

FOR OR AGAINST?

NO. 2773

A SERMON
 INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, APRIL 6, 1902.
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.”
 Matthew 28:4-6.*

THIS twofold incident, the trembling of the guards, and the comforting of the women, seems to me to have a great deal about it in the form of a type. I think it may be looked upon as an illustration of what has often occurred, and will probably occur again and again; and it teaches us how divine and angelic manifestations have their dark and threatening side for the ungodly, and their bright and cheering side for the people of God. Just as the pillar of cloud, which came between the Israelites and the Egyptians, was dark to the Egyptians but gave light to the children of Israel, so, in this case, the appearance of the angel of the Lord made the Roman soldiers shake and swoon away, while it brought comfort and encouragement to the humble women who were the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It will be thus all through the history of the world; the most cheering subjects to saints will be the most gloomy subjects to sinners; and, at the last, “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” “He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” When He shall be welcomed by the joyful acclamations of all His faithful followers, the wicked shall say to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” That face, which will be to His own people as the rising of the sun which will usher in the everlasting day, will be to them as the flaming sword of certain vengeance smiting them to their eternal overthrow.

I bring this incident, therefore, before your notice for the purpose of showing you that the swooning men, on the one side, in the presence of the angel, represent the terrifying effect of many a glorious truth upon the ungodly, while the women, comforted by the cheering words of the angelic messenger, set forth the way in which many a truth, terrible to the wicked, has, nevertheless, its sweet and cheering side to seeking souls.

My first division will be this, *all things have a black look for ungodly men*; and the second will, naturally, be that *all things have a smile for seekers after Christ*.

I. First, I have a stern duty to perform, in reminding everyone who is not reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, and who, therefore, is still living in sin, that **ALL THINGS HAVE A BLACK LOOK FOR HIM**.

Whether you know it, or not, you, who are enemies to God, are out of gear with the entire universe. If God did not hold His creatures in with a strong leash, they would turn upon you, and tear you in pieces. The very earth groans under the burden of having to bear you up, and the bread you eat is unwilling to feed an enemy of God. The wind, and air, and sun, and moon, and stars would, if they could, decline to be of service to you as long as you remain at enmity against Him whom they so gladly serve. The believer in God is informed that he shall be in league with the stones of the field, and that the beasts of the field shall be at peace with him. All things work together for good unto him; but to you who are a rebel against

your God, nothing is working for good. The great wheels of divine providence are continually revolving, and the day is coming in which they will grind you to powder. Whatever little discomfort or inconvenience you may have suffered in the past—and, perhaps, you have fretted and fumed, and even blasphemed against God because of it—it is nothing compared with what you will have to suffer in that day when God shall permit the forces of nature to work their just and righteous will upon you, and to inflict upon you the due penalty for your evil deeds.

If an unconverted man were really in his right senses, so that he could accurately understand the position in which he stands, he would be alarmed to the last degree. Though he may not have outwardly transgressed the law of God by enormous crimes against the law of man, yet, it is guilt enough for him to have lived in rebellion against his God—guilt enough to have forgotten God—guilt enough to have no love for Him. I think I see you now, O ungodly man! You are standing above the pit of everlasting wrath upon a single plank, and that plank is snapping beneath your feet—you are hanging over the awful precipice by a single rope, and each moment the strands of that rope are breaking, and the last one of them will snap before long; and if you are then unsaved, you will learn what eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power will mean. O God, save us all from being any longer opposed to You! Deliver us from the guilt of the past, and the sin of the present, and reconcile us unto Yourself through the death of Your Son. This is the one great need of each unsaved soul in the whole world!

