

God Helps Those Who Can't Help Themselves

"OUT of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord." Ps. 130:1. And he did not cry in vain. The depths from which he cried were the depths of sin; for he said, "If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." So out of the depths of iniquity we may cry to the Lord, with the assurance that He will gladly help us. We cannot be too low down for Him to reach us.

THE Pagan maxim, which too many quote as though it were Bible, is, "God helps him who helps himself." But the truth revealed in the Bible is that God helps the man who is not able to help himself. Read the account of a storm on the sea, and of deliverance from it, as recorded in Ps. 107:23-30. Of the men in the storm it is said: "Their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses." So it was when Jehoshaphat, in behalf of the people, said to the Lord, "For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee," (2 Chron. 20:12) that the Lord sent deliverance.

ALL these things "were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Rom. 15:4. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are; yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:15, 16. Infirm means without strength; without strength implies being overcome by sin. So we learn that in the midst of defeat, when borne down under sin, we may come with boldness to Jesus, and find forgiveness and help.

FOR it is only at the very lowest possible state that we become connected with Christ. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, unto repentance. Matt. 4:13. As He came to save the lost, we commend ourselves to His mercy by acknowledging that we are lost sinners. But sin is death. Therefore Christ bore our sins, and died for us. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal. 3:13, 14. So it is in our wretched, sin-cursed condition that we receive help from the Lord.

DEATH is the lowest condition possible, and it is in His death that we become perfectly united to Christ. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. 3:27. We put on Christ by baptism. And what is baptism? "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?"

Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Rom. 6:3, 4.

WHAT does this show? Simply this: that not only may we be saved when in the very lowest state, but we cannot be saved in any other condition. As a matter of fact all men are in that lost condition; for "all have sinned;" "they have all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good; no, not one." Rom. 3:12, 23. But in order for any to get the benefits of Christ's salvation, they must acknowledge themselves to be in that condition. By the law of faith boasting is excluded. And this not only once, but always. The Christian can never boast of his goodness, for boasting shows the absence of faith, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14:23. The Christian must always acknowledge himself to be a sinner, and then he may always be a sharer in the sacrifice of Christ. So he always lives only in the present. With Paul he may say: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Tim. 1:15. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

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