

"HELP!"

A man had resolved to commit suicide. He went to the bank of a swift river, and leaped into its waters. But when brought thus face to face with death and the eternal world, his eyes were opened. The guilt of his past crimes, and especially of that which he was now perpetrating, and the fearful punishment awaiting him at the hands of an angry God, flashed into his soul; and he resolved if possible to save himself.

He struggled to the steep bank, but the swift current swept him away. He turned to the right hand and to the left, but all was in vain. His strength failed, and the certainty that he was perishing settled down upon him. Then he uttered a loud, piercing cry, "Help! help!" just as he was about to sink to rise no more.

Just so with the awakened sinner. It is when he has made his last effort to work out his own righteousness, when he discovers that the work of making his peace with God, which he thought so easy, is to him impossible; it is then that his sense of guilt, and his fear of eternal death, strike him prostrate in the dust. It is then that they cover the heavens with the blackness of darkness, and open at his feet the mouth of hell.

That cry, "Help! Help!" reached the ear of one passing on the bank above the drowning man. He seized a rope lying just before him. With a quick and skilful cast, he threw the end of it directly into those uplifted hands just disappearing beneath the whirling tide. They clenched it with the death-grasp, and the perishing man was saved.

Just so it is with the perishing sinner. So long as he relies on himself, so long as he seeks to work out his own righteousness, and to secure his own salvation, he is in deep darkness; he is on the wrong road, and the farther he travels the greater his difficulty.

But when he fully discovers his own impotence, and begins to cry, "Help!" "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Lord, save me! I perish!" then it is that Christ appears on the bank, and casts the rope into his hands. Then it is that, by faith in the God-Man, his sins are taken away, and he has peace of conscience, peace with God, joy in the Holy Ghost, and victory over sin.

Reader seize the rope! it is thy life.—*Scl.*

Purity of heart is more by far than power of hand, more than deftness of hand. Human welfare is all built up on moral purity. Our acts are the outcome of thought, and the character of the thought depends on the moral state.—*Rev. F. Hastings.*

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

"We gain much by rightly using and prizing the ordinances of God. They are wells of salvation—sources of refreshment and cheer—means of grace—channels of spiritual life and religious culture. In the sanctuary God reveals himself, displays his glory, manifests his power to help, to invigorate, to bless and to sanctify all true worshippers, inspires and strengthens workers in his kingdom, and through his truth and ambassador makes wise unto salvation. His sacraments are mediums of blessing. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, when properly observed, bring the soul into vital and saving connection with Jesus. Prayer and praise act as uplifters to God and vehicles of the highest, sweetest and purest of communion with heaven. The private reading of the Bible and closet interviews with God tend to build up in truth and in holiness and incite to increased activity in the service of the Lord. No one who would do his duty as well as honor his Master, can afford to ignore, or neglect, or dispense with God's various ordained helps for developing character, qualifying for growing usefulness and preparing for the inheritance of the saints in light. Especially in these days, when there is so much to warp Christian judgment, to draw into the vortex of worldliness and to weaken the power of godliness, is there constant need to habitually frequent, exalt and utilize every agency by which a noble, consistent, happy and useful Christian life may be maintained and developed."

WATCHFUL LIVES.

None are so likely to maintain watchful guard over their hearts and lives as those who know the comfort of living in near communion with God. They feel their privilege and will fear losing it. They will dread falling from their high estate, and marring their own comfort by bringing clouds between themselves and Christ. He that goes on a journey with a little money about him takes little thought of danger, and cares little how late he travels. He, on the contrary, that carries gold and jewels, will be a cautious traveller; he will look well to his roads, his horses, and his company, and run no risks. The fixed stars are those that tremble most. The man that most fully enjoys the light of God's countenance, will be a man tremblingly afraid of losing its blessed consolations, and jealously fearful of doing anything to grieve the Holy Ghost.—*Bishop Ryle.*