

# Gospel Tracts

W. W. Fereday.

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## A Lost Tomb.

The old Abbey Church at Waltham, Essex (twelve miles from London) was founded by the sons of Earl Godwin in the eleventh century. The last Saxon King, Harold II, lies buried there. After the disastrous defeat at Hastings in 1066, two Waltham monks asked permission of Duke William to recover the King's body for burial. Being unable to identify it amongst so many mangled corpses, they called in the help of the notorious Edith, surnamed the Swan-necked. She found it, and it was duly interred in Waltham Abbey.

But the tomb is lost! No one to-day can say with any certainty just where it was placed.

We are reminded of another tomb, the whereabouts of which no one can speak positively — the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was in a garden, quite near the walls of Jerusalem and its owner at the time was a member of the Jewish Council named Joseph. (John 19: 38, 42). Nothing more can well be said about it. But while the tomb of the Saxon King is only of historical interest, and even that to but a limited number, the tomb of the Lord Jesus is of vital interest to every soul on earth.

Let us suppose that both tombs could be identified with certainty. What should we find? The one would contain the dust of him who was placed there; the other would be absolutely empty. The Saxon King awaits his resurrection at the last day; the Lord Jesus had His resurrection nineteen hundred years ago. There is no greater fact in the history of the world than this, and, in mercy to the children of men, God took careful pains to put it beyond all controversy. The risen Lord did not ascend up on high the day He left the tomb. He remained on earth nearly six weeks (Acts 1: 35; and during that time He showed Himself many times to His friends, some of whom were sceptical at first, not expecting such a marvelous work of God, but all ended in worshipping at His feet (John 20: 25; Matt. 28: 17). On one occasion more than five hundred brethren saw Him together. (1 Cor. 15: 6).

The Son of God is thus risen! The tomb has been rifled of its precious charge, to know it no more for ever. But here arises a question of the utmost importance. How came the Son of God to enter the tomb? What caused Him to die? Let God Himself answer the question for us. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8). Listen also to John the Apostle. "Herein is love not that we loved God, but, that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins . . . And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the

Saviour of the world" (1 John 4: 10, 14).

Thus it was our sins that involved the Son of God in the anguish of the tree and the disgrace of the tomb! Was there no other way whereby sinners might be saved from the consequences of their sins? Could not righteousness be satisfied otherwise? Clearly not, or God would not have gone to the extreme length of sacrificing His Son — His well beloved.

How offensive then is sin in the sight of God! How direful its consequences? Has the reader ever faced the sin question? Contemplate it, we beseech you, in the light of the cross and the tomb! you might well exclaim, with another:

"Oh, how vile my lost estate

Since my ransom was so great!"

It is delightful to the conscience-stricken sinner to meditate upon the love that shines out in the great sacrifice of Calvary. But how can we be sure that the sacrifice was sufficient — that the claims of divine righteousness have been truly met by it? The resurrection of Christ is the proof this. The stone was not rolled away in order that He might go forth, it was rolled away for our sake that we might know that death has been constrained to yield its prey. On the resurrection morning, the Angel said to the women, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." (Matt. 28: 6)

Faith can now see even more than this. The risen Christ is now on high, accepted in all the value of His great atoning work. So that we may add to the Angel's words, "We set Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." (Heb. 2: 9).

Reader, is your soul burdened with the guilt of sin? Learn then that it was for just such an one the Saviour died His resurrection is the great discharge, not only for the Holy One Himself, but for every sinner who believes in His name The vacant cross and the empty tomb are the joint proof that all the claims of the throne of God have been met once and for ever. Righteousness shall be imputed to us, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 4: 24-5: 1)

## **A Rock Sermon.**

Early in the last century, the first European steamship, the "Comet," was launched on the River Clyde. Its inventor was Henry Bell, to whose memory a monument may be seen standing on the banks of the Clyde, a little to the east of Dumbarton Castle. At the base of the monument is inscribed upon the rocks the following sentences: —

"God is Love."

"Eternity — Where?"

"Flee from the wrath to come."

When we consider the large number of pleasure steamers which pass the spot in the summer season, and the many ocean liners which go by all the year round, it seems certain that thousands of eyes have read this abiding rock sermon. What will the harvest be? The great day will tell.

