cannot avoid them. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." We may expect it — but we should not fear it. We may look for it — but we may not be alarmed at it.

Troubles of a temporal character will come:

Troubles in the nation.

Troubles in the family.

Troubles in the business.

Troubles in the church.

Bodily sickness.

Depression in trade.

Loss of situation, or property. And sometimes several of these come together!

Troubles of a spiritual nature.

Darkness of soul. The temptations of Satan.

Persecutions for the truth's sake.

Doubts and fears.

Conflicts within. The loss of the means of grace, either by removal from them, or inability to attend upon them. But in every trouble "the Lord is a stronghold." A place of defense. A castle to protect us. A home to receive us. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." He is always at hand, so that we may . . .

repair to him,

pour out our hearts before him,

commit our cause to him, and

expect protection or deliverance from him.

He is stronger than all our foes, and strong enough to preserve us in the most imminent dangers, and therefore we may trust in him. We may trust his word, for it is true and faithful. We may trust his power, for it is engaged for our defense. We may trust his providence, for it is working to bring about what is best for us. We may trust his resources, for they cannot possibly fail. By him, as by the walls of an impregnable fortress — we shall be defended. And in him, as in an inexhaustible magazine — we shall find supplies. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runs into it and is safe." Proverbs 18:10. "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing!" Psalms 34:8-10  
This leads us to consider,

What the Lord does. "He knows those who trust in him." His knowledge is infinite. He knows every creature, the state of every heart, and the movements of every mind. "There is no darkness, or shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

He knows who sincerely confide in him. Many profess to do so. but do not. They trust in their talents, or their wealth, or their reputation, or their connections; but they do not trust in the Lord. He distinguishes between the professor and the possessor of godliness; between him who says, "I trust in the Lord" and the person who really does so. He approves of all who trust in him. For to know — is to approve, or be pleased with. "The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his mercy." Psalms 147:11. He acknowledges those who trust in him. They cry to him, and he hears them. They call upon him, and he appears for them. They appeal to him, and he works deliverance for them. He notices them, and thus distinguishes them from others. He visits them, and thus cheers and encourages them. He comforts them . . .

by the smiles of his face,

by the whispers of his love,

by the application of his promises,

by the intimation of his approval, and

by holding fellowship with them from off his mercy seat.

He relieves them by sending them supplies, as certainly, though not so miraculously, as he did the widow when he multiplied her meal and oil; as he did Elijah, when the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.

Beloved, the Lord knows what is the object of your trust. He sees whether you are trusting in him alone, or are afraid to trust him without some visible object being associated with him. He loves to be trusted. He always honors confidence. He shows his approval of those who take him at his word, and expect him to be what he has said, and do as he has promised. There is no presumption in trusting God — but there is unbelief in our not doing so. He is worthy of our strongest confidence, and of our highest love. Our fathers trusted in him — and he delivered them. They cried unto him and were delivered; they trusted in him, and were not confounded.

Let us then receive, and hold fast this cheering truth, "God is good." He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; but he is especially good to those who put their trust in him, and look for good things from him. He will exalt his goodness before us, and glorify his goodness in us — in the midst of our sorest trials, and severest troubles.

Let us improve this provision, "the Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble." To him alone let us repair; from him alone let us expect safety, deliverance, and supply. And while some are filled with perplexity, and others are dejected and cast down — let us with the devout Psalmist, determine and say, "I lift up my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip — he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you — the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm — he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore!" Psalms 121:1-8

Let us take encouragement from the assurance, the Lord "knows those who trust in him." He observes them, he distinguishes them, he approves of them, and he honors them; and this he

does especially in times of trouble. Let us look to the Lord as our strength, or Strong One, in all seasons of weakness, depression, and sorrow.

But, do we know the Lord? Do we believe his word? Do we trust in Jesus for acceptance with Him? Do we fly to him in trouble and danger? Or, are we building on our self-righteousness, trusting to our own efforts, and expecting from our own endeavors? These are solemn enquiries, let us seriously consider them and honestly answer them. And may the Holy Spirit teach us to make the Lord our refuge, and allow us to find him a stronghold in every time of trouble. But if this mighty God should be your foe, and fight against you! If you should reject his word, refuse his invitation, trifle with his mercy, and fall unprepared into his hands! Ah, then you will find, that it "is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Let us beseech you to consider, reflect, and seriously read over these kind but solemn lines, remembering that "faithful are the wounds of a friend — but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

Stop, poor sinner! stop and think,

Before you further go!

