

WHAT DOES GOD THINK OF YOU?

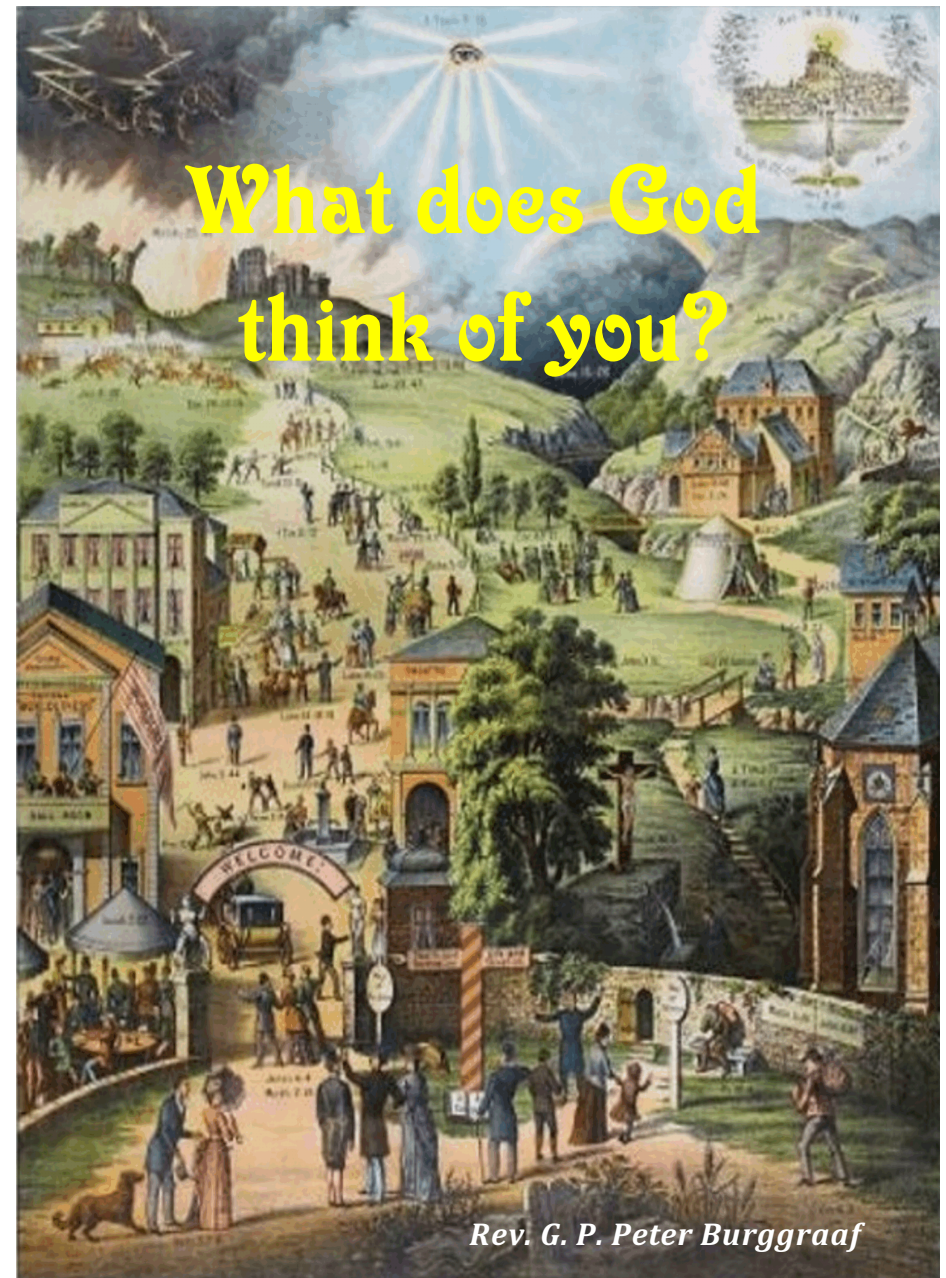
This booklet is written for those who are more or less unknown about God and the salvation in Christ. Therefore this booklet begins with a personal question: *"What does God think of you?"* Such a question is usually asked from a human perspective: *"What do you think of God?"* Two fundamental questions, but which one is decisive?

While our thoughts about God are certainly not unimportant; indeed, they are essential within the framework of true faith, they are not decisive in determining our salvation. The question, *"What does God think of you?"* is therefore the most important question, and the answer to it cannot be left in doubt, because it concerns our eternal destination. By nature, we do not know God as He demands to be known, because, due to our profound fall in Adam, we live in enmity with our Creator. We can only stand before God if our sins are forgiven through the blood of Christ, applied by faith.

However, to give a conscientious answer to the main question, we first must know who God is, and secondly, who we are and what our existence is before God. If we do not know who God is by true faith in Christ, we can never give the right answer to the main question in the presence of God.

ISBN 9076100278

PUBLISHER "DE ROKENDE VLASWIEK"
REFORMED LITERATURE
THE NETHERLANDS - CANADA



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by

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and may not be sold**

Burggraaf G.P.P.