The person who designed so public a testimony evidently judged there was something worth

thinking about in the words thus inscribed, and we quite agree with him. "God is love," weightiest of all weighty truths, and yet how little is it understood! How many regard God as a severe Being, exacting hard things from His creatures, and taking pleasure in condemning those who fail to render His demands! But "God is love" (1 John 4: 8). The cross of Calvary has declared His love in all its vast extent. God's Son, His only and Well-Beloved, sacrificed for the salvation of rebellious sinners; was ever love like this? Is anything like it known among men? Reader, have you considered the application of it to your own case? Have you ever thanked God for His love to yourself, a sinner only worthy of eternal flames? "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5: 8).

Well might the rock-preacher add: "Eternity-where?" A mere breath separates every one of us from it. All is well for him who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ: but what of the man (or woman) to whom this glorious Person is only a name? Eternity means destruction for all such; not extinction of being as some who love their sins fondly hope but desolation and ruin for ever and ever. Everlasting banishment from the presence of God where all is light and song — reader, can you bear to think of this? With all our powers we urge every unsaved one into whose hands this paper may fall to "Flee from the wrath to come." Before the storm of Divine judgment bursts, "Whosoever will" may find shelter in the Saviour: when the storm begins (and the dark clouds are gathering on every hand) His Saviour character will come to an end, and His enemies must meet Him as Judge. In their terror men will say to the mountains and rocks: "Fall on us, hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6: 16, 17). Beloved reader, in what character do you wish to know the Son of God?

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that obeyeth not (R.V.) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him " (John 3: 16).

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### **"What is a man profited..."**

In the terrible retreat from the city of Mexico on the night of July 1st 1520, Cortes urged his followers to carry as little as possible with them. He told them that those would fare best who travelled lightest. Many of the soldiers however preferred to take with them as much as possible of the gold they had looted; but the weight of it dragged them down to death as they endeavoured to swim the lake. For the sake of the treasure they risked and lost their lives, and that in spite of the warning of their Commander.

Men are just as foolish today. As the Lord Jesus expressed it in Luke 8: 14 they "are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life." The last of the three is the most deadly of all at the present. The pleasures of this life are abundant. Never was there such variety, and multitudes are simply intoxicated with them. Long queues standing outside picture houses, and massed thousands gaping and cheering at football matches, are sufficient of themselves to prove how deeply pleasure has eaten into the hearts of the people. They think of little else; by these things they live. That they have souls that must live for ever is a thought that never gives them a moments concern. That which is of vital importance, is as nothing in their esteem, while that which is worthless is, in their eyes, of the highest account.

Oh, fools, to throw away your souls thus! Well did our Lord ask, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

(Matt. 16: 26) What indeed. The rich man of Luke; 16: 19, when he found himself in torments, would have given all he ever possessed for an opportunity to retrieve his wasted past. When on earth his one thought was to "have a good time." He was "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." In selfish enjoyment he spent his days, ignoring even the poor diseased mendicant who lay at his own gate. He was too absorbed in his own pleasures to have room in his mind for others. So he lived, and so he died, and perished forever.

Reader, this brief span that we call "time" is not everything. For each one of us there is a boundless beyond. Are indeed willing to so load yourself with business, pleasure, or anything else of an earthly character that you must needs be lost for ever? Hear the voice of your Maker and God. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? And your labour for that which satisfyeth not? hearken diligently unto Me... incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live. (Isa 55: 2, 3) In His most Holy Word, He tells you plainly of your sin and guilt, and of the peril in which you stand. Moreover in His Word, He tells you of the wondrous mission of His Beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. From heaven He came in search of sinners lost and undone, and upon Calvary's cross, He suffered once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. (1 Peter 3: 18)

Reader, what have you to say to this? Is the eternal future worthy of your consideration or not? Is it wise to throw away eternal bliss in order to enjoy the corrupt pleasures of this present short life? A gracious God waits to bless you, are you willing to be blessed?

## Apron Factories

It was remarked one day by a servant of Christ that "many places of worship in these times are just apron factories, and nothing more."

The speaker had in mind of course, what is written in Genesis 3: 7. Genesis 3 is God's account of the most terrible catastrophe that ever befell the human family. The story is related in the very simplest terms, in order that everyone may understand. It is the story of **the fall of man** — of his revolt against his Maker, and how God met the sinners need. No sooner had Adam and his wife sinned, than they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Yet, in spite of their device, so conscious were they of their nakedness, that at the first sound of the voice of God they hid themselves ass unfit to stand in His Holy presence.

