

4. (Matt. 10:28) "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul.

II. MANY INDUCEMENTS TO BE SAVED

All around him was encouragement, yet he made no response/

Frederick Robertson says, "Round the cross of the dying thief were accumulated such means as never before met together to bring a man to God."

Lets note some of the circumstances which seemed peculiarly designed to lead a soul to God in contrition and faith?

1. The power of pain.

Out of my stony griefs
Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to Thee.

When he had tasted the cup of suffering he remained un-

changed. Many are changed during days of suffering. Often men turn to God in time of pain.

2. THE Power of a Personal Testimony. 40

He listened to the truth as it was preached by a (recent convert) his comrade in the anguish of crucifixion. Here was an (earnest plea) from a man whose heart was warm with love, yet this man was not stirred.

You have heard the saying, ("Preachers are dying men preaching unto dying people.") Here is an example of the penitent malefactor gives the truth from his dying lips. None of

MAL'è FAK'tēr
THE IMPENITENT MALEFACTOR

Luke 23:32

INTRODUCTION: There were three crosses on Calvary.

Jesus Christ did not die alone. Crucifixion was a common form of execution then. Any visitor to Jerusalem, passing the Place of the Skull on that never to be forgotten day, might have remarked when he got home: "I saw three men crucified today."

Three men! Three crosses! How similar they were in some ways!--Their agonized bodies sagging on the pierced hands, the raging thirst that tortured them in heat, and the naked spectacle for all to gaze upon.

I wonder what led the (rulers to crucify Christ with thieves) Was it just "an accident" or was it planned?

The crosses were the same--yet there was a vast difference in those three crosses!

Of the (Central Cross) believers join with the Apostle Paul in exclaiming, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Of the cross on which there was nailed the thief, who became penitent, Christians everywhere sing Cowper's lines:

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day:
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.

2. Of the other cross and the man who was crucified thereon

silence largely prevails.

Three men shared death upon a hill,
But only one man died;
The other two
A Thief and God himself
Made rendezvous. RÄN' de'. voo

Three crosses still
Are borne up Calvary's hill
Where sin still lifts them high;
Upon one, sag broken men
Who, cursing, die;
Another holds the praying thief.
Or those, who, penitent as he,
Still find the Christ
Beside them on the tree.

--Miriam Crouse

The Cross of the Impenitent Malefactor has a solemn message for one day. This cross holds up awful symbolism.

I. SIN WILL BE PUNISHED.

This hardened criminal and bandit going to his execution given the assurance that sin is often punished drastically in this life.

We hear much about the prosperity of the wicked. This problem vexed the (Hebrew Psalmist) and still today puzzles the thoughtful. We see evil men grow gray in their iniquity and seem to flourish like a mighty oak tree, with no apparent penalty.

(President M. W. Stäper of Hamilton College) once said:
"Sodom does not always burn; not every Korah fates the jaws of the earth." It does seem that some Sodoms prosper and some of

3. the sons of Korah are never swallowed up by the earth.

Here is a cross and an executed (man demonstrating) for all ages that crime does not pay, and that evil more often brings destruction upon the evildoer than it fails so to do.

Here is a cross proclaiming to mankind that the (Bible) is correct in its stern pronouncements: "The way of the transgressor is hard." "The wicked shall not live out half their days." "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." "Be sure your sins will find you out." "Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death..."

"We receive the due reward of our deeds," was the comment of the thief who repented, to his companion on the opposite side of Christ. Retribution for sins and wickedness are realized most of the time in this world.

(Pharaoh's army) perishing in the Red Sea spoke of punishment.

(Adam) having to leave the garden.

(Lot's wife) as a pillar of salt is a reminder of the penalty of disobedience to God.

(Heb. 2:3) "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation."

Here is a man who had never troubled himself about the spiritual phrase of his existence. What did he care for the soul, whether his own or that of his neighbor.

• He had seen Jesus, heard him speak, but was not impressed.

Some persons are never granted ~~what~~ he termed a dying hour.

Without premonition, and in a twinkling of an eye, they lapse into the gate of death.

(Did he come out of a bad home) and learn to steal almost as soon as he learned to walk?

Did he come out of a (good home) and did his mother dream concerning him and pray that he might be good and great?

Were they (bad companions who led him wrong?)

I do not know. But I do know how wrong he was. He was coarsened and hardened in sin. He was no first offender.

