

THE GREAT QUESTION

ANSWERED

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Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said: Sir, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? And they said, BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved. — Acts 16: 29-31.

PART I

That great number of people, even in this Christianized country, are ignorant of the way of salvation, is too evident to be denied. It is manifestly no part of their concern, any more than if they were in no danger of being lost, or such a thing as salvation had never been heard of. Nor is this true only of weak and illiterate people; men who in all other concerns are wise, in these things have no knowledge or sense to direct them. The evil therefore cannot be ascribed to simple ignorance, which, as far as it goes, tends to excuse; but to being willingly ignorant, saying unto God "*Depart from us—we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*"

God, however, has a witness in every man's conscience. Every man, whatever he may pretend, feels himself to be a sinner, and to need forgiveness. Ignorant and idolatrous as the Philippian jailer had been all his life, yet, when death stared him in the face, he trembled and cried for mercy. And if it was thus with the heathen, much more is it likely to be thus with those who have been educated under the light of revelation. The most careless and thoughtless cannot stand the approach of death. The courage of the most harnessed infidel commonly fails him at that solemn period.

Reader, are you one of the many who scarcely ever think of these things; and whose chief concern is, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed? Let the anxiety of a heathen reprove you.

If you were made only to eat and drink, and enjoy life, for a few years, and then to sink into nothing, you might well throw aside every care, except that which respects your present gratification. But you are of an order of beings distinguished from all others in the creation. In your nature are united mortality and immortality; the dust of the ground, and the breath of the Almighty. Life to you is but the introduction to existence, a short voyage which will land you on the shores of eternity. You are surrounded by a

number of objects, and feel an interest in each. You build houses, plant orchards, rear animals, and form to yourself a home; but you are not at home. Your feelings associate with these things, but they, are not fit associates for you. You may have a portion in all that is doing in your family, and in your country, yea, and in some sort, all that is done under the Sun; but this is not sufficient for you. The time draweth nigh, when there will be an end to all these things, and they will be as though they had not been; but you will still live. You will witness the wreck of nature itself, and survive it; and stand before the Son of man at his appearing and kingdom. Can you think of these things and be unconcerned?

Or, though you be an immortal and accountable creature—as your conscience tells you you are, whenever you consult it, and sometimes when you would gladly shut your ears against it—yet if you had not sinned against your Maker, there would be no cause for alarm. A sinless creature has nothing to fear from a righteous God. The approach of an assize, with all its solemn pomp, does not terrify the innocent; neither would judgment or eternity inspire the least degree of dread, if you were guiltless. But you are a sinner, a corrupt branch of a corrupt stock. God placed, as I may say, a generous confidence in our species, and required nothing in return but love; but we have returned him evil for good. You, for yourself, are conscious that you have done so, and that it is in your very, nature to do evil.

Or though you be what is called a sinner, yet, if sin were your misfortune, rather than your fault, you might fly for refuge to the equity of your Maker. But this is not the case. Whatever may be said as to the manner in which you became a sinner, and however you may wish to excuse yourself on that ground, your own conscience bears witness that what you are you choose to be, and occasionally reproaches you for being so. You may speculate upon sin as a kind of hereditary disease, which is merely a misfortune, not a fault; but if so, why do you feel guilt on account of it? Why do you not also acquit others of blame, where the evil is directed against you? You do not think of excusing a fellow creature, when he injures you, upon any such grounds as you allege in excuse of transgression against God. If he be rational and his offence voluntary, you make no further inquiry; but, without any hesitation, pronounce him criminal.

Out of your own mouth, therefore, shall you be judged. The inability that you

feel to do good, is entirely owing to your having no heart to it. It is of the same in nature as that of an unprincipled servant, who cannot seek his master's interest, but is always defrauding him. You would not hold such a servant blameless. Nor will God hold you so. You are not destitute of those powers which render us accountable beings, but merely of a heart to make use of them for God. You take pleasure in knowledge, but desire not the Knowledge of his ways; in conversation, but the mention of serious religion strikes you dumb; in activity but in a his service you are as one that is dead. You are fond of news; but that which angels announced and the Son of God came down to publish gives you no pleasure. All these things prove, beyond a doubt, where, the inability lies. Or, if sin should be allowed to be your fault, yet, if it were a small offence, an imperfection that might be overlooked, or so slight a matter that you could atone for it by repentance, or prayers, or tears, or any effort of your own, there might be less reason for alarm. But neither is this the case. If sin were so light a matter as it is commonly made, how is it that a train of the most awful curses should be denounced against the sinner? Is it possible that a just and good God would curse his creatures in basket and in store, in their houses and in their fields, in their lying down, and in their rising up, and in all that they set their hands to, for a mere trifle, or an imperfection that might be overlooked?

