

The Present Truth (UK) January 30, 1890

# How Shall We Draw Near to God?

“Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” There are many who profess to be the sons and daughters of God, but who are walking in the darkness of unbelief. They say, “I have no light. I do not know that God accepts me.” For years they have had a name to live, and ought to be far advanced in experience and in the knowledge of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. They ought to be able to bear a decided testimony to the effect that they have been saved by faith in Him. They ought to be able to bear a decided testimony to the effect that they have been saved by faith in Him. They ought to be able to bear a decided testimony to the effect that they have been saved by faith in Him. They ought to be able to bear a decided testimony to the effect that they have been saved by faith in Him.

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January 30, 1890, par. 1}

When we yield to the temptations of Satan, and walk in darkness, we say to the world that we have found Christ an insufficient Saviour; we say that the legions of evil angels that surrounded His cross in the hour of His fiercest agony, proved too strong for Him. To indulge in gloomy thoughts and to brood over doubts, will blunt the senses of men, until they have no power to perceive that the Saviour is faithful, and that in the conflict with the powers of darkness, He will work out a complete victory for those who trust in Him. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 2}

Satan claimed man as his rightful property, but the Saviour became a ransom, and with His own precious blood paid the penalty of man’s transgression. The great theme of redemption can be understood only as we eat the flesh

and drink the blood of the Son of God. It is only as we are partakers of the Divine nature that we can comprehend the great plan of salvation. But it is painfully apparent that the higher truths of God’s Word are not comprehended by the majority of those who profess to be followers of Christ. It is not a belief in a theory of the atonement that will save the soul; it is faith in the fact that Jesus died for our transgressions, that melts and subdues the heart. When we believe that Christ is our personal Saviour, we realize that His love has a constraining power over us. It is when we behold a dying Redeemer that we can say “He is my trust, my sanctification, my righteousness.” {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 3}

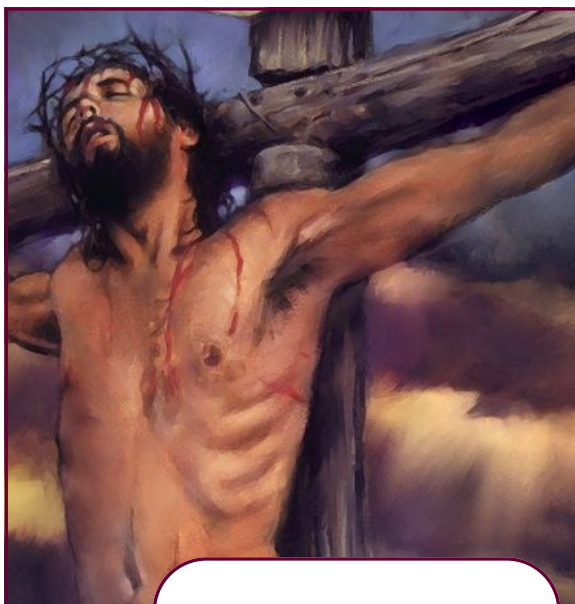
We are not to walk in sparks of our own kindling; for if we do, we shall lie down in darkness. If we look away from self to Jesus, abiding continually in Him, gladly and willingly becoming doers of His Word, we shall walk in light. He is the light. But fail the



things that are pleasing in His sight, we cannot expect to be cheered by the enlivening influence of the Holy Spirit, and we cannot say, with assurance, “Christ is my strength and my portion for ever.” {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 4}

Are there any among our readers to whom these words apply? any “that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?” To you are addressed the words, “Let him trust in the name of the Lord.” I hope there are none who are unwilling to be helped to the platform of faith in God. I have met persons who seemed to feel that it was a virtue to be found mourning, and complaining of their darkness and spiritual misery. O that God would enlighten them, that they might see how faith in a dying Saviour is the stimulating power of the Christian’s life! The broken body, the shed blood, of Him who died on Calvary, will avail for him who feels his lost condition. O that those who are in darkness might see the love, the forbearance, the goodness, of our heavenly Father! I would repeat these precious promises that are full of comfort, light, and hope. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 5}