‘WHAT DOES GOD THINK OF YOU ?’

Cover -illustration: The Broad way and the Narrow way

ISBN - 9076100278

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THE NETHERLANDS - CANADA

Printed in Canada

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WHAT DOES GOD THINK OF YOU?

Dear fellow-travellers to the never-ending eternity!
I will begin this conversation by asking you a personal question: ***"What does God think of you?"*** Such a question is usually asked from a human perspective: ***"What do you think of God?"*** Two fundamental questions, but which one is decisive?

While our thoughts about God are certainly not unimportant; indeed, they are essential within the framework of true faith, they are not decisive in determining our salvation. The question, *"How does God think of you?"* is therefore essentially the most important question, and the answer to it cannot be left in doubt.

By nature, we do not know God as He demands to be known, because, due to our profound fall in Adam, we live in enmity toward God our Creator. We can only stand before God if our sins are forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ, applied by faith.

However, to give a conscientious answer to the main question, we must first know who God is, and secondly, who we are and what our existence is before God. If we do not know who God is by true faith in Christ, we can never give the right answer to the main question in the presence of God.

Every human being has an innate knowledge of God and feels in their conscience that there is a God. However, this innate knowledge of God has been so obscured by

our profound fall into sin that we no longer have a true knowledge of God. Therefore, through an innate knowledge of God, we do not arrive at the true knowledge of God. I would also like to point out that I have never met a single person who could give **me** a satisfactory answer to this title-question.

You say: I can answer this question. And I know people who can.

Yes, I believe so, **but I want a satisfying answer for me personally**. And that applies to you too. You need to know it for yourself. I've already pointed out to you that the main question is of utmost importance. It's about the eternal well-being or eternal woe of our souls. Either we are eternally saved, or we are eternally lost.

The answer to the chief question must therefore be **reliable**, so that I cannot make any mistakes. I must therefore rule out any error, because my soul is at stake. Yours too! All people, including you and me, must appear before the judgment seat of Christ at our day of death and on the last day when Christ will appear on the clouds to judge the entire human race. So, before I have to appear before God, I must **know for certain** in this life how God is thinking about me. Therefore, we must seek a reliable source to find the answer to our chief question.

We sometimes say, "I've heard from reliable sources..." But how many times has it happened that these so-called 'reliable sources' turned out to be unreliable, because reality turned out to be different?

So by **reliable** I mean the original meaning of the word, which is: *certain and sure; without doubt; all error is excluded; it is an eternal certainty*.

The hallmarks of a satisfactory answer must therefore

be reliable to put my and your conscience at ease regarding our relationship with God. To answer the title-question, we must know who God is and who we ourselves are from a reliable source.

You say: Which source should that be then?

Now, there is only one book on the face of the earth in which we can find a reliable answer to this question. That book is the Bible, God's Word.

You say: Yes, but I don't believe in the Bible.

Dear friend, I am not asking whether you believe in the Bible. The Bible is not true because you and I believe it or not, but because God has said it is His Word, and the Holy Spirit bears witness to it, as it is written: *"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear record in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he hath not believed the witness that God hath testified of his Son. And this is the witness, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: he that hath not the Son of God hath not life", 1 John 1:14. 5:7-12.*

So, the secondary question was: **Who is God?** I've already said that no human being can give me a satisfactory answer to this question. Therefore, we must consult the Bible. God's Word is the only reliable source and guide for the time in which we live, and above all, for our eternal destiny. God's Word describes who God is and who we have become

through our profound fall into sin in Adam. God's Word is inspired by the Holy Spirit. We cannot say that of any other book. The Bible is the Word of God in which He has revealed Himself, His will and His doctrine. With the final book of the Bible, Revelation, God's Word forms a complete canon. The Bible is God's own Word from cover to cover and therefore the end of all contradiction. That's not a theory, because then I would never read the Bible again. ***God's Word is a living and powerful Word***, like it says, *"For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart", Hebr. 4:12.*

You say: I don't believe that God exists.

You wish you didn't believe it. My depraved flesh wishes so too. Yes, we are so ungodly that we consider God a liar. But I will prove to you that you do believe God exists.

You were cycling on a deserted road last week and were caught in a heavy thunderstorm. Lightning struck close to you. Why did you feel anxious then? Why did your heart pound in your throat? Why were you paralysed with fear? I can tell you: Because your conscience told you that God's majesty was revealed in the storm. If God isn't there, you didn't need to be so anxious during that storm, did you? God spoke in the storm, and your conscience confirmed it! Now you must never again try to talk tall talk and say that God isn't there, because I can prove the opposite to you from a thousand natural phenomena, which your conscience will agree to against your will. Moreover, every natural person has some sense of good and evil, at least if they have a conscious conscience. Every

person knows more or less that they sin because of their innate knowledge of God. That isn't true knowledge, let alone saving knowledge, but it is sufficient knowledge to know that God exists. Nature, however, does not teach us who God is, only that God exists. The only source of knowledge for knowing God for who He is is the Bible. God's Word is the source of knowledge of God, in which His will and law are revealed. God's Word teaches us about God in Jeremiah 10:10a: ***"But the LORD God is the Truth; He is the living God and the everlasting King."***

From this passage, we would like to explain the image of God a little further. *"God is the Truth,"* it says.