Every unconverted person ought to learn, from the connection of our text, *that the great throes of nature are always against the ungodly*. These Roman soldiers, who were on guard at the door of the sepulcher, were probably not any worse than most other men of their time; possibly, they were better than a good many others; but they were not Christian men, so they were opposed to God, and they were doing the devil's work. While they were at their post, the earth suddenly began to rock under their feet. They may have had some experience with earthquakes before, for they had lived in regions where earthquakes were not uncommon; but this was “a great earthquake;” and, as they felt the ground moving beneath them, as though they were on the sea rather than on the land, they were full of fear. There is, in most men, a consciousness of the power of that which is supernatural. You may hear them swear, or talk in atheistic fashion, until there comes a sudden flash of lightning so vivid that they start, and as it is followed by a tremendous thunderclap, they are alarmed, and they cry out, “O God!” If they happen to witness such a violent phenomenon as a tropical tornado or an earthquake, they are so alarmed and distressed that they know not what to do. Men on board ship, in times of terrible storm and peril, who never thought of praying before, believe in God straight away, and cry to Him for mercy when the yawning wave threatens to swallow up the vessel in which they are sailing. I think that there are few sailors who really remain atheists; at any rate, I cannot imagine that they will continue to be so if, on some lone night, when the ship is gently moving over the sea, there should happen to be one of those strange lights that will sometimes come, and which I have myself seen, lighting up every spar and sail with wonderful magnificence for a moment, and then all sinking into darkness again. The man, who witnesses such a sight as that, stands aghast; and all his doubts concerning the existence of God are driven away, by the inward conviction that, somehow or other, the great and terrible forces of nature are ranged against the man who is living in opposition to his God.

Another thing is also very clear from this narrative, and we may state it as a fact, that *all mysterious beings are against the ungodly*. These Roman soldiers evidently thought so, or they would not have trembled, and become as dead men. They had never seen an angel before, though they may have had some sort of belief that there were such mysterious beings; but, on this occasion, there appeared to them the angel of the Lord: “his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow;” and they were so astonished and alarmed at the sight of him that they quaked, and became as dead men. It has become a custom, in this evil age, for certain persons to attempt to communicate with familiar spirits. If it can be done, it is strictly forbidden in this Book; yet there are some who try to have dealings with those who are in the land of spirits. Well, if they will trespass on that forbidden ground, it is possible that, one of these days, somebody will appear to them. I should not greatly wonder if their father, the devil, came up, and ran away

with them. They go so near his door, and do their utmost to enter, that they ought not to be surprised if he should appear, and claim his own.

But let every unconverted person be sure that, whatever spirits there may be in the unseen world—and there are good angels and bad ones—they will none of them work for the good of the ungodly. The evil angels may tempt, and mislead, and help to destroy; but they can do no good, even if they wished to do so, to the ungodly. And as for the pure and holy spirits that behold the Father's face in glory, I think that their flaming swords must often be ready to start from their scabbards as they hear God's holy name profaned, and see how mortal men, puny creatures as they are, dare to provoke the majesty of heaven. If angels are capable of experiencing horror, I think they must often be horrified into burning indignation at the transgressions which they behold among the sons and daughters of men. Ah! You who try to pierce the veil which hides these mysterious beings from view, be sure of this, that, whatever of mystery there is in the world of spirits, it is all arrayed against you. Even if you can see the hand that is writing on the wall, you cannot see the body of the writer who is inscribing the letters of fire upon the wall; and though those letters are a mystery to you, you need not think twice as to the purport and meaning of the message, for you may be sure that it is against you. Whenever there is a manifestation from the spirit world at all, God cannot have sent it in your favor as long as you remain His adversaries. There is a black and threatening side of every angelic face towards everyone who will not be reconciled to God.

The same is true concerning *the resurrection of Christ*. These Roman legionaries saw the Savior rise from the dead; or, at least, they witnessed as much of that great act as could be beheld by men; and it made them tremble as they saw the dead man, whose corpse they were guarding, suddenly emerge from the grave in life and resurrection beauty. Well might they be alarmed at the resurrection of Christ; and there will be another resurrection, both of the just and of the unjust, and that great truth has a dark side to everyone who is the adversary of God. You might be glad to get rid of that body of yours, and to suffer only in your spirit, but you cannot do so; therefore, I charge you to “fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” “Those are hard words,” says someone. I know they are, but they are not mine; they are the words of the tenderhearted Christ, who never said anything more harshly than it was necessary to utter it. You cannot get rid of that body of yours; you will have to wear it in another world, and it will have to smart if you die unsaved. The members of your body, that you have made members of unrighteousness, and servants of sin, will have to bear the fury of divine wrath even as the spirit which now inhabits that body will have to bear it. Yes, the truth of the resurrection has a dark side to the ungodly. If you could creep into your beds of dust, and lie there and rot—if there were some dens and caves where you could hide yourselves from the face of God—or if there were for you the annihilation which some false teachers promise you, then you might continue in sin without fear of the consequences; but now you have but one way of hope, and that is, repent and be reconciled to God, for, if you will not, neither heaven, nor earth, nor hell, can hide you from the face of Him that sits upon the throne, nor can either time or eternity find you a place of shelter from the wrath of the Lamb.