Will you sport upon the brink

Of everlasting woe?

Once again I charge you stop!

For unless you warning take,

Before you are aware you'll drop

Into the burning lake.

Say, have you an arm like God,

That you his will oppose?

Fear you not that iron rod

With which He breaks his foes? Can you stand in that dread day

When He judgment shall proclaim,

And the earth shall melt away,

Like wax before the flame?

Pale-faced death will quickly come,

To drag you to his bar;

Then to hear your awful doom,

Will fill you with despair.

All your sins will round you crowd,

Sins of blood and crimson dye;

Each for vengeance crying loud,  
And what can you reply?  
Though your heart be made of steel,  
Your forehead lined with brass,  
God at length will make you feel —  
He will not let you pass!  
Sinners then in vain will call,  
(Though they now despise his grace)  
Rocks and mountains on us fall,  
And hide us from his face.  
But, as yet, there is a hope  
You may his mercy know:  
Though his arm is lifted up,  
He still forbears the blow.  
'Twas for sinners Jesus died,  
Sinners He invites to come;  
None who come shall be denied,  
He says, "There still is room!"

## 45 The Great Change

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The Great Change "Truly, truly, I say unto you: Unless a man is born again — he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3 The Lord Jesus Christ who spoke as never man spoke, here speaks to us. He who revealed the mind of Jehovah, who came into the world to save sinners, informs us that we must be born again. And, unless a man is born again, or born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Again, "Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." My fellow-sinner, Jesus, speaks of you, he speaks to you. Have you ever seriously considered the important language? Have you ever been led to inquire, What is it to be born again? If not, I will suppose that you now put the question: What is it to be truly converted to God? By way of answering it, I will observe:

It is to be quickened by the Holy Spirit — to feel that you are a wretched, miserable, and ruined sinner.

It is to be illuminated to see that you are vile, polluted, and filthy before God.

It is to be alarmed at your state, surprised at your past unconcern, and to be now led to fly for refuge to Jesus the hope set before you.

It is to be brought to know that there is neither goodness, help, nor hope in yourself.

It is to be feelingly assured that unless you are saved by the Lord Jesus as an act of grace — that you must be lost forever.

It is to be led by the Holy Spirit to cry earnestly, frequently, and perseveringly to the Lord for mercy.

It is to be brought to see that the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation are most exactly suited to you — to save, satisfy, and make you happy.

It is to feel an insatiable craving, hungering, and thirsting after a saving interest in Christ, his righteousness, and blood.

It is to feel sin to be a burden, a plague, and the misery of your life — and so to feel it, as to get no rest until you know it to be pardoned, and find the guilt and burden of it removed from your mind, by the precious blood of Christ.

It is to have the fear of the Lord implanted in your soul — operating as a preservative from sin, a preventative to falling into temptation, and a barrier to the inroads of Satan.

It is to hate, abhor, and detest sin — all kinds of sin, and sinful practices.

It is to mourn over inward depravity, outward inconsistency, and felt inability — with godly sorrow working repentance unto salvation.

It is to feel Christ precious, mercy sweet, and the Gospel to be glad tidings indeed.

It is to be panting for a spiritual, experimental, extensive knowledge of Jesus, in his person, work, sufferings, blood shedding, death, resurrection, and intercession.

It is to feel a love to, a desire to be like, and a wish to be numbered with the Lord's spiritual people.

It is to have a relish for, an ardent attachment to, and a realization of, the importance of the Word of God.

It is to have Christ formed in the heart, the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, and the laws of God inscribed upon the mind.

It is to feel grace constraining to obedience, fear urging to flee to Jesus, and love impelling to choose that which is good, to pray for that which is promised, and to give the Lord no rest until you have made your calling and your election sure.