You say: What does truth actually consist of?

Truth is the opposite of falsehood. When someone is brought before a court, what does the judge examine the defendant for? For *truth* and *falsehood*. These two contradictions must be brought to light. The judge wants to know the truth, because if they know the truth, they can, based on the truth, condemn the lie and sentence the defendant. This is what the law demands. Therefore, the judge must pronounce a just sentence on the convicted person based on the truth.

Suppose a defendant is accused of theft and the defendant pleads not guilty and denies the charges. The judge must then investigate whether the accusation is true. And if it is true, the defendant is convicted by a legal verdict, because the truth has come to light. In every trial, the facts are therefore examined for truth. Otherwise the judge cannot render a verdict. The judge *is* not the truth; he must reveal the truth through facts, witnesses, and legislation. With God, however, it's completely different. God doesn't need to reveal the truth for

Himself, because He *is* the Truth. God doesn't need proof to test the truth, because He Himself is the Truth.

You say: Who will prove that God is the Truth?
God Himself!

You say: How does He prove that?

Through His Word and Spirit, and through the works of nature. God is *the* Truth. What does that mean? God is the Source of all truth. The Bible was written by that Source of Truth. Therefore, the Bible is completely TRUE. It is divinely true! Why? Because God is the Truth. The attributes of the God of Truth are perfect knowledge, perfect understanding, perfect justice, perfect selfhood, perfect love, perfect holiness, and perfect mercy. God is perfect in Truth, perfect in knowledge, perfect in deeds, perfect in wisdom; indeed, He is omniscient, omnipotent, blessed, holy, and eternal. In countless Scriptures, we encounter the word "*knowledge*", which means "understanding". Christ is our true knowledge of God. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. God is the true Truth. Truth here does not mean that it is an attribute, but it says something about the Being of God.

What is the essence of a human being? His feet? His hands? His head? No, those are just parts of the human being. The essence of man lies in the soul of that person. When a person dies, a dead body remains; the soul then goes to its eternal destination, either heaven or hell. The essence of man, the soul, does not die, for it is immortal. The body was also immortal in Paradise, but through the Fall, threefold death entered the world. For God had said, "*In the day that you eat of it (of the tree of knowledge of good and evil), you shall surely die*", Gen. 2:17.

We sometimes say to someone, "Don't be so vacant!" What we mean by that is, "Don't be so absent-minded; it seems like you're not even there." This is a consequence of the Fall. It didn't exist before the Fall. Then, the human being was entirely dedicated to God, clothed in true wisdom, righteousness, and holiness.

The human being, therefore, consists primarily of the soul. The body is actually the soul's home. The soul governs a person's thinking. It determines their actions in a certain way. It speaks volumes about their character and being. The body is not a waste product; no, the human body reflected the image of God. The body was also part of the human being's essence.

Before the Fall, human nature was a reflection of the Image of God, and after the Fall, we sold our nature to the devil. We are beings who no longer want to know anything of the Essence of God. Through the Fall, we have effectively become essenceless, because, at our deepest level, our true nature is reflected in the Image of God, which is the Essence of God.

What is the Essence of God? It is the Image of God; it is God Himself with all the attributes and virtues of the Triune God. What are the attributes of that Essence? Again: *omniscience, knowledge, understanding, wisdom, love, justice, goodness, righteousness, holiness, perfection, etc.* Therefore, every human being is created in the Image of God, in *true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness*.

We were created perfect by the Truth, but we despised the Truth, fell for the lie, and fell from God's righteousness and holiness. In paradise, we fell away from God and fell for the devil. We listened to the devil and didn't accept God's trial commandment as

TRUE. We made God a liar. We ate from the forbidden tree. We ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God had forbidden this, but we did it anyway. Then we lost the Image of God through our own fault. We no longer know God as the Truth because we believed the lie. And that is our own fault, because we loved the lie more than the Truth. We believed the devil and rejected God our Creator through unbelief.

These biblical truths are essential to know. So, please, listen further.

What did God do with us after the Fall? How did Truth interact with us? God asked His fallen creatures, *"Adam, where art thou?" Gen. 3:9.*

That is an eternal miracle, because God could have justifiably swept us away into outer darkness. We wilfully lost the true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness in which God created us.

However, God reclaims His image from every human being. No one is blameless, because we, along with the entire world, are condemned before God. Yet, God has not finally dealt with fallen humanity, for from the fallen race of Adam He chose a people to save them from Satan's power and make them eternally happy. That was never possible again through Adam's obedience, for he fell in disobedience. Adam was the head of the covenant of creation, but through his fall, the entire earth became cursed for his sake. Because of Adam's disobedience, salvation and eternal life are no longer possible. However, God made the second Adam surety for the sins of His people.