Rest assured, that you must rise again, and that you must appear before the judgment seat of Christ and receive from His lips the righteous sentence for the things which you have done in your body. I beseech you to give heed to this message, and to be warned by it, all you who are living ungodly lives. The second coming of Christ will be a time of terror to you, whatever of bliss there may be about it for His own people. I am not going to enter into any details of the great conflagration, when the heavens and the earth shall pass away in flaming fire, or of the wondrous renovation in which there shall be new heavens and a new earth; I will not attempt to describe what the coming of Christ will be like; but I will just remind you that the day of the Lord will be one of darkness, and not light, to everyone who remains out of Christ. To those who bow the knee, and kiss the Son, and accept God's grace in His Son, Jesus Christ, everything about Christ's coming will be joyous; but to those who reject the Mediator, and trample on His precious blood, everything about His coming will be black as sackcloth of hair. Their sun shall be turned into darkness, and their moon into blood; their stars shall wither like unripe figs; and their sky shall pass away like a scroll. There shall be no hope, or light, or comfort left for them in that tremendous day of Christ's

appearing. Everything—and I make no exception—from God’s all-piercing eye, that shall burn with holy indignation against those who have rejected His Son, even to the glaring eyes of devils in hell—all shall shed baleful beams of blackness upon those who have refused to believe in Jesus, and who have remained the enemies of God.

I have no doubt that these men, who kept watch at the Savior’s tomb, were strong men; Caesar did not pick dwarfs and weaklings for his armies. I have no doubt that they were also cruel men; soldiers often are, and Roman soldiers certainly were of that character. They were brave men, too. No men, who have ever lived, have been braver than were the soldiers of old Rome. They were hardy also, I do not doubt. Many of them had passed through arduous campaigns, and they were probably all familiar with bloodshed and the sad sights and sounds of the field of battle. They had stood firm amid the shock of arms in deadly combat; but, now, just as the morning dawned, they were witnesses of the wondrous spectacle of the resurrection of Christ, and the descent of the angel of the Lord; “and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.” Well, now, if it was so with the bravest of the brave when they saw only one angel, what will be the condition of any of us, who remain unsaved, when we shall see the heavens all aglow with myriads of bright spirits; and when we shall not merely see Christ in the glory of His resurrection, but in the glory of His Father, and of His holy angels; when the archangel’s trumpet shall ring out o’er land and sea, and there shall peal forth that soul-piercing message, “Awake, you dead, and come to judgment;” when the earth shall rock and reel to and fro, and the sea shall give up her dead? Ah, what dismay will seize the unsaved sinner then! How will he put his hands upon his loins in the bitter anguish of his spirit! How will he wish—all in vain—that he had never been born! But I forbear; for the subject is too great and too terrible for human language. God grant that you may be born-again! Then you will not have to wish that you had never been born. May you, by faith, see Christ on His cross, or else the sight of Christ on His throne will overwhelm you with eternal despair.

II. Now, in the second place, I have to speak of something more pleasing. The second part of my discourse is to be upon this theme, ALL THINGS SMILE UPON SEEKERS AFTER CHRIST.

The angel said to the women, “Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified.” From these words, I gather that true seekers after Christ are *those who seek Jesus, “which was crucified.”* They are those who understand that Christ died upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin, and they seek Him in order that He may put away their sin. They have heard that He has made an atonement for sin by the shedding of His precious blood, and they want to have blessings bestowed upon themselves; so they seek to have Him as their Substitute and Representative, to stand forever before God on their behalf, and to put away their guilt by His great sacrifice. Now, dear friends, you know whether you are seeking Christ in that way, or in some other fashion. To seek Christ simply as your Example, or as a sort of make weight for your own goodness and merit, is no good whatever; that is no better than not seeking Him at all. But to seek Christ as the Crucified One, to recognize Him as the appointed Victim offered up for His people’s guilt, and to want to have Him to be a Substitute for you—that is the right sort of seeking, and you have no need to fear if you are so seeking Jesus.

I learn, also, from this narrative, that *there are some seeking Jesus, who was crucified, who have known Him long.* Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, were old familiar friends of Jesus, but they had lost Him for a little while. He had been hidden away from them in the sepulcher, so they were seeking Him. So, dear friends, are you seeking Christ, not for the first time, but because you have known Him for many years, and you want again to enjoy the light of His countenance? Then I say to you, as the angel said to the women, “Fear not: for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not dead, but He still lives, and loves you, and will graciously appear unto you.”

