

Henry Ziegler

Treatment of the Awakened



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Treatment of the Awakened

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Treatment of the Awakened

By Rev. Henry Ziegler, A.M.

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Contents

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[About The Lutheran Library](#)

[Contents](#)

[Preface by Lutheran Librarian](#)

[Treatment Of The Awakened.](#)

[I. Two Systems in Protestant Churches](#)

[II. Naming The Systems](#)

[IIIa. The Lutheran System is Scriptural; The Anti-Lutheran System is Unscriptural.](#)

[1. The Conversion Of The Three Thousand On The Day Of Pentecost.](#)

[2. The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch.](#)

[3. The conversion of Said of Tarsus.](#)

[4. The conversion of Cornelius.](#)

[5. The conversion of the Philippian jailor.](#)

[IIIb. The Lutheran System is Scriptural; The Anti-Lutheran System is Unscriptural.](#)

[1. Compliance with the conditions on which God has promised to pardon and save, does, from the nature of God's attributes, infallibly bring us pardon and salvation.](#)

[IIIc. The Lutheran System is Scriptural; The Anti-Lutheran System is Unscriptural.](#)

[IV. That the old Methodist system does not differ essentially from the Lutheran system.](#)

[1. On faith as the condition of pardon and salvation.](#)

[2. On faith as the prerequisite of feeling — indeed of every grace.](#)

[3. On the possibility of being pardoned, and even of being in possession of perfect love, and, yet not knowing it; or not having the witness of it.](#)

4. I will add a few extracts, showing his manner of instructing inquirers.

V. To make a few additional remarks concerning the more prominent mistakes and consequences of this Anti-Lutheran system.

1. It confounds the inward peace and consolations of believers, which follow the knowledge of pardoned sin, and which accompany a life of holiness, with the conditions of pardon and acceptance.

2. It mistakes the nature of pardon.

3. It mistakes the object of faith.

4. That this system leads into the folly of pleading with God for what he has already given.

5. This system often drives persons away from Christ, and not unfrequently leads to infidelity.

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

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Treatment Of The Awakened.

By Rev. H. Ziegler, A. M., Salona, Pa.

IT HAS BEEN frequently said that the grand object of preaching the Gospel, is to lead sinners to make the inquiry, “what must I do to be saved?” Another subject of equal, if not of vastly greater importance to the minister of Christ is, how shall awakened and inquiring souls be treated? This shall constitute the theme of our discussion.

I. Two Systems in Protestant Churches

There are, at the present time, two Systems of dealing with such persons, in vogue in the Protestant Churches. Both systems claim to have the same object in view, viz., to direct and aid inquirers how to obtain the pardon of sin, and the favor of God. In all other respects they differ — in their stand-points, in the things on which they insist as the evidence of pardon and acceptance with God, and in the means which they employ to gain the object at which they aim.

The one system assumes, as its stand-point, that it is possible for an individual to be pardoned and accepted of God, and yet that he may not have the assurance of it. It maintains, moreover, that we must first know that we are pardoned and accepted, by believing the evidence appointed by God himself for this purpose, before we can have the joy and consolation thereof.

The other system assumes, as its stand-point, that God never pardons and accepts any person without his knowing it; and that we have no assurance of pardon and acceptance until we feel it in our souls.

The one system regards compliance with the conditions on which God has promised to pardon and save, as sufficient and reliable, because it is the Divinely appointed evidence of pardon and acceptance with God.

The other system does not regard compliance with these conditions as a sufficient and reliable evidence of pardon and acceptance. It demands, in addition, the following things: First, an inward, feeling sense of pardon and acceptance; and secondly, an outward manifestation of rejoicing, as an evidence of this inward sense of pardon and acceptance.

The one system aims at the attainment of its object —

[1] By showing awakened and inquiring persons on what conditions God has promised to pardon and save sinners.

[2] By helping them to examine themselves, in order to ascertain whether they have complied with these conditions.

[3] If they have not complied with them, by urging them at once to do so, as the only means of obtaining pardon and salvation.

[4] If they have complied with them, then by showing them that, according to God's promises, they are pardoned and accepted; and that it is their privilege and duty at once to rely on his promises through Christ, and thus rejoice in the free salvation of God.

[5] This system implies that there is some hindrance which prevents the true penitent from confiding heartily in God's promises of pardon and salvation, and that this hindrance must be removed mainly by instruction. In fact, this system relies mainly on instruction as the means to be employed in attaining its object. It might be here added, that the place where this is to be done, is not essential to the system. It may be in the family circle, in the catechetical class, in the inquiry meeting, or at the close of the sermon in the public sanctuary.