Immediately after the Fall, God promised another Head of a far better covenant in the Mother's promise, namely

His own dear Son, who would become Man to fulfill all righteousness. Christ came to this cursed earth to fulfill the Law through a path of suffering and death and to bring about an eternal reconciliation. The Word became flesh. Christ is God manifested in the flesh. He stood in the place of His own and fulfilled all the righteousness that we lost through our fall. We must therefore be recreated by Word and Spirit to rightly know God again in Christ. We can only share in the right knowledge of God through regeneration and faith in Christ. Only in and through Christ do we truly know God.

But fallen man by nature has no need of a Saviour, because he is not burdened by his sins. We have no pleasure in the knowledge of God's ways, and sins do not burden us. This must be revealed to us by the service of the Law. When the mirror of the Law reveals our hostile existence before God, we stand naked and lost before Him. Then our record of sin is revealed and our guilt is presented, yet we have no penny to pay. Man does try to do this, but the Law demands perfect obedience, and we lost that in the first Adam. We have wilfully fallen away from God, and there is no movement from man that can satisfy the Law. So, the Law reveals man to his completely lost Adamic existence. That is a miracle if this is allowed to happen, because man does not want to be revealed to his lost existence. He is a fierce enemy of it, for then his heavenly guilt is revealed.

The Law, however, does not teach us to know God is saving lost souls; the Law uncovers us to know our terrible state of sin in the light of God's holiness, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20). Knowledge of sin is necessary, and indeed, such that I must know the magnitude of my sins and misery and how I can be delivered from them. A little knowledge of sin does not lead to the recognition and acceptance of

the well-deserved punishment for sin, but that is precisely what God wants us to do. Therefore, we must know the magnitude of our sins and misery, yes, so great that we realize we are eternally lost. Humans naturally do not believe the latter, and therefore we consider God a liar. However, if the Law convinces us of sin, righteousness, and judgment, then we also know how God feels about us in our unreconciled state of sin and death: namely, that we are condemnable, God-hostile, and lost people, whom He looks upon with wrath and must punish with eternal damnation.

God would cease to be God if He did not punish the sinner with the most severe temporal, spiritual, and eternal punishments. God has warned us of this: *"In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die"*, Gen. 2:17. God has already pronounced and written the sentence on the fallen sinner. For the soul that sins, shall die.

Who among our readers has ever read their verdict in God's Word? God's Word is not unclear about how God feels about a fallen person, but no one naturally believes that! No one believes they must die and give an account of their deeds before God's judgment seat. If a person appears before God unreconciled, outside of Christ, it is eternally lost for that person, because outside of Christ, God is a consuming Fire (Hebr. 12:29). When a person is made aware of this, that is a miracle, indeed, all rest is given up. Neither rest nor peace is found, because of my sins. When the Law exposes your mortal and God-hostile existence, ***you will know what God is thinking about you.***

God's thoughts about every human being outside of Christ, is written in Romans 3:19, *"Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all*

the world may become damnable before God."

If the Holy Ghost gives witness of this divine truth in your heart, then the majesty and holiness of God will be impressed upon your soul. Then you will cry out with the prophet Isaiah: *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips"*, Isa. 6:5.

It is also possible that people, despite the convictions of the Law, harden themselves, as Cain hardened himself, and permanently turn away from God. For this, the person, who has courageously and voluntarily fallen away from God, is himself responsible.

If God doesn't draw a sinner to Christ, that person remains in his sin, and that is his own fault. After all, God created humanity good and in His image, and He holds every person responsible for their wilful fall.

Oh, and when the Law delivers your sentence, you discover that God is not unjust by leaving you in that trap of sin. That one murderer on the cross recognized this from the bottom of his heart. *"We are indeed just, for we receive the punishment worthy of what we have done..."*, and he justified the Son of God, saying, *"...but this Man has done nothing wrong."*

That murderer had nothing left to lose, and those sentenced to death who are convicted of their damnable guiltiness have nothing left to lose before God. Those are deigned to plead with God for mercy. Sinners who plead for mercy acknowledge that they are utterly lost and have no rights. Then you say, "Lord, I am guilty of eternal death, but remember me, Son of David."

Dear reader, Christ burns with love to save guilty

sinners. We see this, for example, in the case of the murderer on the cross. Christ grants grace to the ungodly, who cannot help but receive their well-deserved punishment. Nowadays, the tendency is that people only want to hear the "Gospel," but they refuse to know, let alone accept, the Divine Law and the Paradise sentence.

This is not a human work; it is the work of the Holy Spirit. God does not save a single sinner at the expense of His Law. The Law demands perfect obedience to God's commandments. At the slightest transgression, the Law declares: *"The soul that sins shall die."* **Period!** And that fact is already there, because we have sinned against God and we are fallen from God.

What I want to ask, reader, how are you doing now?

You say: I don't know about that!

That's precisely your enmity! Because no one wants to hear about that. We don't want to hear about guilt, no, and we don't want to hear about a just God either. Yes, we do want a God of love, but nothing more than that. God's love can only be poured out into our hearts when God has forgiven our sins. Remember that! God never overlooks guilt. For God cannot overlook sin. Truth cannot unite with lies. God is Truth, He is true, eternally genuine, and right, and we are an evil, false, crooked and perverse race. We are by nature (as we were born) subject to eternal punishment and worthy of hellish damnation.