Possibly, some whom I am now addressing are seeking the Lord for the first time. Happy are the people who are led truly to seek Him! How good He is to those who seek Him aright! I am speaking now of what I know, for I know how good He was to me when I first sought Him. There was nothing in me that could have won His heart; it was because He was so good in Himself that He had pity upon such an unworthy one as I was when I began to seek Him. But, oh! He was so tender, and so gracious, and so good

to me, that I cannot help telling you about Him, and trying especially to cheer you who are seeking His face. He is not hard to find, for He is not far from any of us. He is not one with whom it is difficult to plead, for He is full of compassion and mercy. He has a great heart, and there is an easy way to get at it, for the soldier's spear opened a road right up to it; and any sigh, or tear, or cry, from a heart that truly longs for Him, will touch His heart, and His soul will go forth in pity towards you who are seeking Him. I am so glad that you have begun to seek Him, for everything will smile upon you now, if you are really, heartily, and earnestly, seeking the Savior.

This, then, is the kind of seekers to whom all things look fair. So, beloved, if you are a seeker of this sort, if you are really seeking the crucified Savior, then every *mysterious being is on your side*. I do not suppose that you ever saw an angel; you need not wish to do so; but if you did, the angel would say to you, "Fear not: for I know that you seek Jesus which was crucified." The angels know a great deal about us. I have no doubt they can read our hearts in the way in which one spirit can read another spirit. They certainly rejoice when you begin to pray, and to repent, and to believe in Jesus. Do not be afraid of them, for they will not hurt you. Get rid of all fears concerning mysterious beings, for, in the first place, they do not appear to men now, unless under very exceptional circumstances, so you need not be at all afraid that they will appear to you. But if they did, would it matter in the least to me or to you if we are in Christ Jesus? If there were a thousand devils in my way, and I had to go where they were, I would drive them all away. They would fly, like chaff before the wind, from the face of any man who did but mention the name of Jesus. And if all the angels of heaven stood in serried squadrons in front of you, you must just say to them, "Ah, blessed servitors! I am glad to see you, now go about your business;" and they would soon be gone. There is nothing, in angel or devil, for a man to fear who is trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. He shall have the angels to smile upon him; and, whatever mysterious beings or things there may be, in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, they are all on the side of the man who is on the side of God.

This is also true concerning *all the mysterious doctrines of Scripture*. "Well," says someone, "there are many doctrines in the Bible that I cannot understand." That is quite likely, for there are a good many things, out of the Bible, that I cannot understand—in fact, to tell the truth, I do not know that I really understand anything completely, and I have, a long while ago, given up trying to do so. I can see a great many things, and I can believe a great many truths; but understanding is another thing altogether from either seeing or believing; and it is my conviction that the most of things that exist in the world are beyond all understanding. I think you must have heard the simple story of the two young men, who said that they would never believe what they could not understand; but someone said to them, "Let me tell you what I saw as I came here. I passed by a field, and I saw some geese there, and they were eating grass. I also saw some sheep, and they were eating grass; and I saw some oxen, and they, too, were eating grass; do you believe that?" "Yes," the young men said, they believed that. "Well," said the other, "but I noticed that, on the geese, there grew feathers; and on the sheep, there grew wool; and on the oxen, there grew hair; do you believe that?" "Yes," said the young men. "Well," replied the other, "seeing that they all eat grass, do you understand how it is that, in one case, it turns to feathers; in another, to wool; and in the other, to hair? Of course, you do not; so that, after all, you do believe a great deal that you cannot understand." It is perfectly clear that every man must believe a great deal which it will remain forever impossible for him to be able fully to comprehend; but, whatever there is in the Bible that you do not understand, you can be sure that, if you truly seek Jesus, who was crucified, there is no dark, mysterious decree of reprobation which shuts you out from finding Him; and, on the other hand, there is no bright, lustrous decree of election which blocks your way in coming to Christ. There are many grand and sublime truths in the Word of God, and among them is the doctrine of election, which is most certainly true, but it is not a barrier against any sincere seeker of the Savior. The Lord said, as long ago as the days of Isaiah, "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you Me in vain." Nor will He say so to you if you seek Him with all your heart. Whatever secret decree there may be, or may not be, it cannot be contrary to the plain words of the Lord Jesus Christ, "He that believes and is baptized shall be

saved; but He that believes not shall be damned.” That is the all-important question for you to consider; and, if you have believed in Jesus, you may rest assured that all the decrees that are unknown to you must be on your side.