If sin were a light thing, how is it that the Father of mercies should have doomed all mankind to death, and to all the miseries that prepare its way, on account of it? How is it that wicked men die under such fearful apprehensions? Above all, how is it that it should require the eternal Son of God to become incarnate, and to be made a sacrifice, to atone for it?

But if sin be thus offensive to God, then are you in a fearful situation. If you had the whole world to offer for your ransom it would be of no account. Were that which you offered ever so pure, it could have no influence whatever towards atoning for your past guilt, any more than the tears of a murderer can atone for blood: but this is not the case—those very performances by which you hope to appease the divine anger, are polluted with sin.

You are, whether you know it or not, a lost sinner, and that in the strongest sense of the term. Men judge of sin only by its open acts, but God looketh directly at the heart. Their censures fall only on particular branches of immorality, which strike immediately at the well-being of society; but God

views the root of the mischief, and takes into consideration all its mischievous bearings. "*Know thou, therefore, and consider, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast done; that thou hast departed from the living God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of Hosts.*"

Finally: Though your sin be exceedingly offensive to your Creator, and though you can make no atonement for it, yet, if you could resist his power, escape his hand, or endure his wrath, your unconcern might admit of some kind of apology. Surely I need not prove to you that you cannot resist his power—what is your strength when tried? You may, in the hour of health and festivity, and when in company with others like yourself, indulge your pride, and boast great things; but if God touch you with his afflicting hand, your strength and your courage, instantly forsake you.

And will you go on to provoke Omnipotence? Canst thou escape his hand? Whither wilt thou flee? If, attentive to thy safety, the rocks could fall on thee, or the mountains cover thee, yet would they not be able to hide thee from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. God hath beset thee behind and before, and laid his hand upon thee. Whither wilt thou go from his spirit? Whither wilt thou flee from his presence? If thou ascend to heaven, he is there. Or if thou make thy bed in hell, behold, he is there!

The only question that remains is, whether thou canst endure his displeasure. And this must surely be a forlorn hope! Can thine heart endure, and thine hands be strong, in the day that he shall deal with thee? Think of the wrath to come. If it were founded in caprice or injustice, supported by conscious innocence, you might possibly bear it; but, should you perish, you will be destitute of this resource. Conscience will eternally say Amen to the justice of your sufferings. If you had mere justice done you, unmixed with mercy, your sufferings would be more tolerable than they will be; but if you perish, you must have your portion with Bethsaida and Chorazin. Goodness gives an edge to justice. The displeasure of a kind and merciful being—and such is the wrath of the Lamb—is insupportable.

If, after having heard these truths, and lived in a country where they are fully declared, you do not feel interested by them, you have reason to fear that God has given you up to hardness of heart and that the language of the prophet is fulfilled in you: "*Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not*

understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Remember that, in Old Testament times, when God blessed his people Israel with singular temporal blessings, he punished their transgressions mostly with temporal judgments; but now that we are favored with singular spiritual privileges, the neglect of them is commonly punished with spiritual judgments.

But whether you will bear, or whether you will forbear, I will declare unto you THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION. That which was addressed to the Philippian jailer, is addressed to you. "*God has so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.*" He hath given him not only to teach us the good and the right way but to be made a sacrifice for sin, and as such to be himself the way. He suffered from the hands of wicked men; but this was not all; it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put him to grief, and made his soul an offering for sin. He commanded his sword to awake against him, that through his death lie might turn his hand in mercy towards perishing sinners. He hath set him forth to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