You say: If I understand correctly, pastor, I am not going to be lost, but I am lost. Then my existence is disastrous! You heard correctly, reader, but the Scripture passage from Jeremiah 10:10b goes even further: *"But the LORD God is the Truth, **He is the living God** and the*

everlasting King." The LORD God is the Truth, but He is also the *living* God.

You say: Now what does that mean?

God not only says that we are condemned by our deep fall and deserve a threefold death, but He will also carry out that sentence. For He is also the living God. *"For our God is a consuming fire and an everlasting burning in whom no one can dwell,"* says God's Word.

God not only threatens punishment for violations of His commandments, He also carries out the sentence. God is not only Creator, but also Judge of all His creatures. God is God, the Eternal, the Perfect, the Truth, the Living God. The Creator of heaven and earth. God is the Judge of the entire human race. *"God is the Judge who decides, who, as Supreme Guardian of all, humbles those who are exalted."*

We must all appear before that God. Every person must answer to God. *"For God will bring every work into judgment."* God is not a creature, God is not created, God is from eternity to eternity. God is our Creator; your Maker and mine!

You say: My mind cannot grasp that.

You shouldn't bother trying, because it's in vain. God doesn't ask us to understand Him, because God is incomprehensible. God doesn't allow Himself to be analysed and understood by the human mind. God wants to be believed, and man does want to believe, but only to save himself. But whoever wants to save his life will lose it forever on the day of the great judgment. No one wants to be converted as God does, and if God doesn't convert us, which He is not obligated to do, we are and remain unreconciled and condemned sinners, even if we practice all the good works that Rome

prescribes to be saved. We can only be saved by free grace in Christ, and that is a one-sided work of God.

You might well doubt this truth if it were my truth. However, it is not my truth, but God Himself says in His Word that it is His Truth. God is the Truth. His Word is the Truth. Humanity was created to praise and glorify God 24 hours a day. Now, after the Fall, humanity is busy praising and glorifying itself 24 hours a day, often even after receiving grace! Every human being is naturally pre-occupied with themselves 24 hours a day. On the other hand, even if we read our Bible all day long and were locked up in a monastery like a monk, we still have no existence before God, because God demands fully perfection. With just one sinful thought, we are guilty of death before God. For God cannot have fellowship with the slightest sin. *God is the Truth; He is the living God.* God hates sin with a righteous hatred, because of His spotless holiness and Truth.

What are the main attributes of Truth? Righteousness and holiness. Would God be just if He didn't punish sins? No He will not. God's justice, therefore, demands full payment from the sinner for the guilt he has incurred. And because God lives, He will indeed demand that account.

You say: Is there then a possibility to pay the guilt incurred?

Not through fallen man; that is eternally impossible. How could a dead and fallen creature offer God any perfection?

You say: Dead creature? Aren't we alive?

In our carnal state we are spiritual dead, we act out our enmity against God. Through our fall into sin, we have eternally separated from God. We want nothing more to do with our Creator. After the fall, Adam and Eve covered themselves with fig leaves and hid behind the bushes. They wanted to hide from God. Every person does the same. One does it with their religion, another with humanism and/or so-called 'good works'. But that is of no use in salvation, because it cannot be considered righteousness in God's eyes. *"The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any who understood, who sought after God. They have all turned aside, they have together become filthy; there is none who does good, no, not one!" Ps. 14:23.*

God says in His Word that after the fall of man there is no one who asks about Him and there is no one who does good, not even one.

You say: So prayer is actually a delay of execution?

As long as we pray to ourselves, yes! For if God's Word says that no one asks about God anymore, then there is no one who truly prays to God.

You say: But I do pray from time to time.

Dear reader, our prayers are not a means of payment to pay off our sky-high guilt before God.

You say: Shouldn't you pray then?

You don't have to do anything! You can't even pray. What is prayer anyway? Prayer is acknowledging God as the only Sovereign and begging Him for mercy as a guardian of hell in the acceptance of your well-deserved punishment. True prayer in the framework

of thankfulness is actually worshipping God, because He is sovereign, righteous and holy. He does only what pleases Him. God only allows Himself to be worshipped. But He also allows Himself to be prayed to, and that, too, ends in worship. God only allows Himself to be prayed to through Christ, who always prays for His people, even for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6) who are not yet born again. And if we are born again, then God also allows Himself to be prayed to through faith, if we pray according to God's will.

You say: But God must punish the sinner?

Surely, God is a living God who judges on this earth. God is the Truth, but He is also the living God, which means He is a **life-giving God**. He can also make a sinner, dead in his sins and trespasses, alive through His **life-giving Spirit**. God is righteous in His judgments. But He is also righteous in His mercy.

You say: I don't understand that.

No, I don't understand that either, reader, because when I want to grasp that miracle, my mind stands still in awe.

You say: How can God be just in granting grace? He demands full payment of guilt.