Is there anything else that is mysterious in the world? There are many *mysterious providences*. Possibly, some of you have been the subjects of very remarkable providences. Ever since you began to seek the Lord, you have had more trouble than you ever had before; you say, “When I was altogether ungodly, I seemed to get on better than I have done since I became a hearer of the Word, and a seeker after Christ.” That is one of the mysterious providences which have puzzled many people, but you may depend upon it that it is wholly on your side. It may be that the Lord sees that there is no way of saving you except by making you pass through what seems like a sea of trouble. The day will probably come when you will thank God that things did not go smoothly and pleasantly with you. You see, as long as you are going down stream, your boat glides along easily enough with the current; but now that you are beginning to pull upstream, it is not a cause of wonder that you find the current to be contrary, and the spray breaks over you, and now you have to pull with all your might to escape from the waterfall, the roaring of which you can distinctly hear; but you will be helped, depend upon it. Do not marvel, however, if the dispensations of providence should appear to you to be very mysterious; but say in your soul, “It is all right, for every providence says to me, ‘Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus.’” Every doctrine of Scripture says to you, “Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus;” and every angel in heaven says, “Fear not, for I know that you seek Jesus;” so all must be well with you.

Yet once more, beloved friends, *the truth that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead* is altogether on your side if you are seeking Him. The angel said to the women, “Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said.” I would like to speak to anybody here, who is really seeking the Savior, just as I would have liked to have been spoken to when I was seeking Him. Dear friend, let me assure you that there is still a living Savior. It is true that Jesus died upon the cross, but He is not dead now. If you really want a Savior, He is to be found. He has not given up His office; He is still living, and working. He is as full of power as He ever was; and, by His Spirit, He is still working effectually upon all who seek Him. There is a living Savior; the Lord Jesus Christ still lives; and there is great meaning in His resurrection. You see, He died to pay our debts, and He would never have risen again if those debts had not been paid. He died because of our transgressions, and He has risen again to declare that we are fully and forever justified. Now that the crucified Christ lives again, the greatest sinners, who come to Him, will most certainly be justified in the sight of God, since Jesus Christ was not only “delivered for our offenses,” but He was also “raised again for our justification.”

Do you seekers know what it is for which Jesus now lives? Paul tells us that “He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” The chief thing that He does up there in heaven is to plead for poor souls such as you are. If you are really seeking Him with all your heart, seeking Him as your crucified Savior, listen, and by faith you will hear Him pleading for you, “Father, forgive him; accept him; save him. He is seeking Me; O My Father, bless him!” Such are His pleas before the throne, and you may rest assured that they will prevail for you; so, be of good courage, and be not afraid. “He is not here.” Be thankful that He is not. “He is risen.” He has gone into glory, where He can serve your turn far better than He could if He were still down here. He said to His disciples, “It is expedient for you that I go away;” and He must say the same to you. If you are really seeking Him—if you will come now, and trust Him—if you will just cast yourself upon Him—then, fear not, for His resurrection is full of comfort to you.

I think I hear someone say, “My fear is that I shall never find Him.” Perhaps you would not if it was left with you, but He will find you. If you are seeking Him, and cannot find Him, remember that He is also seeking you, and that He will find you. I hope He will find you this very hour. I wish He would bring you to this pass—that you would say, “I will not rest until I do find Him.” I do not think He would let another night go over your head without your discovering that He is very near you. Only trust Him; only trust Him, and you have already found Him; may His mighty mercy bring you to that blessed position!

Do not be afraid, for you shall surely find Him if you sincerely seek Him, and diligently search for Him with all your heart.

“But I am afraid,” says another timid one, “that He is not for me.” Do not indulge such foolish fears. Do not say, “He is not for me,” until He tells you so Himself. If there is any text of Scripture that declares that your name is left out of the Lamb’s book of life, then believe it. But there is no such text in the whole Bible. On the other hand, there are many passages that should encourage you to trust in Jesus, like that one I quoted a little while ago—I cannot help repeating it—“Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out;” and this one, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Therefore, there is no justification for you to say, “Christ is not for me,” if you truly trust in Him.