This is the only sacrifice which is well-pleasing to God. All that went before, were of no account but as they pointed to it; and all the prayers and praises of sinful creatures are no otherwise acceptable than as presented through it. It is not for you to go about to appease the divine displeasure, or to recommend yourself to the Saviour by any efforts of your own; but despairing of help from every other quarter to receive the atonement which Christ hath made. To this you are invited, and that in the most pressing terms. He that made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, hath on this ground committed to his servants the ministry of reconciliation; and they, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by them, pray you in Christ's stead, "*Be ye reconciled to God.*"

The blessings of pardon, peace, and eternal life, are compared to a feast, or marriage-supper, which the King of heaven and earth hath made for his Son; and he hath commanded his servants to go forth, as to the highways and

hedges, and to invite without distinction; yea, to compel them to come in. Nor is this all: you are exhorted and commanded to believe in Christ, on pain of damnation. All your other you merely to the curse of the law; but the sin of unbelief, if persisted in, will expose you, like the barren fig tree, to the curse of the Saviour, from which there is no redemption.

Say not in thine heart, "*All these things I have believed from my youth up.*" You may indeed have been taught them, and have received them as a tradition from your fathers; but such faith is dead, and consequently inoperative. It is the same as that of the Jews towards Moses, which our Saviour would not admit to be faith. "*If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me, for he wrote of me.*" It is no better than the faith of devils, and in some respects has less influence: for they believe and tremble, whereas you believe and are at ease.

But it may be you will say, "*I have examined Christianity for myself and am fully persuaded it is true.*" Yet it has no effect upon you any more than if you disbelieved it, unless it be to restrain you within the limits of exterior decorum. Your faith, therefore, must still be dead, being alone. Believing in Christ is not the exercise of a mind at ease casting up the evidences for and against, and then coldly assenting, as in a question of science, to that side which seems to have the greatest weight of proof. To one whose mind is subdued to the obedience of faith, there is indeed no want of evidence; but it is not so much from external proofs, as from its' own case as a perishing sinner, that he feels himself impelled to receive it.

The Gospel is too interesting and has too much influence on our past and future conduct, to be an object of unfeeling speculation. It is "*a hope set before us*" which none but those who are ready will ever embrace. To be who are "*ready to perish*" will ever embrace. To believe it, is to renounce our own wisdom, our own righteousness, and our own will, and to: fall into the arms of mere grace, through the atoning blood of the cross. If the good news of salvation be not in this manner believed, it signifies but little what speculative notions we may entertain concerning it; for where there is no renunciation of self, there is no dependence upon Christ for justification; and where there is no such dependence, there is no revealed interest in that important blessing; but the curses and threatenings of God stand in their force against us.

PART II

Had the question proposed by the jailor been addressed to the first genius upon earth, unacquainted with the Gospel, it could not have been answered. Had it been put to all the great philosophers of antiquity, one by one, and to all the learned doctors among the Jews, none of them could have resolved it to any good purpose. Nor, amidst all the boasted light of modern times, can a single unbeliever be found who could know what to do with it. Yet it is a question which arises in every man's mind at one period or other of his life; and a question which must be resolved, or we are lost forever.

Reader, this important question may have already occupied your mind. An alarming sermon, a death in your family, a hint from a faithful friend, or it may be, an impressive dream, has awakened your attention. You cannot take pleasure, as formerly, in worldly company and pursuits; yet you have no pleasure in religion. You have justify off many vices, and have complied with many religious duties, but can find no rest for your soul. The remembrance of the past is bitter; the prospect of the future may be more so. The thought of God troubles you. You have even wished that you had never been born or that you could new shrink back into non-existence, or that you were any thing rather than a man. But you are aware that all these wishes are vain. You do exist; your nature is stamped with immortality; you must go forward and die, and stand before this holy Lord God!

If these or such like exercises, occupy your mind, the question of the Philipian jailer is yours; and to you let me address a few DIRECTIONS included or implied in the answer.