The other system aims at attaining the same object mainly by the following means:

[1] By prevailing on awakened persons to kneel at a front bench, for the purpose of seeking religion, by pleading earnestly with God for pardon, for his Holy Spirit, for "the blessing," etc.

[2] By surrounding them and praying with them and for them, in order thus to encourage them to be in earnest, and "never give up the struggle" until they "receive the blessing." This is, moreover, regarded as a very essential means of drawing down and obtaining the blessing sought.

[3] This system implies that there is some hindrance which prevents the true penitent from obtaining pardon, and that this hindrance must be removed mainly by earnest prayer.

[4] This system places very little reliance on instruction in accomplishing its object.

We have now clearly defined the two systems. The next point will be to designate these systems by their appropriate names.

II. Naming The Systems

The first of these systems I shall call the Lutheran system. I give it this appellation, not because it is found only in the Lutheran church, but because the Lutheran is the first church of the Reformation that introduced and practiced it. The other system I shall call the Anti-Lutheran, not because it is never found among Lutherans, but because it stands in direct opposition to the Lutheran system.

It will hardly be necessary to advance arguments to prove that the former of these systems is appropriately called the Lutheran. On this point, I would simply refer to our liturgical forms, used at the service preparatory to the Lord's Supper. The whole form contemplates a self-examination.

The questions propounded call attention to the conditions of pardon and salvation. The answers to these questions, and the prayer which follows, imply a compliance with these conditions. And the announcement is a declaration of God's promise of pardon to all who have complied with the conditions of pardon. I leave this point and hasten to the next, viz:

IIIa. The Lutheran System is Scriptural; The Anti-Lutheran System is Unscriptural.

Proof first. This shall be furnished from conversions recorded in the Acts of the apostles.

1. The Conversion Of The Three Thousand On The Day Of Pentecost.

Acts 2:37-41. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren what

shall we do?" Thus they are agitating the great question — they are inquirers. And what course did the Apostles take?

First, Peter makes known the conditions of pardon, viz: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Here we have repentance and faith as the conditions of pardon; for baptism in the name of Jesus, is a profession of faith in him as the promised Messiah and Savior of the world.

Secondly, to encourage them to comply with these conditions, Peter refers to God's promise. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The remainder of what Peter said to them is intended, thirdly, to prevail on them at once to accept the offered salvation. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation."

The whole system is instruction — there is no urging to plead with God for "the blessing." It is the Lutheran system.

The result of Peter's instruction is thus recorded. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." "They gladly received the word" which Peter preached; that is, they were willing to accept of God's conditions of pardon and salvation. But this willingness implies that they understood these conditions; they must, therefore, have given their undivided attention to the instructions of Peter. There was no praying and singing going on whilst the instruction was being imparted.

We find here no encouragement for the Anti-Lutheran system.

2. The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Acts 8:26 — 89. Philip was directed by the angel of the Lord to the Ethiopian eunuch, as he was returning home from Jerusalem, whither, as a Jew, he had gone to worship. Philip found him reading the prophet Isaiah. He was a sincere inquirer after the way of salvation. What course did take?

The first thing was, to ascertain the state of his mind, and the extent of his knowledge of the plan of salvation.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" was the first step. This led the eunuch to open his mind to the stranger. He replies: "How can I, except

some one should guide me.” “And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.” He was reading where the Messiah is spoken of as a “sheep led to the slaughter,” etc. He again said to Philip, “I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself? or of some other man?”

Philip, secondly, made known to the eunuch the Gospel plan of salvation; in other words, the conditions of pardon under Christ. “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” That he made known to him the conditions of pardon, and spoke especially of baptism as the mode of professing faith in Jesus as the Messiah, is evident from what follows. “And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch said, ‘See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized;’” He desired to profess his faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and therefore desired to know whether there was any thing to prevent his being baptized at once. The only condition announced by Philip was, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” And as soon as the eunuch declared, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” he ordered the chariot to stand still, and baptized him. This done, the same Lord who sent him to the eunuch, took him from him. Philip’s work with the inquiring eunuch was accomplished. And what was it? To ascertain the state of his mind; to make known the conditions of pardon; that is, the plan of salvation through Christ; and as soon as he was willing to comply with these conditions, to receive him by baptism into the fellowship of believers.

Here again we have the Lutheran system. The other system finds no quarters. There is no urging to prayer, in order to obtain “the blessing.” No inward feeling is insisted on as a condition of pardon and acceptance. It is, understand the conditions of pardon, comply with them, and you are safe.