“But,” says another friend, “I am afraid that He would not receive me now. He may be changed from what He was on earth.” If Jesus Christ stood on this platform tonight, poor troubled soul, would you not come, and cast yourself at His feet, and say, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on me”? Well, now, He is the same Christ that He was when He was upon the earth, and He is just as really here as if your eyes could behold Him; I do not ask you to do with your body what you would do if His body were here, but do with your soul what you would do if you felt that Jesus were here. Will you not say, in your heart, knowing that He can hear you even if you do not utter the words audibly, “Jesus, have mercy on me; I do believe that You can, and that You will save me, and I trust You to save me”? You are saved as soon as you have thus trusted Him, you are saved now; all your transgressions are forgiven you. If you can truly say that this is the utterance of your soul, if you do really cast yourself upon Him, He says to you, “Son, daughter, your sins are forgiven you; go in peace.” “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.”

What is your fear, my friend? “O sir, my fear is that, if I did find Jesus, I should soon lose Him!” Well, if I were in your place, I would find Him first before I began worrying about losing Him. The very best thing in the world, when you are nervous and troubled, is to live by very short periods. “What do you mean by that expression?” asks someone. Why, just this; some people try to live a year ahead, so they always have a heap of trouble; and they often worry themselves about things that never come to pass—

*“Day by day the manna fell,
Oh, to learn that lesson well!”*

Live by the day; or, better still, live moment by moment. Remember this, if you once find Christ, or, rather, if He finds you, He is not accustomed to lose His people, and He will never let you go again. He had a strange lot of disciples when He was here, but concerning them all He said to His Father, “Those that You gave Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” And as He did not lose one of them, so He will not lose one of you who truly trust Him. I know that some of you, who have come to Christ, will have many troubles, but you need not have any fears. You have those fears because you do not think carefully enough upon the matter, and examine it in the light of Scripture. The writer of “The Recreations of a Country Parson” tells us of a man, who was in great trouble, and who very nearly brought himself into a lunatic asylum. He had £500 a year. He was obliged to live in a certain house and in a certain style; he could not increase his income, and his expenditure could not very well be cut down. I suppose neither he nor his wife had been much accustomed to economize. He felt bound to have a certain number of servants, everything to match, and he had the fear upon him that he should “overrun the constable,” as people say, and that he would die in a debtor’s prison, for there was such a thing in those days; so he put down all his payments in a book, and at the end of three months he found that he had actually spent £125. “Now,” he said to himself, “four times £125 is £600. I shall be a hundred pounds in debt at the end of the year, and I shall go to prison;” and that man for a long time troubled, worried, and fretted himself, and could not tell what to do, till it struck him, all of a sudden, that four times £125 was not £600, but £500, and that, therefore, he did not owe anybody anything. But although he recovered from his former state of melancholy, the effects of that unhappy experience remained upon him for years all through his not calculating correctly, and I believe that there is many a person who is in distress for reasons quite as absurd as that.

Now, dear friend, will you try to calculate and do it correctly? Set down your sins. “Oh, that is a long task!” says one; “I have not a roll of paper long enough.” Well, use up all you have, and then we will give you some more; but be sure to put them all down. Have you anymore? Put them all down. “Oh, there are so many, I cannot put them all down!” Well, then, put them down in a lump; say that they are infinite if you like. Put them down, in some way or other that will be final. “Oh, the list is too dreadful! It is too black!” I know it is, but I am not going to read it, so do not alarm yourself about that. I am no father confessor; I would not like to make my ear into a common sewer. Well, now, have you written them all down? If not, take the pencil again, and complete the list, put down something that will comprehend it all. Have you put it all down? Then, lend me the pencil, for I want to write something, or I shall be very glad if you will write this sentence at the end of the list of all your sins: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” It does not matter what the total of your sin was, for it is all gone now. If I should owe any person here £5, and he will kindly write at the bottom, “Received with thanks,” and put his name and the date across the stamp, the debt is paid. Supposing I owed him £500, well, if he will write the same words, that debt is cancelled. Supposing I owe Him £5,000; if he will write the same, that debt is gone. Supposing I owe Him £50,000—£500,000—£1,000,000—£50,000,000—if he will only put, “Received,” that debt is all done with, it is all gone. That is what our Lord Jesus Christ has done by His precious blood—He has put this receipt at the bottom of the whole list of our transgressions, and they are all gone, and gone forever: “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.”

What cause, then, can there be for fear if you will but trust in Jesus? You will be damned if you will not come; you are “condemned already” if you have not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God; but if you do come to Jesus—if you do believe in Jesus, and are baptized on confession of your faith in Him, you are saved. God grant that each one of you may so come, and believe, and be baptized, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

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