If by this question you mean, What can you do to appease lie wrath of God, or recommend yourself as a fit object of his mercy? What can you do as a good deed, or the beginning of a course of good deeds, in reward of which he may bestow upon you an interest in the Saviour? I answer, Nothing. An interest in Christ, and eternal life, are indeed given as a reward; but not of any thing we have done, or can do, even with divine assistance; it is the reward of the obedience of Christ unto death. To us it is of mere grace, and as such must be received, Though faith is in itself a holy exercise of the mind, yet, as that by which we are justified, it is directly opposed to doing. *"To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; but to him, that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is*

counted for righteousness." He that worketh, seeks to obtain life and the favor of God, in some way or other, as a reward; but he that believeth, receives it as a free gift to the unworthy. And let me apprize you, that this is the state of mind you must be brought to, or you must perish forever. So far as you think of doing anything, call it what you may, with a hope of being pardoned and justified for its sake, so far you reject the only way of salvation, and have reason to expect your portion with unbelievers.

Let me deal freely with you. Yours is a most serious situation. The Gospel-rest is before you; and if you enter not in, it will be because of unbelief. You know the answer given to the jailer; and this is the only answer that can with safety be given to you. Consider, and beware, as you regard your eternal salvation, that you take up your rest in nothing short of it. But, in the first place, let me declare unto you the Gospel of God, which you are directed to believe. If this meet your case; if, rightly understood, it approve itself not only to your conscience, but your whole soul; if it accord with your desires, as it undoubtedly does with your necessities, all is well, and well forever. I shall not trouble you with the opinions of men as to what the Gospel is, nor even with my own, but direct you to the account given of it by its Author. The New Testament informs us what it is, in such plain and pointed language, that he who runs may read: "*God so loved he world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.*"—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."—"This is a faithful saying,"—a truth of such importance as to have become a kind of Christian proverb—"and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."—"WE PREACH Christ crucified."—"I determined NOT TO KNOW ANY THING among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified."—"THIS IS THE RECORD, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

It is not meant, by these brief descriptions of the Gospel, that there is no other truth necessary to be believed but that the doctrine of the cross, properly

embraced, includes all others, or draws after it, the belief of them.

The import of this Gospel is that God is in the right, and we are in the wrong; that we have transgressed against him without cause, and are justly exposed to everlasting punishment; that mercy, originating purely in himself, required, for the due honor of his government, to be exercised through the atonement of his beloved Son; that with this sacrifice God is well pleased, and can, consistently with all his perfections, pardon and accept of any sinner, whatever he hath done, who believeth in him.

What say you to this? The truth of it hath been confirmed by the most unquestionable proofs. It first began to be spoken by the Lord himself, and it has been confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles. The witness of the three in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, is borne to this; namely, that "*God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son:*" and to this also is directed the witness of the three on earth the Spirit, and the Water and the Blood. Can you subscribe to this great truth, in all its hearings, and rest the salvation of your soul upon it; or do you doubt whether you be so guilty, so helpless, or in so dangerous a state as this doctrine supposes? Is it as one of the chief of sinners that you view yourself; or does it grate upon our feelings to receive forgiveness in that humble character? In suing for mercy, are you content to stand on the same low ground as if you were a convict actually going to be executed; or does your heart secretly pine after salvation less humiliating, in which some account might be made of that difference of character by which you may have been distinguished from the vilest of men, and in which you might be in some degree a co-operator with God? Does that which pleases God, please you; or does your mind revolt at it? It meets all your wants, but none of your prejudices, and proud thoughts, or vicious propensities; all these must come down and be made to sacrifice to it. Can you subscribe to it on these terms?

I am well aware, that the great concern of persons in your situation, is to obtain peace of mind; and any thing which promises to afford this, attracts your attention. If this Gospel be believed with all your heart, it will give you peace. This is the good and the old way; walk in it and you shall find rest for your soul, but it is not everything which promises peace, that will ultimately afford it. It is at our peril to offer you other consolation, and at yours to

receive it.

Consider, and beware, I say again, as you regard your eternal salvation, that you take up your rest in nothing short of Christ! Particularly,

1. Beware of brooding over your guilt in a way of unbelieving despondence; and so of standing aloof from the hope of mercy. Say not, "*My sins have been too great, too numerous, or too aggravated to be forgiven.*" "*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin,*" Believest thou this? You are not straitened in him, but in your own bowels. God's thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor his ways as your ways: as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts higher than your thoughts, and his ways than your ways. On the sinner that returneth to our God he bestoweth abundant pardon. It is not, "*if thou canst do any thing, help me;*" but, "*If thou canst believe—all things are possible to him that believeth.*" Of what dost thou doubt? Of his all-sufficiency? He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Of his willingness? Ought not his gracious invitations to satisfy thee on this head? Can you imagine that he would proclaim, saying, "*Whosoever thirsteth, let him come unto me and drink,*" and yet be reluctant to gratify the desires of those that come to him? Objections, on the ground of the greatness of guilt and unworthiness, may seem to wear the face of modesty and humility; but, after all, it becomes you to consider whether they be any other than the workings of a self-righteous spirit. If you could find in your heart to accept of mercy as one of the chief of sinners, all your objections would vanish in a moment.