3. The conversion of Said of Tarsus.

Acts 9:1 — 20; 22:6 — 16. After Saul was arrested by a miraculous light, Jesus commences a conversation with him. This proves that although he had fallen to the earth, he was neither senseless nor speechless — his mental powers were in full exercise. The conversation and miracle resulted in his conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, as well as in his submission to his authority; in other words, it resulted in his conversion. For he inquired, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” This implies faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and a determination at once to obey him.

Now, observe what Jesus replies to his inquiry. It is not, pray on until “the blessing” comes; but, “Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” He was already converted; and all he needed was the necessary instruction. Jesus did not give him this instruction himself; it must be imparted by one of his disciples. And how did Ananias proceed? Putting his hand on him, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been, scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.” In the twenty-second chapter Paul relates this interview with Ananias thus: “He came unto me and stood, and said unto me, ‘brother Saul receive thy sight.’ And the same hour I looked upon him. And he said, ‘the God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’” Or, as it might be more literally translated, having called on the name of the Lord. It is not a command to call on his name; it is stating the fact that he had already been doing so.

Here also we have the Lutheran system. It is instruction; and when the conditions of pardon are complied with, it is assuring Saul of his acceptance with God, and urging him without delay to profess his faith in Christ, and thus become identified with his followers.

The other system finds nothing to support it. There is no urging to earnest prayer, in order to “seek religion,” no “hold, on until you get the blessing.” Indeed, the opposite course is taken. “And now, why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, etc.” As much as to say, you are a brother in Christ; be baptized at once; and enter on the path of duty. Neither is there any feeling referred to as an evidence of pardon; nothing except God’s own conditions; faith in Christ, and submission to him.

4. The conversion of Cornelius.

Acts. 10. Cornelius was a devout man, he feared God with all his house; he gave much alms to the people; he prayed to God always; his prayers were heard; his alms had come up as a memorial before God; he was a just man; he was in the habit of fasting; he was ready to do the whole will of God as soon as it was made known to him. See verses 1 to 4, 22, 30, 31, 32 & 33.

In few words, he was a child of God; God had accepted him. This is implied in the language of Peter. “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.” It is not, shall be accepted; but “is accepted.” Cornelius, then, was accepted; but there was still something lacking — not to make him a child of God; but to enable him to understand the true ground upon which God pardons sin, to give him a fuller assurance of his acceptance, to bring him into the church of Christ, and thus to make him more useful to those around him.

All he needed was, therefore, to understand the plan of salvation through Christ. The angel therefore commanded him to send for Peter, telling him that when he had come, he would tell him “what he ought to do.”

Now observe, what does Peter tell him? After assuring him that God is no respecter of persons, but that he accepts all who fear him and work righteousness; he at once commences about peace through Jesus Christ. He then proceeds to give the evidences of his Divine Messiahship; states that he was crucified; gives the evidence of his resurrection, and asserts that God appointed him to be the Judge of the living and the dead. This done, he directs attention to the prophecies of the Old Testament, bearing on this subject. “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.”

It is stated that, while Peter was yet speaking these words, “the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the word,” and that “they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.” This extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, manifesting itself in speaking unknown languages, is evidence that while Peter was speaking, Cornelius, and those assembled with him, believed in Jesus Christ as the Messiah: for this extraordinary gift was never given previous to the exercise of faith in Christ. Peter, therefore, without inquiring whether they believed in Christ, commanded them to be baptized in his name.

This, too, is the Lutheran system. It is instruction from beginning to end. The peculiarities of the Anti-Lutheran system are not found. There is no urging to plead for “the blessing;” no inward feeling insisted on as a condition or evidence of pardon and acceptance.

5. The conversion of the Philippian jailor.

Acts 16:25 — 34. The whole transaction, after the jailor makes the inquiry, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” is thus related.

“And they said unto him, ‘believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.’ And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” Finally, this case also proves the scripturality of the Lutheran, and the unscripturality of the Anti-Lutheran system.

The evidence drawn from the cases of conversion recorded in the Acts of the apostles, therefore, amounts to a moral demonstration in favor of the Lutheran, and against the Anti-Lutheran system of dealing with awakened and inquiring souls.

IIIb. The Lutheran System is Scriptural; The Anti-Lutheran System is Unscriptural.

We proceed to Proof second. This has reference exclusively to the things on which these two systems insist as evidence of pardon and acceptance with God. That, on this point, the Lutheran system is Scriptural, and the other unscriptural, has already been shown; but we present additional proof.

1. Compliance with the conditions on which God has promised to pardon and save, does, from the nature of God’s attributes, infallibly bring us pardon and salvation.