It's true, reader, that God never waives that requirement. God demands full payment from every person, even though God knows no one can pay.

You say: Isn't that unfair?

No, the Lord cannot be unjust, because He is the Truth. God possesses only true qualities and virtues. Therefore, God is not unjust when He demands full payment from a fallen sinner, whom He knows is

incapable of paying. Because we have fallen to our death in sins and crimes, we are completely unwilling to be reconciled with God. As a result, we are also powerless to free ourselves from that immense guilt. That is not God's fault. For God was not the cause of our falling into sin; we must seek that cause within ourselves. **We** listened to the devil, while God had said, "You shall **not** eat from this tree!" Then it is just that God presents the account for that incurred guilt; otherwise, He would cease to be God. God can no longer have any fellowship with the fallen sinner because He is a holy God. Therefore, God is just in His judgments. Yet, He is also just in bestowing grace. However, God only bestows grace on the basis of the righteousness of Christ. God is just, both outside of Christ and in Christ. The sinner is only free when Christ has paid the price for him in due time applied by faith. If a person dies without mercy, he or she will go to eternal damnation. **A terrible reality!** It is therefore vitally important that we discover to recognize our guilt before God on time, because that guilt must be forgiven. We all owe God a guilt, and no one can pay it. God demands that every sinner pay this guilt, under penalty of a threefold death.

You say: But if we are spiritually dead, then what more can be expected of us?

Be aware, there is no expectation of a fallen sinner. With our being and doings we cannot stand before God, because it proceeds from a corrupt heart. And even after receiving grace, the best works are defiled with so many sins, and therefore condemnable before God. No man can pay his guilt before God by any work. And yet it must be done, or we are forever lost.

You say: If it is all so, and I feel it to be the truth, then my case is hopeless!

It is indeed hopeless, reader, **on our side!** But in Jeremiah 10:10b it not only says, "*The LORD God is the truth, He is the living God*", it says even more: "**...and an everlasting King.**" A king is not a king without subjects, and so it is with this divine King. This King is almighty and He rules and governs heaven and earth. This King is an eternal King with an eternal dominion. Everything is subject to Him. Every earthly king or president must bow down to the dust before this King, for He has all power in heaven and on earth. Even the prince of darkness is a defeated enemy for this King.

"Yes, all the princes will bow down and fall down before Him. All the heathen bears witness to His praise, and is ready to serve in His glory" (Ps. 72:6a).

You say: So it is an eternal wonder that God has not yet done what He should have done to me, namely, give me the well-deserved punishment.

It's true, reader, it's incomprehensible that God hasn't yet swept us away with the broom of His righteousness. That's a great miracle. But do you know what's a greater miracle? That God has done this: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life*", John 3:16. That is the incomprehensible love of God. God has given the dearest thing He had as a Ransom for many, namely, His own dear Son. John 3:16 is therefore the unconditional Gospel.

"For GOD so loved the world ..."

Salvation, then, originates from God. God is moved in

Himself and has devised a way of escape and the Way is Christ. The incarnation of God's Only Begotten Son is an incomprehensible miracle of God's love. **Christ is the Image of God, the express image of divine substance, and He has acquired perfect righteousness through His passive and active obedience, and that through faith.** When God **applies** the righteousness of Christ to our hearts as we pass through the narrow gate, we are a new creature, as it says, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new*", 2 Cor. 5:17.

You say: How does that work?

It's a free gift of God and He is also the only One from whom you can get it. But if you are still unconverted and you can no longer endure it because of your lostness and the unbearable burden of sin, you must cry out directly to the Lord Jesus: "*Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!*"

Nowhere in God's Word do I read that Christ passes by such a suppliant. I wish you a prosperous death (not literally, but spiritually), so that you may receive life in Christ. That will be the happiest day of your life. Then you will leap for joy, then you will have obtained your wish. Oh, blessed is he to whom it may happen that God will justly hold him guiltless.

Do you want to become spiritual healthy, reader?

To answer that question, you need to know if you are terminally ill, for it says, "*They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*", Matth. 9:12.

However, I don't meet many people who believe they

are lost and incurably sick of their sins. We skip and frolic through life, until...! Until God intervenes. And that is an eternal miracle, if God intervenes in your life and mine. Because it is eternal justice if He leaves us in our death state. But when He comes, you'll no longer frolic in sin, you know; it's suddenly over. Then you'll discover that you no longer have a ground to stand on before God. And that is an eternal miracle if you can discover that. Because we have absolutely no right to that. God could forget us all and pass us by, so that we would truly be lost.

May I ask you, reader, how long have you been living on this earth?

You say: I am already 68 years old, pastor.

Oh, so you've been able to endure a benevolent God for 68 years? You've been wallowing in your sins for 68 years? Oh, if you had known today what is necessary for your salvation.

You say: Yes, but I'm not like all those striking labourers who just stop working. I still work for my money.

May I ask, who gives you the strength to do that work?

You say: My sandwiches.

I asked WHO! Anyway, who's giving you those sandwiches?

You say: I'll buy them at the bakery.

I didn't ask that either, but who gives you the money to buy those sandwiches at the bakery?