It is in a word, to be as the Holy Spirit states, "a New Creature." "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has gone, the new has come!" Such are the true "circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Perhaps you are now ready to ask: "Am I born again?" I answer, not if you can live in sin! Not if the card table, the theater, or the ball-room suits your taste and yields you gratification. Not if the alehouse, profane language, and loose company are congenial to your mind. Not if you can indulge in pride, lying, or covetousness; for these are not the fruits of the Spirit — but the fruits of inward depravity. Not if you remain the same blind, careless, secure creature as you have been from your youth! In a word, if you find no love to the Lord's people, no relish for his Word, no delight in his ways, no spirit of prayer, no dislike to the world, no inward crying for pardon, peace and salvation — you are not born again. You are still in the flesh, you cannot please God, for your very prayers are an abomination to the Lord. You are dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world — according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that always works in the children of disobedience. And what will be the end if you live and die in this state? Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, a certain fearful looking for of judgment awaits you, which will devour you as God's adversary! Remember, Oh! remember, my fellow-sinner, there is no salvation without a new birth; and no new birth without crying to God, mourning for sin, and a change of life. Without this, all, all is vain — you will die in your sins; and where Jesus, saints, and happiness are — you can never come. No well-spent life, no death-bed repentance, no crying, 'God be merciful' at last — can be substituted for this, "You MUST be born again." And that you may not be deceived by taking external reformation for internal regeneration, the Lord has condescended in his word to compare it to a Resurrection. Man is spiritually dead, and consequently inactive, blind, and indifferent respecting his eternal concerns; but when Jesus calls, "then the dead hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear, live." John 5:25. "His sheep hear his voice — and follow him." John 10:27.

It is further set forth as a Creation. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezekiel 36:26. The sinner receives a new nature, which is holy, powerful, and immortal; and this leads him "to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God." Micah 6:8.

It is represented as "putting the law in the mind, and writing it in his heart;" and then the man appears to be "the epistle of Christ, written not with ink — but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone — but in fleshy tables of the heart." 2 Corinthians 3:3.

It is called a washing, "according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior." Titus 3:5-6.

It is a deliverance from the power of darkness, and a translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son! Colossians 1:13. The person opens his eyes upon new objects, and is taken up with new subjects, he finds his bosom the seat of new feelings, his heart is exercised with new fears, new hopes, new desires, and new discoveries. He now seeks a new way, looks to the new covenant, and finds new prospects opening before him! He is a new man — self, duties, and a form of godliness will no longer satisfy him; he must know that he has redemption in Jesus, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of divine grace. Ephesians 1:7. My dear reader, no man can pass through all this, without some knowledge of it. The scriptures speak of God's people as knowing "that they have passed from death to life." And I am certain that a sinner that is truly born again, never can be satisfied until he does know this.

Now have you been raised from a death in sin, to a life of righteousness? Have you been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Have you a new heart? Are you washed, justified, and sanctified, according to 1 Corinthians 6:11? How infinitely important are such questions — may the Lord enable you honestly to answer them. A title to Heaven is founded upon God's free grace, and is bestowed upon sinners through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; but a fitness for Heaven stands in the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, creating us anew in Christ Jesus, and forming us a people to show forth Jehovah's praise; and without this new creation — there can be no spiritual religion here, nor happiness beyond the grave. May the Lord the Holy Spirit give you a new heart, and create in you a right spirit for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

## 46 Can I Be Saved?

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Can I Be Saved? When a question of importance is proposed, we naturally take some notice of the person making the inquiry, and generally endeavor to ascertain his motive for so doing. Many ask questions from mere curiosity, without any practical object in view. Others, because an idea strikes them at the moment — but as they are suddenly impressed, so the impression suddenly passes away — and therefore they either do not wait for an answer, or they pay no attention to it when it is given. The question now proposed is of the greatest importance. It has interested thousands, and it will interest thousands more. But before we reply to it, it may be well to propose two or three other questions to the person who proposes this.