A promises B twenty dollars, on certain conditions. B complies with those conditions and demands his pay. A, however, refuses to pay the money until B complies with other conditions, never until now made known, and never agreed on. A has deceived B — he is dishonest. It is just so in regard to the pardon of sin and salvation. God has promised us pardon and salvation on clearly defined conditions. These are, repentance, or a renunciation of our sins; submission to the will of God, or a willingness or determination to obey him; and faith in Christ as the Savior of sinners, appointed as such by

God himself. Indeed, faith is very frequently presented as the only condition. It, however, always implies the other two, repentance and submission. You never say to the impenitent, submissive sinner, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This language is always, in the word of God, addressed to penitent and inquiring souls. We invariably demand a sincere determination to forsake all sin and obey God, before we direct any one to Christ for salvation by faith. It is, "Repent and believe the Gospel;" it is "Repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ;" it is, "Whosoever feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him," and then, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins."

You repent — you have sincerely renounced your sins — not already conquered and subdued them; but you have sincerely determined, by God's grace, to do so. You have submitted to God — yielded your will to his will — not indeed that you have already yielded entire obedience; but you have resolved to learn and do his whole will. You believe in Jesus Christ — encouraged by God's promises, you have committed yourself to him, body and soul, for time and eternity. You have now complied with God's conditions of pardon. You are pardoned — you are accepted. There is no doubt about it. The veracity and honesty of God are concerned in this matter. God cannot lie; God cannot deceive; therefore, pardon and salvation are yours the very moment you comply with his conditions of pardon.

This is the Lutheran system. But now comes the Anti-Lutheran system, and insists on another condition or evidence of pardon, viz., an inward, feeling sense of pardon in the soul — a condition never made known in the word of God. Without this you have no pardon. This makes God untrue and dishonest; it is blasphemy. It is setting up one's own notion against God's word; it is virtually claiming to have an unwritten revelation. It is fanaticism, the wildest fanaticism.

IIIc. The Lutheran System is Scriptural; The Anti-Lutheran System is Unscriptural.

We come now to Proof third. This refers exclusively to the stand-points of the two systems. The Lutheran system maintains that it is possible for an individual to be pardoned and accepted of God, and yet he not be certain of it.

The other system maintains, that God never pardons and accepts any person without his knowing it.

A number of persons have united in rebellion against their government. The penalty is death. They are surrounded by the king's army; they are in his power. But he determines to pardon them on the following conditions. In the presence of my army, lay down your arms, confess your crime, and solemnly promise future obedience to your lawful sovereign. These conditions are made known to the rebels by the king's generalissimo. They all understand what they are commanded to do; but they do not all clearly understand, that these are the only conditions of pardon. Some suppose that these are only preliminary to other conditions. They are all willing to comply — they do comply. They all have pardon the moment they comply with the conditions; but how many of them know it? Only those who clearly understand that they have complied with all the conditions. Have the others no pardon, simply because they do not know that they have complied with all the conditions? In other words, because they do not know that they have pardon? It is evident that they have pardon equally with the others, and on the same grounds. They only need to know it.

Again, our neighbor A is condemned to suffer capital punishment. We sign a petition and send it to the Governor, praying for his pardon. The Governor hears our prayer, he grants neighbor A a full pardon. He is pardoned the very moment the Governor grants our petition. But does neighbor A know it? Not until he is informed of the fact. Suppose he should die before he knows it, has he died unpardoned simply for want of this knowledge? Never, never. He was pardoned, though he knew it not.

It is just so in regard to the pardon of sin, and acceptance with God.

You comply with God's conditions of pardon. That moment you are pardoned and accepted. But it is possible that you may not be certain of it. This will be the case under the following circumstances:

First, whenever you desire and expect evidences of pardon different from, or over and above God's conditions of pardon. And secondly, when satisfied that compliance with God's conditions of pardon is a reliable evidence or assurance of pardon and acceptance, and although having complied with his conditions, you are forever doubting; whether your repentance is as deep, your submission as entire, and your faith as strong and implicit as it should be. Under these circumstances, an individual should not be urged to seek for pardon. He has this. What he needs is to know that he

has complied with God's conditions of pardon, and that this compliance and God's promise are his assurance of pardon and acceptance.