You say: My boss, because that's what I worked for.

See, you want nothing to do with God? You've been living in your pride for 68 years now? Pardon me, but we naturally reek of pride. We just don't feel it. Oh, if we are truly convinced of who God is and who we ourselves are, we will loathe ourselves.

You say: I don't know, I don't feel that way.

That's proof of your state of death. So you can still manage without God. But now I'm going to ask you another question. If you have to die tonight, where will you be then, in hell or in heaven?

You say: I don't think I should die, because I feel very well.

Do you see now that you don't believe God at His Word, Who said, "*In the day you eat of it, you will surely die.*" What is your answer to this?

You say: But is there no escape from death and hell?

Yes, there is an escape from the wrath of God, but only by going through the narrow gate as a hell-deserving sinner. "***Strive to enter in at the strait gate!***" God also says, "*Today, if you will hear My voice, do not harden your hearts, but be guided.*" So then tomorrow will be too late. Suppose you die today, are you prepared for it?

You say: Yes, I think so, because I have never stolen.

Never stolen? By nature we have trespassed all God's commandments. The contents of the Law does not exist in one, but in ten commandments (Ex. 20:1-17), and we are trespassers of the entire Law. We are sorcerers, adulterers, murderers, idolaters, liars and thieves, etc.

You say: Well, I don't do that either, I've never stolen.

But my friend, you steal every day because every human being IS a thief by virtue of the Fall. We don't become thieves because we steal; we are thieves, and that's why we steal, in words, thoughts, and deeds. And if we have sinned against one commandment, we are guilty of the entire Law. May I ask you: From whom did you receive the light in your eyes and the breath in your lungs?

You say: Now you are making it more difficult..., I think I got light in my eyes and breath in my lungs from God.

And do you pay God for that light in your eyes and for the breath in your lungs?

You say: No, but how could that be?

So you are a thief after all! You are stealing from God, your Creator. As long as we have no surety for our guilt, we remain sinners before God, guilty of death. Do you now feel that your guilt is still unpaid to God? Or do you continue in your self-conceit and self-justification? Your guilt to God is still outstanding, only you are not bothered by it. But that doesn't change God's demand. His demand remains valid: "PAY WHAT YOU OWE ME!"

If that demand hits home, you are deprived of peace. I sincerely wish that for you. For it concerns your immortal soul. You may not understand much of this language. The language of God's Word is not math, but can only be understood by faith. The murderer on the cross was given the belief that he had been justly condemned, because that man went on to declare God free and begged Christ for mercy. He received it. However, it is not about crying out for mercy, but about receiving it. By nature, no one needs grace. A person thinks they can stand before God through their actions.

Did you know, sinner, that we have no idea that our guilt before God is so immense that we can't begin to deal with it? I don't say that, but that's what God's Word says. We must be exposed to that. But God doesn't have to, because no one has the right to know how great that guilt is, for then they would immediately beg their Judge for mercy. God never says in His Word we have a right to it, but God is merciful. God is eternally worthy of us begging Him for mercy, because He is an eternal King. A king has the right to have his subjects beg for mercy when they have broken His laws. So it is with God, He is an ETERNAL KING, with an eternal dominion, Who not only demands, but is also eternally worthy of His subjects begging Him for mercy.

You say: Who are His subjects?

All creatures !

You say: But the animals don't need mercy, do they?

This writing isn't about the animals, but about you and me! The animals don't have a soul to lose, but they must suffer because we have sinned. There is a people on earth who are made aware of the God-provoking nature of sin. Because they are being committed against a holy and benevolent God. Sins are so terrible that this people grieve not so much for the consequences of sin (which are also terrible, but that is their own fault), but for the sins themselves and that we have sinned against God. The cause of our sin is rebellion and disobedience toward our Maker in Paradise! We want to be like God! Because of this, a breach exists between God and our souls.

You say: How can that breach be healed?

It's impossible by humans, but it's also impossible by

God. ***Unless...! "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God", John 3:3.*** That breach between God and our souls can only be healed by Christ Who came to this world to stand in our smitten breach to reconcile lost sinners with God by His precious blood. We must be united with Christ through true saving grace in the forgiveness of all our sins. We cannot appear before God with any knowledge of the truth. We can only appear before God when God no longer sees any sin in us.

Now, perhaps one reader will cry out, *"But I am a lump of sin. And I don't know how I can ever be converted to God. I have all the marks of a reprobate."*

Then I have a message for you, reader.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them", 2 Cor. 5:19. Christ voluntarily allowed Himself to be rejected by God in order to save reprobates. Therefore, there is eternal salvation with God in Christ for reprobates in themselves.

Come and see! *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John 1:29.* It is Christ Who saves sinners. He was made sin by imputation. Christ is the innocent Lamb Who bore the sin of His people upon Himself, to go to the slaughter of God's judgment in their place. He is their Mediator; He is their Substitute. Christ came to pay the blood-price for His people, to quench God's wrath against them.

Sins have been paid for with the supreme price of Christ's blood. God is reconciled, and therefore there is still place for the greatest of all sinners, of whom I am the foremost!