Friend, are you lost? Do you perceive that you are in the greatest danger — and that without a deliverer, you must perish forever? The Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost. Unless you feel that you are a lost sinner — you do not realize your need of a Savior. Do you sincerely desire to be saved? To be saved immediately? Is salvation in your estimation the one thing needful? Do you perceive that nothing is important, but as it stands connected with your salvation? Are you willing to be saved in God's way? If God is to save a sinner, he will do it in his own way. Man has no choice in the matter. His one business is to submit to God's plan, and accept of the blessing in God's way. If you propose the question thoughtfully and heartily — then you are willing to be saved in God's way. Will you seek salvation if it is to be obtained? Seek it as an object of the greatest value? For instance, as the sick man will seek for health — as the poor man will seek a fortune — as a prisoner will seek for liberty — or as a condemned malefactor will seek a pardon? If you really feel that you are lost — then you heartily desire salvation; if you heartily desire salvation — then you are quite willing to be saved in God's way; and if you are willing to be saved in God's way — then you will seek salvation with all your heart and soul.

If this is not the case, it is folly for you to ask the question, and it will only be a waste of time, so far as you are concerned, to reply to it. But if you are such a character, the answer to the inquiry is ready: You Can Be Saved. The Lord Jesus Christ came into the world on purpose to save you. He had you in his eye when he came. All that he did, and all that he suffered, was for you. On your account . . .

he obeyed the holy law:

he endured the curse of God:

he overcame the prince of darkness:

he made an infinite atonement for sin:

he triumphed over death and the grave:

and he ascended to the right hand of the Father, to present his precious blood and make intercession. To you, he is presented in the everlasting gospel — to be your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. To you, the Holy Spirit is promised — to be your

teacher, leader, sanctifier, and comforter. For you, the wells of salvation were opened, and with joy you may come and draw water therefrom.

You can not only be saved — but be saved with ease — with certainty — and God can be glorified forever in saving you. You can be saved at this moment — and be saved for evermore. It is not a mere possibility, or a probability — it is a certainty. If God can save — and who dare doubt his power — then he will save you. But I imagine I hear you say, "I have been such a great sinner!" He is able to save to the uttermost.

"But my sins are so numerous, and they rise up between God and my soul!" He says, I, even I, am he who blots out your sins as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud.

"But my sins are of such an aggravated nature — of so deep a dye!" If they were a thousand fold more than they are, if they were ten thousand times more aggravated — still, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." His infinite atonement gave full satisfaction to divine justice; and it is an honor to God, and an act of justice too — to pardon every confessing sinner. No matter who you are. No matter where you are. No matter what you are. If you are a lost sinner, if you desire to be saved, if you are willing to be saved in God's way — then there is salvation for you, and full salvation too.

Seek it, and you must find it.

Seek it, and you will obtain it.

Seek it, and you shall enjoy it.

Seek it, and it is your portion forever.

Yes, you can be saved. You can be saved now. You can be saved freely. You can be saved beyond a doubt. To doubt it, is to doubt the veracity of God. To doubt it, is to question the faithfulness of Jesus. To doubt it, is to doubt the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

Salvation is for sinners. For vile, worthless, Hell deserving sinners. Salvation is a gift, a free gift. Salvation is for whoever will, and for you, reader, if you are willing to receive it. It is not by works of righteousness. It is not by fasts and penances. It is by grace — by grace alone. The Father devised the plan. The Son did all that law and justice required. The Holy Spirit has revealed it in the Word, and he applies it to the soul. The gospel preacher proclaims it, and urges men to accept it.

Faith embraces and appropriates it. The beautiful ornament of a holy life spring from it. And the unfading glories of eternity are the consummation of it.

But, reader, suppose that you should not be saved! Suppose that you should be lost forever! Suppose that in Hell, you should lift up your eyes being in torments! Where will you cast the blame? Will you be able to say, that salvation was impossible? Impossible! What! Is there not virtue in the blood of Jesus? Is not the fountain open? Are not the invitations of the gospel free? Have you not been assured that you would be welcome, heartily welcome at the throne of grace?

God will say, "You destroyed yourself!" The Savior will say, "You would not come unto me — that you might have life."

Ministers will say, "You put it away from you, and judged yourself unworthy of everlasting life."

Angels will say, "We witnessed your carelessness, and the preference you gave to the things of time."

Devils will say, "You believed us in preference to God; you followed us instead of the Savior."

All, all will say, "Your damnation is just!"

Repent therefore, and turn from your evil ways, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. You can be saved, for Christ is able. You may be saved, for Christ is willing. If you are not saved — your destruction will be of yourself; and you will have yourself to blame forever!

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