But let us look at the teachings of the Bible on this point. — 1 John 5: 9 — 13. From verse thirteen, we learn that those to whom St. John wrote — and they were believers — did not know that they were heirs of eternal life; and moreover, that he wrote to them for this very purpose, that they might know it. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,” etc. Thus, although they were believers, yet they did not know that they were pardoned and accepted; or knowing this, they did not regard pardon and acceptance as a guarantee of eternal life. St. John, therefore, wrote to them, to assure them of this fact — their title to eternal life. He does this by calling their attention to God's own testimony on the subject; and by showing them their obligation to receive and confide in his testimony. “And this is the record, or testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” And also, “If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.” That is, if we rely on the testimony of men, how much greater is our obligation to rely on God's testimony. But “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 believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

Thus God's testimony is, that whoever hath his Son — that is, believes in him — hath eternal life. It is, moreover, evident that believers can know that this promised eternal life is theirs, only by relying on God's revealed testimony on the subject.

But it may be objected that, after all, those believers were certain of eternal life; for they had the inward witness of it, viz., “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” Clarke teaches that this is “the Spirit of God bearing witness with his — the believer's spirit, that he is a child of God.” I deny in toto that this passage teaches this doctrine. But for argument's sake, we will grant it. Then we have the Spirit of God bearing witness with the spirits of those to whom St. John wrote, that they were the children of God. Now, if the Spirit of God bears witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God, then this witness must be reliable; it must give me assurance that I certainly am or have the thing concerning which the witness has been given me; otherwise the witness is of no use; it fails to accomplish

the object for which it is given. Just such happens to be the inward witness, in the case under consideration. According to this interpretation, they had the inward witness of God's Spirit; and by this witness, they knew to a certainty that they were God's children, and heirs of heaven. But they did not know this; for, as already shown, St. John wrote to them to assure them of this fact, by referring them to God's revealed testimony on this subject.

It is, therefore, possible for an individual to be a believer; and, therefore, to be pardoned and accepted, and an heir of heaven, and yet not know it. This is scriptural; and this is a part of the Lutheran system.

Again, the position that we cannot know that our sins are pardoned, until we feel it, is as far from the truth, as that just disposed of, viz., that God never pardons and accepts any person without his knowing it.

It is a universal law of the human mind, that we must first perceive evidence, secondly, believe that evidence, and that we can then, thirdly, have the feeling necessarily resulting from such knowledge and faith. Thus, we do not know and believe that the religion of Christ is of Divine origin, because we feel it to be so. On the contrary, we must first perceive the evidence of its Divinity; I mean evidence external to ourselves, and independent of our feelings; and then believe this evidence, before we can have the proper feelings in its favor. Indeed, Christ never appeals to men's feelings as evidence of the Divine origin of his religion. The appeal is almost universally to his own works. "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." — See also John 10: 24, 25, 87, 38. Ib. 14: 8 — 11. Ib. 20: 30, 31. Acts 2: 22. Heb. 2: 3, 4.

Again, you do not know and believe that an absent friend is dead, because you are impressed with a feeling that it is so. You know and believe it only by means of reliable testimony. Understanding such testimony, and believing it, you can and will have the feeling which this knowledge and faith are calculated to produce on your mind.

It is just so in regard to the pardon of sin, and our acceptance with God.

We do not first feel that our sins are pardoned, and then know and believe it, because we feel it. On the contrary, we must first know and believe that our sins are pardoned and we accepted, before we can feel it; or more

correctly, before we can have the peace and consolation resulting from such knowledge and faith.

But this also is part of the Lutheran system; and as it corresponds with a universal law of the mind — a law of God's own creation — it bears the impress of Divinity. Our Lutheran system is, therefore, from God; it is scriptural. We will show,

IV. That the old Methodist system does not differ essentially from the Lutheran system.

The proof will consist of extracts from the Memoirs of William Carvosso, who was, for sixty years, a class-leader among the Wesleyan Methodists in England. He died in 1834. I quote from an edition published in 1843, by the Book Concern of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the U. States. Hear him:

1. On faith as the condition of pardon and salvation.

His son says of him, in the preface to the work, pp. 9 & 10:

"Present, free and full salvation, by simple faith in the atonement, formed the theme on which he dwelt with delight, and almost without intermission. In receiving the salvation of the Gospel, he had no opinion of delays, exceptions, or limits. To the spiritually diseased of every class, his constant cry was, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' He saw in the strong commanding light of faith, Christ present, able, willing to save to the uttermost; and therefore, when he exclaimed,

'Believe, and all your sins forgiven;
Only believe, and yours is heaven' —

it often produced an effect peculiarly his own."