Jesus is the only hope of the soul. By faith every soul may say with the Psalmist, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.” The moment the sinner lays hold of Christ by faith, his sins are no longer upon him. Christ stands in the sinner’s place, and declares, “I have borne his guilt, I have been punished for his transgressions, I have taken his sins, and put My righteousness upon him.” In Christ the sinner stands guiltless before the law. But how vain is the hope of entering heaven if we have no present faith in Christ, no delight in spiritual things, no joy in anticipating the joys of heaven. The child of God finds his comfort and peace in Christ. He delights to dwell upon the holiness of his future, immortal home. The Lord commands, “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” The Christian’s constant endeavour should be to come into perfect conformity to the life of Christ; we must look away from the darkness, and face the light. Do not, by your attitude of unbelief, charge God with partiality or unfaithfulness. Your doubt casts reflections upon the verity of His promises. When in living faith you come to Jesus, and become doers of His Word, you will taste and see that the Lord is good. You will say to all, “By His stripes we are healed.” You will think of Jesus, you will talk of Jesus, as One who is willing and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. If you believe in Christ as your Saviour, His perfect obedience is set to your account. You are pardoned as you look



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to Jesus as your substitute and surety. The promise of God is, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 6}

If you fail to come to Jesus because you are sinful, you will always remain sinful, and will die in your sins. You cannot feel His cleansing power unless you rely upon Him with implicit faith. You can do nothing yourself to remove one stain of sin. Jesus alone is able to make you clean. Will you come to Christ and be made whole, or will you remain away in unbelief, and still mourn over your wretched state? Look and live. By beholding, we become changed into His image. When you look at the darkness, and talk of the darkness, you are scattering seeds of evil.

Words of discouragement and complaint are like tares sown in a field. They fall into other minds, and spring up and bear a harvest after their kind; and souls may be lost through your suggestions of unbelief. Long after your period of darkness and temptation has passed, the words forgotten by yourself will live in the memory of others, and when temptation comes upon them, the fruit of the seed sown will appear. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 7}

An infinite sacrifice has been made for us; a dear price has been paid. Let us show that we appreciate the great gift bestowed upon us through the merits of Him who shed His blood on the cross of Calvary, and let us permit the Lord to do all that His love has made possible for the sanctification

of the soul. We should remember the words of the apostle, “What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” The purchase money has been paid for us, even if we perish. We may degrade the soul by sin, we may enslave the body by lust, but soul and body belong to God. Why not bring to God His own? Why not love Him with undivided affection, and be clothed with His salvation? Why not educate the tongue to praise God, the soul to make melody unto Him? {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 8}

We claim to belong to the people of God; then why not show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light? Never by thought, or word, or action, cast reflection upon God. Tell of His goodness, sing of His matchless love. Never let Satan hear you utter one word of distrust. Never say before him, "My sins are so great the Lord cannot forgive me." Satan delights to have those for whom Christ died, doubt the benefits of Divine grace, and by so doing bring in a testimony of unbelief in the efficacy of the infinite sacrifice made on Calvary. Is God pleased or honoured to have you remain under a cloud, failing to appropriate His rich promises, and saying by your despair that there has not been a sufficient offering made to avail in your case? What a terrible thing it is to bear such a testimony to the world! Away with your unbelief! Begin to work on the faith side of the question. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 9}

Many, instead of trusting in God, and resting in Him, are trusting in themselves. They make feeling their criterion. If their emotions are stirred they feel pleased, and build up their hopes upon their impulses. But when their feelings change, they become sad. Feeling is their god, but it will never work their sanctification; for they give evidence through this fact that they are trusting to their works for acceptance and salvation. When those who are walking in darkness take Christ as their Saviour, they will find peace and rest in a new life. Christ takes the place of self, and he who trusts in the Saviour, finds no longer a support in self. Jesus is his whole dependence. He can say with heart and soul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 10}

Every day we are to gather strength from Jesus until we have grown to be like him. Through His grace we can say, "We have feared the Lord, we have obeyed the voice of his servants, we have trusted in the name of the Lord, and stayed upon our God; we do not trust in our own righteousness, we do not boast in our holiness, but we trust in Christ's merit. We accept by faith the robe of Christ's righteousness, and are one with Christ. We are righteous, because He is righteous. We present to the Father the merits of the blood of a crucified and risen Saviour." {PrT

January 30, 1890, par. 11}

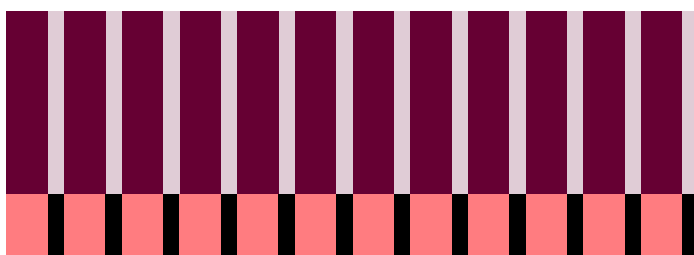
Many say, "I am weak and ignorant and sinful. I must be in a different condition before I can come to Jesus." I would say to such, Do not parley with the enemy one moment, but come; for the Spirit of the Lord is drawing you. The Saviour said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." Christ draws the souls of men, and though many refuse and resist, He still continues to woo them by His tender Spirit, and some respond to His love. You may be ignorant, but Christ invites you to unite your ignorance with His wisdom, your weakness with His strength, your frailty with His enduring might. You must come to Jesus just as you are; it is His grace that will remove the defects from your character. Without

