

John - Commentaries by T.W.P. Wolston, Editor

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 12, "I Have God's Testimony for That." (3:33)

CERTAINTY as to our salvation can only be obtained by a full, unreserved acceptance of God's testimony concerning those who believe on His Son. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John 3:33). "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 John 5:10).

So it is a question of believing God, or making Him a liar. Which are you doing, reader?

You say: "I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I would not give up my hope for anything, but I have not that certainty that you speak of. I do not wish to make God a liar, but I do not feel that I am saved."

Let me answer you by the words of another. After he got saved, he said to the writer, "I can say, I am accepted, and saved through the blood of Christ. I have God's testimony for that."

Mark those words: "I have God's testimony for that."

You say, "Did he not feel himself to be saved?"

No doubt he had deep and real feeling, for he had been on the way, as a convicted sinner, for three long years; but it was God's testimony, and his "setting to his seal that God was true," that gave him the blessed certainty of being saved.

Hence it was not a mere hope, nor was it based upon his ever-changing feelings, but a divine certainty, because it rested on God's testimony concerning Christ and His precious blood.

Mark again the words of this dear soul, "I can say, that I am accepted, and saved through the blood of Christ. I have God's testimony for that."

Goodness, he had found out, he had none; righteousness, he had the testimony of God that he had none. "There is none righteous; no, not one" (Rom. 3:).

With him now it was neither his goodness nor his righteousness, but, "I can say I am accepted, and saved through the blood of Christ."

"The blood of Christ." What priceless value there is for God in the blood of Christ! In its infinite value it has met the claims of a just and righteous God in respect to our sins. In the same precious blood we find our need as guilty sinners met, and that it is the ground of our every blessing.

It is not a hope. It might have been that before the Son of God died for us, but now it is an accomplished fact. Peace has been made by the blood of His cross (Col. 1:20). Redemption is accomplished by the same precious blood. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

As to our feelings, they could never bear an adequate testimony to the precious blood of Christ, nor be to us the assurance of our salvation. God has borne witness to the infinite efficacy of the blood of His Son, by raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory; and it is His testimony that removes all uncertainty from the mind of the believer, and gives him the peaceful assurance that he is saved forever. "And this is the record (or witness), that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12).

Wonderful words! As simple as they are assuring. Have I the Son of God? Can I claim Him as my own very Saviour, the One who died for me? Then I can be assured that I have eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36).

How good it is of God to give us words which place the matter beyond all question, and that fill the soul with gratitude and praise, and the heart too with an intense desire to serve Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us!

True praise and service are the outcome of a soul consciously saved. It is no legal performance of so much duty to get saved, or to keep one's self saved; but the spontaneous desire of a soul that knows itself saved, and that can say, "I have God's testimony for that." It blesses God; it seeks by the Word to walk in paths of holiness, and in deep concern it reaches out after others, earnestly desiring their salvation.

An anxious soul once said, "Oh that God would write it in the skies that He loves me!" Thank God, we have something even better than that. It might be said that is a mere illusion, but when, by the Word of God, we are taken back to Calvary, and as we read the wondrous tale of divine love, all uncertainty leaves us, and we are assured by the agony and blood of the Saviour there that God loves us. And when we again read in the Word of our God, "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13), we are assured that we are saved.

In conclusion, dear reader, can you affirm, as the expression of your own faith, "I can say, I am accepted, and saved through the blood of Christ; I have God's testimony for that"? If so, bless His holy name continually, for you can rightly sing: —

E. A.

The Gospel Messenger: Volume 12, "Perhaps Today." (14:3)

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—1 Thess. 4:16-18.

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry."—Hebrews 10:37.

"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:3.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."—Rev. 22:20.

THESE sayings are faithful and true. Centuries have elapsed since they were uttered by "the Lord himself" and "the Spirit of truth," but He most surely will fulfill His promise, and give effect to it too, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." The return of the long-absent Lord and Bridegroom may well be the brightest expectation of His much-loved and dearly-purchased Church—a company of sinners loved with His infinite love, and redeemed by such a priceless sacrifice—a company destined to bear His glorious likeness through the ages to come, caught up from the grave and the earth; changed by His almighty life-giving power, at His coming again; ushered into the long-looked-for delight—"forever with the Lord." Hallelujah!

Perhaps, unbeliever, you may be tempted to say—in heart if not by lips—that this is all a fair illusion, an ill-founded dream, or the phantom of some crack-brained theologian. Nay; "the time is at hand." The return of the world-scorned Christ depends not upon your infidelity or your credulity, but upon the faithfulness of Him who hath said, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." What will be supreme happiness and salvation for His own which are in the world will be supreme misery and damnation for those who know and love not our Lord Jesus Christ.

To know the Lover and Saviour of sinners is to love Him; and "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—given up to judgment—for the Lord cometh. "When?" you may ask. "Perhaps today." The words heading this exhortation are most suggestive.

Many years since I heard a servant of Christ say that upon a wall in a house in Otley there could be seen two words in a frame—"Perhaps today." For those who believe that the long-absent Redeemer will soon return, they are very sweet, comforting, invigorating, soul-stirring, love-quicken, and holiness-producing words. So did they lay hold upon my heart that I had them reproduced, and hung in my house. Yea? after year they spoke to faith and love, stirring up to watchfulness and activity. The words got smoked, fly-blown, and soiled, but I could not destroy the speaking card, so gave it away to a dear loving sister, who loved and cherished a family of poor orphan children. Year after year these words spoke from their blue setting, 'Perhaps today.' Faith and love were produced in hearts. What they meant was clearly taught, and God owned the expressive watchword. And may He "fasten it like a nail in a sure place" in your soul this very hour.

Long after the orphan-lover had entered her rest, her daughter told me of the power of these words over one of noble birth, who loved the Lord, and who spoke of Him in the room where these beautiful words hung—"Perhaps today." He had gone into company; his heart had got cold, not heeding the Master's word, "What I say unto you I say unto you all, Watch"; he had let "things seen and temporal" dim his faith to "things not seen and eternal." Walking along the busy street of the world's largest city, all in a moment, as though a voice had spoken in his ear, the words on the card in the humble orphanage pealed into his soul—"Perhaps today." "What," thought he, "am I thus dishonoring my Lord? Oh! how ashamed I should feel should He come and find me thus backslidden in heart from Him." It was a word in season (and how good it is), leading him to self-judgment and humiliation.

In conclusion, let me, dear reader, say to you that the event involved in the fulfillment of these words is of grave importance, because if unsaved, unwashed, unregenerate, and unconverted, it would fix your doom. It would be equivalent to the solemn statement in the parable: "The bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut."

Yes, oh! —salvation neglecter,—Christ rejecter, gospel-hardened, Christless professor, and no-oil possessor, you will be outside, and never enter in. Ah! ye who have never really prayed will pray then; but all to no purpose. Like the privileged multitudes to whom Jesus spoke when here below, but who trusted Him not, He will say of you, Ye "shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. For when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunken in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "Be ye therefore ready also." "The Lord is ready to pardon" (Neh. 9:17).