Speaking of three sisters, he says: "They all bid fair for the kingdom. The youngest, who was brought to God in the last revival, was longing to love the Lord with all her heart. This, I told her, was her privilege, and that God's time was the present moment: but I found she could not venture on the atonement." The next day, while conversing with her, he asked her,

“Can you now believe?” Her reply was, “No, I still feel a bar that prevents my laying hold.” He then continues: “I saw what she wanted, and requested her to bring me Mrs. Rogers’ Memoirs. I opened to the part applicable to her experience, and bid her read for herself. It was where Mr. Fletcher invites all who felt their need of full salvation, to believe now for it. He observes: ‘As when you reckon with your creditor or with your host; and as when you have paid all, you reckon yourself free; so now reckon with God. Jesus hath paid all; and hath paid all for thee; hath purchased thy pardon and holiness. Therefore, it is now God’s command; reckon thyself dead indeed unto sin, and thou art alive unto God from this hour. O begin; begin to reckon now. Believe, believe, believe! And continue to believe every moment, so shalt thou continue free.’”

“This,” adds Carvosso, “had the blessed effect which I longed to see. The words, ‘fear not,’ etc., touched her heart, and she wept, believed, and entered in.” — pp. 194, 195.

Recording his own experience, he says: “I bless the Lord, he is still deepening and widening his good work in my soul. In all my pilgrimage, I never saw so much included in the word believing, as I do now. I clearly perceive that were I for a moment to cease believing, I should at once be swallowed up by the enemy of my soul. Were I to suffer unbelief to slip in, to true peace of mind I must say farewell. I find no way to conquer but through faith in his blood.” — p. 155. Hear him —

2. On faith as the prerequisite of feeling — indeed of every grace.

Speaking of God’s kingdom in the heart, he remarks: “To aim aright at this liberty of children of God, requires a continual acting of faith — of a naked faith, independent of all feelings, in a naked promise — such as, The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

He then continues. “By a naked faith in a naked promise, I do not mean a bare assent that God is faithful, and that such a promise in the book of God may be fulfilled to me; but a bold, hearty, steady venturing of soul, body and spirit upon the truth of the promise, with an appropriating act; it is mine, because I am a sinner, and am determined to believe, come what will.”

Again he adds: "You must also remember that it is your privilege to go to Christ with such a faith now and every succeeding moment; and that you are to bring nothing but a careless, distracted, tossed, hardened heart; just such an one as you now have. Here lies the grand mistake of many poor, miserable, but precious souls. They are afraid to believe, lest it should be presumption, because they have not yet comfort, joy, love, etc.; not considering that this is to look for the fruit before the tree is planted."

Once more he adds: "Beware., then, of looking for any grace previous to believing." — pp. 245, 246.

Giving his own experience on this point, he says: "For several days past, Satan and unbelief, the two great enemies of my soul, have labored hard to wrest my shield from me, and weaken my confidence in God. I have had to hang on Christ by a naked faith, without any sensible enjoyment."

"But," he continues, "I was greatly blessed while thinking of that remark of Lady Maxwell, viz., 'I have often been enabled strongly to act faith on Jesus, even in the absence of all comfort; and this has diffused a heaven of sweetness through my soul, and brought with it the powerful witness of purity.'" — p. 275.

Writing to a Christian sister, he says: "You say you want a more lively faith, and desire me to tell you how to get it." He replies: "You must take God at his word, my sister. He tells you, 'all is yours.' I see where you miss the simple way of faith, and fall into the stinking dungeon of self. St. Paul, I conceive, had no reference to rapturous joys, when he said, 'the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

After quoting several more Scripture passages, he adds: "O, may the Lord bless you with heavenly wisdom to understand the faith of which Mr. Wesley speaks in these words:

'Though waves and storms go o'er my head,
Though strength, and health, and friends be gone;
Though joys be withered all and dead,
And every comfort be withdrawn;
On this my steadfast soul relies,
Father, thy mercy never dies.'

He continues: "I wish you to meditate on the whole of this hymn, and pray that the Lord may reveal clearly to your mind, all that is contained in it;

then, I am sure, you will not be perplexed about frames and feelings; but will say, with one of old, ‘though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’ May the Lord bless you with the mighty faith that conquers all.” — pp. 294, 295. Hear him —

3. On the possibility of being pardoned, and even of being in possession of perfect love, and, yet not knowing it; or not having the witness of it.

At one time, asking a female whether she loved God, and receiving the reply, “Yes, but there is something which I still want,” he said to her, “Come and sit down by me, and I will tell you all about it.” His son, recording this case, says: “She sat down accordingly, and he soon discovered she did, not know her sins were pardoned.” He then said to her, “you may receive this blessing now.” He then put her to reading one of the Methodist hymns, and when she had uttered the words, “Thy debt is paid,” “he put his thumb on the words which followed, and asked her whether she thought it was paid?” It is added: “She burst into a flood of tears, and was made happy from that moment.” — Preface, p. 14.

