

Here trembling sinner recognize and adore the sovereignty, adorned by mercy, of your God, who, while he exercises his royal prerogative of "shewing mercy upon whom he will have mercy and whom he will he hardeneth," at the same time points to Jesus as able and willing to save every one—and you among the number,—who will accept his accomplished atonement and his offered pardon. You have before you on these two crosses the two alternatives between which you must inevitably choose—the despair of the reprobate and the hope of the christian. And if you want the explanation the Bible points you to the central cross, and shows you Him who hangs thereon bearing the heavy burthen of *your sin*, the weight of which increases the agony of the mangled hands and the lacerated feet. Have faith then like the dying thief. "Be not afraid, only believe."

There is something so amazing in the faith of this malefactor as evidently to mark its divine origin. That Jesus when engaged in healing the bodies of his suffering fellow men should have heard the prayer of a believing penitent, and turned aside to administer hope and comfort to a sin stricken soul, could not appear wonderful to any one who had heard the story of the woman of Samaria or the penitent Magdalene. But that at a time when we would suppose him to have been totally absorbed with his own agonies, who could have expected that he should have been able to bestow a thought on the sufferings of others, and especially on a guilty and convicted thief. And yet this man not only believed that Christ was able to save him, but that he would then and there listen to his prayer and grant him an answer which would sweeten even the pangs of the cross.—Surely this was a marvellous faith. If any thing can be more wonderful it is the fact that this faith and confidence were not misplaced, but proved, even under such circumstances, the infinitude of Christ's compassion and the truth of all his numerous promises that he will assuredly hear and answer believing prayer.

We had intended especially to comment on the peculiar encouragement which this incident gives to those who come to the Saviour at the eleventh hour, but our remarks on this point must necessarily be brief. The sinner on his death bed is haunted by the temptation that he cannot be accepted because he has spent his whole life in the service of Satan, and has now no opportunity of manifesting his repentance by his works. But even this excuse for want of confidence in Christ as a Saviour is taken away. Here is an example of a great sinner not only *hopefully*, but *certainly* converted in his last moments. It affords no ground on the part of those in health for presumptuously putting off their salvation to a dying hour, for while we have multitudes of apparent, and, let us hope, real conversions on a near approach to the grave, we have many others in which a subsequent recovery has afforded opportunity for abundant evidence that the apparent conversion was hollow and delusive. And thus one single instance exists, in the whole history of christianity, in which we certainly and infallibly know that a death bed conversion was real. Let none therefore, on account of it, postpone for a moment their eternal interests. But, though in this respect it stands alone, how inestimable is its value. But for this example the christian minister might have been left to approach the sinner's death bed armed only with faint hopes and weak consolations. But here we have the most conclusive proof that Christ will hear and will save even in the last moment. Only let the penitence be as sincere, the faith as large, and the prayer as earnest as that of the dying thief, and salvation is