There we have the beginning of what has long since developed into an enormous evil-- sinners endeavouring to work out a righteousness of their own. But however industrious and sincere the workers may be, it is all to no avail, for, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." Rom 3: 20. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Isa 64: 6.

Note what happened when God entered Eden. Having convicted the man and his wife of their sin, He spoke to the Suffering Seed, The Lord Jesus, and forthwith made coats of skin and clothed them. Here we have grace indeed. If man has no covering suitable for God, God is able to furnish all that the guilty one needs. So, in Rom 3. (already quoted, we go on to read that the righteousness of God has now been manifested unto them that believe; that righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, and which is founded upon His atoning blood.

Death furnished the coats of skin; the death of Christ has made it possible for God to be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Is this what is being universally preached to-day? Or are not the people being diverted to

sacraments and other pious works, rather than to Christ, and the work He accomplished? Are not the multitudes being told that it is "character" that counts with God? This is just to repeat the egregious blunder of our first parents who "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." And it is ruinous to the soul. What a contrast there was between these aprons and the coats which God supplied? Not a divine stitch was in the one, not a human stitch was in the other. In like manner, in man's efforts after righteousness, there is nothing of God, and in the righteousness divine which grace confers, there is nothing of man.

Now reader, on what ground do you stand with God? Are you spending precious time sewing fig leaves together? That is to say, are you doing your best to make yourself presentable to God? If so, you are on a false line altogether, and we entreat you to renounce your own efforts as worse than worthless, and put your whole trust in the Lord, Jesus, and in the great work which He has done. This is what God says to those who believe. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast. (Eph. 2: 8, 9) This is what believers say in response: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. (Titus 3: 5) Beware of "apron making," Beware of "apron factories."

## **A Well Balanced Budget, and something still better**

The Budget of 1932 caused more anxiety to all classes in Britain than any that had ever preceded it. The warning sounded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in February, 1931, that matters were going wrong, and that drastic steps should be taken, passed unheeded. Then came the great wake-up in August when the nation realized that it stood upon the verge of bankruptcy. Stringent measures were immediately taken in order that Britain might maintain its standing in the world. "The Budget must be balanced," was said by both rulers and people. During those anxious months every right-minded person wished well to the men in the seat of authority, and those who knew God and had access to His throne of grace, did not fail to make intercession for them there.

It is a serious matter for a nation to default. Everyone is thereby plunged into disaster from the King down to the meanest subject. In a moment all that men have set their hearts upon, and all that their industry has accumulated, disappears in overwhelming ruin. But God sometimes uses the disappointments of life for the blessing of men's souls. Some, as they behold everything slipping away from them, feel so keenly the transitoriness of everything earthly that they turn to God, and thus get into touch with the things that really matter, and that abide evermore.

In Psalm 4: 6, David says:

"There be many that say, who will show us any good?"

This is the cry of disappointed hearts. They have tried so many things that have yielded no satisfaction that they are at their wits end what next to try, or in what direction to turn. But David was able to answer the pitiful cry for himself:

"Lord lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Thou has put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased."

He knew God, and that was enough. In his day he was the mightiest king on earth, but he was not always mighty. Commencing life as the youngest son of a farmer, and sent into the fields to tend sheep,

he was, while yet a youth, privately anointed king by Samuel in substitution for the miserable failure who then ruled. Then followed years of persecution while his relentless foe sought his life, before he actually sat upon the throne of Israel. During those years he sometimes knew neither where to lay his head, nor where to turn for bread to eat, but those were his best years spiritually.

Reader, can you say anything at all like it? Have you proved the blessed reality of having to do with God? It is most certain that whatever measure of relief may be granted to us by a balanced Budget, everything is shaking beneath our feet. A glance at world-conditions generally makes this plain. Awful indeed for those who have nothing outside this world!

If you are seriously seeking what this world cannot give, you must first have to do with God about your sins. The sin-question is fundamental, and a holy God cannot pass it by. If there were no sin in the world, there would be no trouble, financial or otherwise. God looks to both you and me for a frank acknowledgment of this.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51: 5).

Terrible is it not?

"The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born." (Ps. 58: 3).

This is true of everyone of us, like silly sheep we have all turned our backs upon the God who made us — our best friend really.

On what ground can God receive the sinner? Romans 5: 8, will tell us:

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

This is truly amazing. God's own Son, has suffered for my sins! All the judgment that I deserved was poured out upon Him, and, believing in Him, I am free!

W. W. Fereday.