A correspondent relates the following: “One memorable night, my friends being present with me, he was conversing with us on the blessing of perfect love. He, like a wise master builder, having examined our spiritual attainments, discovered that we were in possession of the essential properties of that happy state, but without the joyful witness thereof. He therefore, no longer held up the thing in prospect before us, but declared us in possession of it, and charged us with the error of asking God for what he had already given” He added, “now it is your business rather to give thanks and rejoice.” — Preface, p. 15.

To one of his correspondents he says: “Since you came to P——, God has opened the eyes of your understanding, and given you to see the dangerous state you were in by sinning against him,” He then continues: “And although you have not that clear witness of the Spirit which it is your privilege to enjoy, yet I should not have a doubt of your salvation, if I were called to follow you to the grave. I believe whatever is lacking in you, God will accomplish. I have seen, the tears of penitence running down your cheeks, and more than once, your very limbs trembling under you. I believe you are a sincere follower of Jesus, so far as you have heavenly light. I was

never as fully convinced in my life, as I am at this moment, that you ought to be as fully persuaded in your mind that Jesus bore your sins in his own body on the tree, as if there were no other sinner in the world.”

He adds: "When you read the following lines, be sure you hold fast what is included in them:

‘Thou hast ray full ransom paid,
And in thy wounds I rest.’ — pp. 273, 274.

4. I will add a few extracts, showing his manner of instructing inquirers.

Being called to the bedside of a sick woman, and “finding that she had been for three years a member of the society, and knew nothing of salvation by the remission of her sins,” he says: “I asked her for what end Jesus Christ came into the world. She replied, To save sinners.’ I then told her that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that he never would be more willing to save her than he was at that moment. I explained to her the plan of salvation, and showed her, that it was To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, that his faith is counted unto him for righteousness.” He then continues: “And now it is a duty which God requires you to believe in Jesus Christ, and in the truth of his promise.” He adds: “While I was thus speaking, she was seized in a strange manner, and it appeared to me, and to those present, that she was dying. But in a moment or two, she lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, and cried out, ‘glory be to God, I am healed, I am healed!’”

The next day the following conversation took place between her and another person: “Well, what has the Lord done for you? Has he pardoned your sins?” “Yes, he has pardoned my sins.” “How long have you been a member of the society?” “Three years.” “And do you not think you might have known it sooner?” “Yes, in six days, had any person showed me the way,” — pp. 73-75.

Visiting a sick man, and after having made some inquiries concerning his health, he says: “But we are come more particularly to inquire how your mind is?” “Very bad, sir,” was the reply. “What is the matter then?” “O, sir, I am such a great sinner.” “A great sinner, are you?” “O, yes sir.” “Well, for what did Jesus Christ die?” “For sinners, sir; but I am —” “Stop, now; an-

swer my questions. You say Jesus Christ died to save sinners. Did he not die to save you?" "Yes sir." "Well now, if he died to save you, should you not praise him?" "Yes sir, but" — "Now stay my friend, just answer my question. You admit that Christ died for you: then, I ask, should you not praise him? Glory be to God, glory be to God. Come, my brother, join with me to praise the Lord."

In this way he drew the man away from his own feelings to Christ. He soon believed and was overpowered with joy. — pp. 306, 307.

His son, the editor of these Memoirs, says of his father — "He would often put the person who was eagerly inquiring after Christ, to read an appropriate passage of Scripture, or verse of a hymn, telling him that he must try to read for himself." He adds: "If at the first reading his heart did not take hold of the truth, he would require him to read over the portion more carefully, again and again. In this way he has helped many a poor mourner over the bar of unbelief."

Again, he says: "At some appropriate turn of expression, he would stop short the sorrowful and heavy-laden reader, look him in the face, and with the feelings of a devoutly melting heart, visible in his eyes, show him what was contained in it, and his right to what his lips had now uttered; and then in the most persuasive and affectionate manner, he would inquire if he did not perceive the meaning and believe the gracious truth contained in the words that had now dropped from his lips."

"Thus," adds his son, "many, ere they were aware, felt themselves gently borne from the fearful precipice of unbelief, and set down amidst the ocean of redeeming love." — Preface, p. 13.

Without endorsing every sentiment set forth in these extracts, I may safely assert that they clearly prove the Old Methodist system of dealing with inquiring souls, identical, in all its main features, with our Lutheran system. And I may add, that their publishing these Memoirs, implies that this same system is, theoretically at least, up to the present time, the system of the Methodist Episcopal Church of this country. We come now —

V. To make a few additional remarks concerning the more prominent mistakes and consequences of this Anti-Lutheran system.

