

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
Matthew xviii. 11.

answered the old man. "No such luck for me—I've no friend to send me coals for nothing."

"Nay, but they're for the man as lives at the dyke. Aint that you?"

"That's me, sure enough; but there's a mistake; it's some other dyke, maybe."

And he shuts the door with a bang, and returns to his desolate hearth.

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The next day the same cart may be seen drawn up opposite to a low court in the town, and the same man is knocking at one of the doors. "I've brought you some coals," he says cheerfully; "where shall I put 'em?"

"They're not for me," answers the man who opens the door; "you've made a mistake."

"It's no mistake," says the coalman. "See, here's the order:—No. 24, quarter of a ton of coals.—Now, that's clear, aint it?"

"That's my number, certainly," replies the other; "but these coals ain't mine, and I can't take 'em in."

"Well," says the man with the coals, "one would think I was bringing yer poison. Here comes a nice present of coals, and yer clean refuses to take 'em. But leave 'em I shall; for yesterday, I took 'em away from a house, and got into trouble for it. So if yer don't open yer cellar door, I shall chuck 'em down here by yer doorstep."

Thus pressed, the man at last opens his cellar door, saying, as he does so, "You'll soon be back to fetch 'em, I guess, so I won't set too much store by 'em. But if they're for me, I'm sure I'm much obliged."

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One more house in that court the coalman visits with his load, and knocking at the door, tells the woman he has brought her some coals.

"For me?" she says; "oh, it can't be true, they must be for some one else."

"No, mum, here's your number, plain enough:—No. 8, quarter of a ton of coals."

"So it is! Well, then, I suppose God

has sent 'em to me, for no one else knows that the last bit of coal is on the fire now, and that I didn't know where to get any more. Bring them in. It must be God who has sent 'em, and I must thank Him."

"Perhaps you'd better," is the man's short answer; but to himself he adds, "she's the only sensible one of the lot; the rest are fools for their pains."

"Fools for their pains!" How many such fools there are in the world! "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 iii. 16). "The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ." (Romans vi. 23). Yet though God offers to each one the free gift of eternal life—life in Christ, pardon, peace, and communion—we too often act like these poor cottagers with their coals. Some, like the old man, refuse it altogether. Others, like the man at 24, are afraid to take the gift; and they need much persuasion and many invitations to induce them to believe that the glad tidings are for them.

But some, like the woman who had come to the end of her coals, having found out their need, accept the gift of life eternal, and thank God for it.

Dear friend, have you accepted this free gift, and are you showing your gratitude by a life spent for Jesus? Or are you still refusing the priceless gift, and shutting the door of your heart against His great love? There will come a time when, if you still refuse the gift of God's dear Son, Heaven's door will be closed against you.

—Selected.

YOUNG MEN'S BIBLE CLASS

Every Monday Evening,

AT 8 O'CLOCK,

ALL INVITED.

"He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

John xi. 25.