He could see Jesus, and hear him pray for his murderers' pardon, and look upon the weeping women, and catch the moan of his broken-hearted mother and still spit out his foul words of bitterness "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."

He was ^{not} sorry for his sin. He was in (complete rebellion). He would not even learn from the lips of a dying man.

There are people like that today. They have a cross of bitterness.

There are those who hate God. This man's godless tongue was active until the end and he faced death without hope and

us are never sure to preach again.

He told of (his own sin) and that justice was being received. He gave a personal testimony and this impenitent thief was not saved.

3. The Power and Influence of Jesus.

There right beside him in the hour of death was Jesus.

This man, after a (lifetime of crime), witnessed the majestic beauty and compassion of Jesus.

He was aware of the (trial) and the mob action and the cruel treatment of Jesus. He had watched them nail Jesus to the Cross.

He had listened to what the (gamblers) had to say, but he heard the from the lips if (Jesus many sweet words). Jesus spoke of the care of Mary. Jesus spoke of thirst. Jesus talked to the penitent thief and gave him the assurance of Salvation.

Many times sinners come under the influence of the power of Jesus and refuse to be saved.

4. The power of Visual Aids. 38

Some times we say (if only I could see it)--then I would believe it.

This Lost Man on the cross not only was privileged in (seeing Jesus) on the Cross, the (expressions on his face), the mob moving beneath the Cross, but there was above the Cross

he could read superscription ("THIS IS JESUS KING OF THE JEWS.")

This was engraved or written on the surface at the top of the Cross as a title.

However, reading this seemed not to disturb his cold heart. As so many today through visual aids, see Christian films, read even the Bible yet fail to respond to the message.

With all these encouragements to contrition and faith, this man was dead and dumb and blind to God, his own immortal soul's welfare, and his terrible need of redemption from sin.

This man like many of you had repeated opportunities to forsake his wicked way, to abandon his unrighteous thought, and to turn to God who will have mercy and abundantly pardon.

III. NO SENSE OF THE SACRED

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You realize from the first that this impenitent robber had no regard for the eternal and invisible realities.

He thought only of the temporal--this is witnessed in his mad cry to Jesus, "Save thyself and us!"

He was concerned solely with an extension of life in this world.

For during his life time had had no respect for any kind of law or his fellow men. He was determined to exploit them.

Here on the Cross he was full of mockery, cursing and bitterness as he departs this world.

Every generation has its bitter enemies of the Christian

religion. There are those today who attack the faith, who are champions of unbelief and pour contempt on all that is high and holy.

A wave of Irreverence has swept over this modern world. You witness it in the theater, in current fiction, and on the street. You find it in the widespread lawlessness and juvenile delinquency. It is to be noted in a marked degree in the desecration of the Sabbath Day.

You find it in Vandalism visited upon ^{Antiquities} ~~Antiquities~~, works of art.

You find it even among church bodies. There are people who have occupied positions of influence in the Christian church, yet have treated the Bible as though it were a mere document of human literature, rather than the Word of God and a revelation of the supernatural.

The modern church could stand a revival or reverence.

IV. NO SORROW FOR HIS SIN

Quite often we use the penitent thief as a supreme example of deathbed repentance.

Now, here is proof that not every man, even in the face of warning turns to the Saviour on his death bed.

There is not even a word of sorrow for sin, or a whisper for mercy.

without God.

His conscience had no fear of God.

There is no sensible response from this man.

The (O. T.) portrays the disintegrating personality of King Saul who again and again spurned the counsel of the prophet Samuel, who was God's special messenger to his soul. At length, Samuel withdrew from Saul. "Samuel called no more to see Saul until the day of his death."

This illustrates for us the relationship between the H.S. and the soul. When one constantly resists the motions of the Divine Spirit, a point of no return is reached.

Pharaoh so persistently declined to give heed to God's voice his heart was hardened.

*(But up on) 74 yrs -
with God - man - sin
for people no right with -*
Today, if ye would hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

"Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

On which side of the Cross of Jesus do you take your stand? Are you on the side of the man who repented, or are you on the side of the man who did not repent?

No man needs to come down to his end as this unhappy man. Will you go down to the end of your days as this man? Or will you look to the cross of Jesus?

My sin-oh, the bliss of this glorious thought-
My sin-not in part, but in the whole,
Is nailed to the Cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
H. G. Spafford

South Norfolk March 23, 58 P.M. -