1. It confounds the inward peace and consolations of believers, which follow the knowledge of pardoned sin, and which accompany a life of holiness, with the conditions of pardon and acceptance.

A, when embracing Christ by faith, experienced peace and consolation. The Gospel soon assures him that this is the privilege of every believer. He now very easily, though very erroneously, makes his experience a condition of pardon; or, which is the same thing, inculcates it on the minds of others, and insists on it, that no person is pardoned and accepted until he experiences peace and consolation in his own soul.

2. It mistakes the nature of pardon.

Neighbor A is pressed down under a sense of sin and condemnation. He obtains a glimpse of the doctrine of justification by faith. He trusts in Christ. His load is gone — he has rest and peace. He now concludes that removal of this load from his conscience, this inward relief, this peace and joy, is itself pardon. Pardon is thus regarded as something produced in the soul, by an act of the Holy Spirit.

I cannot better express this error, than by giving the remarks of a presiding elder of the Methodist church.

Speaking in his sermon of awakened souls, he said: "Some persons try to comfort these souls by telling them, 'only believe in Christ, and you shall be saved — all shall be well.'

"But," added he, "I tell you don't listen to such comforters. Dig on, pray on, until the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven into your soul; and when you have it, no one need tell you — you will know it yourself."

He continued: "When I speak to you, you can hear my voice; and just so, when the Holy Spirit speaks to your spirit, your spirit can hear his voice. Just dig on, pray on, until the Holy Spirit comes down from heaven into your soul; then no one will need to comfort you." And again, he repeated, "Do not listen to such comforters."

But this is not pardon. Pardon is an act of God, which takes place in the court of heaven. It is covering sin; blotting it out; or removing it from God's book. It is a determination or resolution, so to speak, not to punish the sin-

ner; on the contrary, to treat him as though he had not sinned. It is not the removal of the burden from the conscience; it is not peace and joy. These follow the belief of the doctrine of pardon.

Pardon granted to a criminal by a human tribunal, is not? a feeling produced in the soul of that criminal. It is simply a determination not to punish him; it is absolving him from the merited penalty. It is an official act of the court. Just such is our forgiveness.

This pardon, then, takes place whenever we comply with God's conditions of pardon. Our business is, therefore, to comply with these conditions, and then trust in God's promises, and never think about our feelings.

3. It mistakes the object of faith.

It assumes that the thing to be believed is, that we feel in our souls that God has pardoned us. Whenever Rev. W has concluded that pardon takes place in the soul, then he cannot avoid another conclusion, viz., that he must have pardon previous to believing. Therefore again, to carry out this system, he must hold that the thing to be believed is, that you feel in your own soul that you are pardoned.

Without wasting time to refute this error, I remark —

4. That this system leads into the folly of pleading with God for what he has already given.

You have renounced your sins; you have resolved to obey God; you have committed yourself to Christ as the Savior of sinners. You are pardoned and accepted. But you labor under the error that you have no pardon until you feel it in your soul. This you doubt. You continue to plead with God for pardon — for what is yours already by solemn promise.

Such persons ought not to be urged to “pray on until the blessing comes,” etc. Or, as a certain representative of this system, residing in my charge, said to an awakened soul: — “Hold on, hold on; Jesus is coming, he's coming, he's coming.” What such persons need is instruction. Finally,

5. This system often drives persons away from Christ, and not unfrequently leads to infidelity.

We all preach the freeness of the salvation of God — God’s perfect willingness, his deep anxiety to save sinners, to save all sinners. We declare that God’s compassion is the compassion of a father — yea, much more tender than that of an earthly parent. That Christ stands waiting to be gracious — - that “whosoever cometh unto him shall in no wise be cast out,” etc.

How here is a true penitent. He renounces his sins, he submits to God, he is willing to commit himself to Christ for salvation. But you tell him, “plead on;” “never give up the struggle until you get the blessing;” and you pray, “Lord, speak peace to his soul,” etc. He does “pray on,” day after day, and night after night, for weeks and months; but the blessing does not come. Finally, he concludes that pardon is, after all, so difficult to obtain, that it is useless for him to try any longer; or probably that he is a non-elect. He is kept or driven away from Christ. Or again, he concludes, that what we preach about God’s willingness to save is, after all, untrue. Thus, from a true penitent, he falls into infidelity. It is the legitimate fruit of this system; this soul deceiving, soul-destroying system. Lord save us from such delusion!

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