One sees, in your very tears of despondency, a pining after acceptance with God by something in yourself. Were they put into words, they would amount to something like this: "*If I had but somewhat to recommend me to the Saviour, I could go to him with assurance; or, if I had been less wicked, I might hope for acceptance.*" And what is this but making good the complaint of our Saviour? "*Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life!*" Such longings after something to recommend you to the Saviour, are no other than "*going about to establish your own righteousness;*" and while this is the case, there is great danger of your being given up to imagine that you find the worthiness in yourself which your soul desireth.

2. Beware of dwelling in a way of self complacency, on those reformations which may have been produced by the power of conviction This is another of

those workings of unbelief, by which many have come short of believing, and so of entering into rest. There is no doubt but your convictions have driven you from the commission of grosser vices, and probably have frightened you into a compliance with various religious duties: but these are only the loppings off of the branches of sin; the root remains unmortified. It is not the breaking off of your sins that will turn to any account, unless they be broken off by righteousness; and this will not be the case but by believing in Christ. The power of corruption may have only retired into its strong holds, from whence, if you embrace not the Gospel way of salvation, it will soon come forth with increased energy and sweep away all your fancied reformatations. Nay, it is very possible that while the lusts of the flesh have seemed to recede, those of the mind, particularly spiritual pride, may have already increased in strength. If, indeed, you dwell on your reformatations, and draw comfort from them, it is an undoubted proof that it is so; and then, instead of being reformed, or nearer the kingdom of heaven than you were before your character is more offensive to God than ever. Publicans and harlots are more likely to enter into it than you.

Besides if your reformatations were ever so virtuous—which they are not, in his sight by whom actions are weighed—yet while you are an unbeliever, they cannot be accepted. You yourself must first be accepted in the Beloved, ere any thing that you offer can be received. *"It does not consist with the honor of the majesty of the King of heaven and earth to accept of any thing from a condemned malefactor condemned by the justice of his own holy law, till that condemnation be removed."*

3. Beware of deriving comfort from the distress of mind which you may have undergone, or from any feelings within you. Some religious people will tell you, that these workings of mind are a sign that God has mercy in reserve for you; and that, if you go on in the way you are in waiting as at the pool, all will be well in the end; but such language requires great qualification. It is not your being distressed in mind that will prove anything in your favor, but the issue of it. Saul was distressed as well as David and Judas, as well as Peter. When the murderers of our Lord were pricked in their hearts, Peter did not comfort them by representing this their unhappiness as a hopeful sign of conversion; but exhorted them to repent, and be baptized every one them in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.

And thus it was with Paul and Silas, when the jailer was impressed with fear and dismay: they gave him no encouragement from thence, but preached Jesus Christ as the only source of hope. If one who had slain a man in Israel, had stopped short of the City of refuge, and endeavored to draw comfort from the alarm which he had felt, lest the avenger of blood should overtake him, would he have been safe? There is no security to you or to any man, but in fleeing immediately to the Gospel-refuge and laying hold of the hope set before you. If you take comfort from your distress, you are in imminent danger of stopping short of Christ, and so of perishing for ever. Many no doubt, have done so; and that which they have accounted waiting at the pool for the moving of the waters, has proved no other than settling upon a false foundation. Indeed, it must needs be so; for as there is no medium in one that has heard the gospel, between faith and unbelief, he that does not believe in Jesus for salvation, if he have any hope of it, must derive that hope from something in himself.