The testimony of a saved sinner who looks to Jesus with the eyes of faith sounds like this: "My sins drove the nails into His hands and feet. Because of my unrighteousness, He was grieved even to death. Because of my pride, He had to be humbled to the cursed death of the cross. Because of my disobedience in Paradise, He was crushed. He was despised, the most unworthy of men FOR ME! He took my shame, and I received His riches. He stood before Pilate and Herod in my place. I had to go to the cross, but He went for me. The devil dragged me to the gates of hell, but Christ reached out into the hell of my existence and pulled me away from the gates of hell, saying, *"I have the keys of hell and of death"*, Rev. 1:18. I am ungodly before God, but Christ died in due time for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6), for such a monster as I am. My sins, the Law, and the devil relegated me to the hellish damnation, but Christ has the keys of hell and of death and has spoken in my heart, *"I live, and ye shall live also!" John 14:19.*"

Then the Law fell silent. Then God no longer saw sin in me, and then the promises of God, which are yea and amen in Christ, fell like snowflakes into my heart. *"And behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the world", Matt. 28:20.*" - *"See, I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me", Isa. 49:16.* - *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you", John 14:18.* - *"And I do not say to you that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God", John 16:26-27.* - *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness", 2 Cor. 12:9.* And Paul also testifies to this: *"He was delivered up for our offenses,*

and was raised again for our justification", Rom. 4:25. - "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless 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", Gal. 2:20.

That is just the language of God's true people. Whether they always possess the power of it is not the issue here, but they will never lose that Foundation of salvation. God's people know how God feels about them. He has thoughts of peace toward them. For He no longer sees sin in His Jacob and transgression in His Israel, because they are clothed with the garment of Christ's righteousness. God's people live because Christ lives. For He has said, *"I live, and you shall live also."* They live at His expense and for His responsibility, both in time and eternity. That is the richest and only comfort, both in life and in death. Without Jesus, there is no life, but eternal destruction of the soul.

You may say: I am feeling worse than dead.

Christ says, *"The dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live," John 5:25.* Fall at His feet just as you are, ungodly, damnable prayerless, hardened, and immoral. But He heals, He cleanses, He renews dead dogs and beasts, for Christ is a perfect Saviour for big beasts and dead dogs.

Dear readers, we are about to conclude. What I pray of you: Be reconciled to God! We are journeying toward a never-ending eternity. Eternity, oh, eternity. Then 100 million years will have passed, and it has yet to begin. If you are outside of Christ, you will soon

have to chew your tongue eternally in the fires of hell, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Poor Lazarus had nothing on this earth but a body covered in sores and a pack of licking dogs, but when this beggar died, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's lap. Do you know what Lazarus would say: "I've been in heaven for a few centuries now, but eternity won't be too long to praise and glorify God."

The rich man also died, but he was condemned to hell because he had lived comfortably on earth, had let poor Lazarus die in his gate, and had not needed Christ as his Saviour. Oh, how terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God. I pray you, be saved. God waits to be gracious for lost sinners.

You say: You don't know what kind of beast I am.

You don't know who *I* am, but I will tell you: I am the chief of sinners, but I have obtained mercy. God seeks mangy sheep, dead dogs, and large animals. Remember that Christ *died* for the **ungodly** in due time (Rom. 5:6). Christ died for criminals, for He was numbered with the criminals. The murderer on the cross received mercy at the end of his life. For Christ brims with grace and Truth. He did not die as a martyr, but as a Mediator, for He is risen from the dead and HE LIVES for ever!

Queen Esther cried out, *"And so I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law. If I perish, I perish," Esther 4:16b.* And that earthly King Ahasuerus did not reject her, but graciously extended his sceptre to her. Would the King of kings then reject you, black, lost sinner? He has counted on you. He has such precious blood that washes and cleanses from all sin! Than the

blessed will sing, yes, before His throne and here below: *"Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"*, Rev. 5:9b.

"Oh, blessed Lamb, Thy grace is sufficient for me. I am not satisfied with less than Thee. Because if I have Thee, I have all." Christ alone, Christ wholly, Christ all and no one else. *"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord"*, 2 Cor. 10:17.

Dear reader, our conversation has come to an end, but do you have no desire now to serve that God of perfect salvation?

You say: Yes, I'd like to do that.

That will come to nothing, my friend, because Christ didn't come to be served, but to serve, for it says, *"For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life as a ransom for many"*, Mark 10:45. He will do everything, or He will do nothing. He has a ready-made salvation for a ready-made sinner. Please, don't go to hell, but let me meet you in heaven!

I am nothing, but He is All in all. I can do nothing, but He has done it for me. I know nothing, but Christ is my Wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30). Blessed be the Lamb Who took all my sins for His account and carried them away in a sea of everlasting forgetfulness. To Him, to Him alone be all the glory, all praise, thanksgiving, and worship from now until all eternity. Amen. Hallelujah!

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THE BROAD WAY AND THE NARROW WAY



ON WHICH WAY ARE YOU TRAVELLING RIGHT NOW?