His Divine grace you can never do the work of cleansing your heart. Yet there are steps necessary for you to take in order that you may receive the heavenly gift; for you are to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, as God works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 12}

God co-operates with man in the work of his salvation, but He can do nothing for man unless man is willing to become a co-labourer with Heaven. We must put our will on the side of God's will, but it is in the strength which Christ imparts, the grace which He gives, that the soul is strengthened and cleansed.

If you have been jealous, if malice has had a place in your heart even toward those who have done you wrong, you must put it away, or you cannot come to God with pure desires, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. It is sin that has hedged up the way; it is your own perverse will that has kept you from the favour of God. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 13}

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We should endeavour to see our deficiencies, and escape from the control of sluggishness, envy, evil surmisings, jealousies, pride, and selfishness. The conscience must be fully aroused, that we may make decided efforts to clear the King's highway. We must not stand as stumbling-blocks to others, and thus hinder the work of God. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 14}

The Saviour has said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." There are many who do not follow this instruction, and this is why their prayers are not heard. They ask the Lord to do for them that which they are unwilling to do for others. They ask God to forgive, and then refuse forgiveness to him who has trespassed against them. These are in controversy with God. We must cherish a forgiving spirit in our hearts, or we cannot expect that our heavenly Father will forgive our trespasses. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 15}

Jesus says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Brethren, Jesus says, "Come unto Me." He does not say, "Go unto your brethren, and lay your burden upon them." Do you follow the Lord's directions? Do you come with your load of care to the Burden-bearer? Do you lay it at His feet, and wear His yoke and carry His burden? How does His gracious promise of "rest unto your souls" harmonize with your complaints? Your experience of doubt and wretchedness does not agree in the least with this precious promise of rest. Has Jesus made a mistake in giving us such a blessed assurance, that if we will come to Him with our burdens, He will give us rest? The rest He promises is found in learning of Him who is meek and lowly in heart, in wearing His yoke and carrying His burden. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 16}

Many are impatient if they do not at once receive special evidences that God has heard their prayers. They will manifest gratitude if all their expectations are met immediately; but they repine and become fretful if they have to

wait, and trust in God. The Lord Jesus is the great Teacher, and it is His providence to teach us lessons of patient trust. He does not propose to indulge us as some parents indulge spoiled children. The promises of God are sure, and they act an important part in our spiritual training; but if the promise should be fulfilled in the very way that we had marked out, it might work our ruin. The promise which, if fulfilled when we desired, would work us injury, waits for fulfilment until we are further disciplined, that we may appreciate the blessing when God sees best to bestow it. Special mercies are often withheld for a time,

that we may more earnestly supplicate the throne of grace. We must stay ourselves upon God, and not measure the time by our own finite fancies. Our impulses must not rule over us, but we must rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, nor let our sunshine turn to darkness, our faith to distrust. The Psalmist says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Let not your hope languish; only believe that God is true. "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it," and shall not we have that patience and faith that will endure the test, and wait for the harvest of God's promises? {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 17}

It is not best to mark out some special way in which God must work to fulfil your desires. Your ways, your plans, may not be God's ways or God's plans. The promise that you have thought suited to your need will be fulfilled in unlooked-for blessings, greater than you have asked or thought. Remember that you are not to doubt because you do not receive the very thing for which you asked. Paul requested that the troublesome thorn in the flesh might be removed, but the Lord gave that which was more valuable,—grace to endure it patiently. The strength of Jesus was made perfect in weakness, and Paul was able through Christ to bear about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Jesus prayed that if it were possible, the bitter cup might be removed, but He was not released from the obligation of drinking it. Strength was imparted to Him to drain its bitterest dregs. Jesus said, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." With these precious examples before us, let us trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon our God. {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 18}

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We do not glorify God when we walk in sadness and gloom, and complain that we have no light. "Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them." {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 19}

With such blessed assurances as these, why do we doubt God? Why bring dishonour upon His holy name? Why bring shame and darkness upon our own souls? I repeat the words of the prophet for the comfort and instruction of those who have been bowed down in doubt and sorrow: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." {PrT January 30, 1890, par. 20}