4. Beware of considering faith itself the meritorious ground of acceptance with God. It is true, that believing is an act of yours, and an act of obedience to God. Far be it from me that I should convey an idea of anything short of a cordial reception of the Gospel being accompanied with salvation: a reception that involves a renunciation of self-righteousness, and a submission to the righteousness of God. But if you consider it a species of sincere obedience which God has consented to accept, instead of a perfect one; and if you hope to be justified in reward of it, you are still "*going about to establish your own righteousness*" under an evangelical name. This is the commandment of God, that ye believe on the name of his Son. Faith is an act of obedience to God, yet it is not as such that it justifies us, but as receiving Christ, and bringing us into a living union with him, for whose sake alone we are accepted and saved.

Finally: Beware of taking comfort from any impulse, or unfounded persuasion that your sins are forgiven, and that you are a favorite of God. Many are deceived this way, and mistake such a persuasion for faith itself. When a sinner is driven, from all his former holds, it is not unusual for him, instead of falling at the feet of Christ as utterly lost, to catch at a new conceit, however unscriptural and absurd, if it will but afford him relief. If, in such a state of mind, he receives an impression, perhaps in the words of scripture, that God has forgiven and accepted him, or dreams that he is in heaven, or

reads a book, or hears a sermon favorable to such a method of obtaining relief, he eagerly imbibes it, and becomes intoxicated with the delicious draught. The joy of hope being so new and unexpected a thing, and succeeding to great darkness and distress, produces wonderful change in his mind. Now he thinks he has discovered the light of life, and feels as one that has lost his burden. Now he has found out the true religion; and all that he read or heard before, not affording him relief, is false doctrine, or legal preaching. Being treated also as one of the dear children of God by others of the same description, he is attached to his flatterers and despised those as graceless who would rob him of his comforts, by warning him against "*the lie which is in his right hand.*"

I do not mean to say that all consolation which comes suddenly to the mind, or by the impression of a passage of Scripture, any more than by reading, or hearing, is delusive. It is not the manner in which we obtain relief, that is of any account, but what it is that comfort us. If it be the doctrine of the cross, or any revealed truth pertaining to it, this is Gospel consolation; but if it be a supposed revelation from heaven of something which is not taught in the Scriptures, that is a species of comfort on which no dependence can be placed. A believer may be so far misled, as to be carried away with it; but, if a man has nothing better, he is still an unbeliever.

If ever you obtain that rest for your soul which will bear the light, it must be, not from any thing within you, but by looking out of yourself to Christ, as revealed in the Gospel. You may afterwards know that you have passed from death unto life, by the love you bear to the brethren, and by many other Scriptural evidences; and from the time of your embracing the Gospel-remedy, you may be conscious of it, and so enjoy the hope of the promised salvation; but your first relief, if it be genuine, will be drawn directly from Christ, or from finding that in the doctrine of salvation through his death, which suits your wants and wishes as a perishing sinner.

Having thus warned you against certain by-paths, *I shall conclude with a few additional directions concerning the good and the right way.*

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, is to receive him as he is revealed in the Gospel. Christ is God's first gift, with, or for the sake of whom, he bestows all others; and believing in him corresponds with it. If God first give Christ, and with him all things freely, we must first receive Christ, and with him all

things freely. Hence it is said, "*He that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.*" We must receive him as that for which he was given, which was to be a sacrifice, or propitiation for sin, that God might be just in justifying poor ungodly sinners who believe in him. We must trust in him as the sole ground of hope, and, plead for pardon only in his name. Receiving Christ as by a marriage-covenant, we become one with him, and so are interested in all that he hath done and suffered on earth, and in all that he is now doing at the right hand of God,

But though believing in Christ has a special respect to him as the way of acceptance with God, yet, when you receive him as your atoning Priest, you will also receive him as your King. When you "*come*" to him, as guilty and heavy-laden, for rest, you will at the same time "*take his yoke upon you,*" and "*learn his meek and lowly spirit.*" Though we are justified by faith alone, yet it is not by a faith which is alone, but contains the seeds of universal obedience. In one view, namely, as receiving the Saviour, and uniting us to him, it justifieth; in another view, namely, as including the principles of a holy life, it sanctifieth.

In this way, reader, you will find rest for your soul. In your journey to the heavenly world, you will have much to do, much to oppose, and it may be, much to suffer; but by a life of faith on him in whom you first believed, you will find strength equal to your day. Duties will be pleasant, temptations will be overcome, and the sufferings of this present life will work a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.