

There the three crosses stood. Christ was in the center with a malefactor on each side. Those on the outside crosses had probably heard of him who was between them, but had probably not been so close to him before. Whatever they did not know about him, there was one thing they did know; and that was the charge on which he was condemned. He had claimed to be God and Savior. Perhaps they could see the inscription over his head, written in letters of Hebrew, of Latin and of Greek. If they turned their heads a bit toward him they could read above him, THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH? THE KING OF THE JEWS.

And the thief on the left hand cross, considering the inscription and the cross out of harmony together, taunted him who hung there. With a sneer he spits, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. If thou be the Christ, we don't for a moment believe you are, but if so, save thyself and us. That scoundrel on the left hand cross, wanted to be saved, but from what did he want to be saved. He didn't seem anxious to be saved from sin. He wasn't worrying about crime. No, he wanted to be saved from the consequences of sin and from the penalty of crime. There was no repentance in his plea. He wanted immediate release from his sufferings and felt offended that Christ didn't save him, in spite of the fact he didn't believe Christ could save.

From the right hand cross came a mild reproach, a calm answer, rebuking him, saying, Dost thou not fear God? seeing thou art in the same condemnation. Don't you know that we must stand before God to answer for our sins. You have no right to taunt him, you are in no position to mock him, you are in the same predicament yourself, and so am I. However, we are justly here, we are guilty and merit this death, we have been condemned lawfully, we receive the due reward of our deed; but this man hath done nothing amiss. He is innocent and you know it. This is a frame up on him. He is not guilty. Do not torment him, but let him be.

Why did the thief on the right hand cross take Christ's part? He championed Jesus when no one else dared to. Christ's enemies were triumphant around him, exulting in his torture, Christ's disciples had fled, and the few women at the foot of the cross were scared speechless. Only the dying thief dared to Christ's favor. And it must have taken courage on his part to do so, if we are to believe tradition. For we are told that as soon as the Jews heard him defending Christ against reproaches, against further agony, as soon as they saw him befriending him, so soon did they rush at him with one howl and maltreat him terribly.

Insert
Note the charge +
implicit claim to
mess + deity.
Eh I charge was true
or Xd insane.

We are surely to be
and v. pains of
hell, - saved to
+ for righteousness.

LK 23:49 = all
his acquaintance +
women ... stood
for of himself
P.
John Mary other
sister + Magdalen
stood at foot of
I cross for a while.
2 Jo. 19:25 + some
pe were for of
for a time of
Mk 16:40 + Mt 27:55

Thyself + S. K
and die.

maltreat him terribly. With physical outrages they tortured him. With insult and ignominy they covered him. How dared the thief to speak in Christ's favor? Why did he do it? We are not authorized to suppose that the thief had listened to Jesus preach. We cannot imagine that he was a secret disciple. No, he was a desperate criminal. But he had heard Christ say one thing. As the three of them were being lifted up on their crosses, Christ said, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. This the thief had heard, and indeed it was a revelation to him. So, rebuking the other thief for abusing Christ, he said, ^{Lord} ~~Jesus~~, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. He did not ask to be saved from the cross, he only wanted to be remembered in that kingdom of which he knew so little. But he knew the King!

An evangelist preached many time in the slums, only to be jeered at and despitefully used. At last he was instrumental in leading to Jesus, the leader of the gang of lawbreakers. This gangster confessed Christ, and began his Christian life. His old cronies mocked him, and made all sorts of fun of him. They ridiculed his ignorance. Where is Jesus they said. And he had to answer, I don't know. Where was he born? And again he had to say, I don't know. Who was his father. I don't know. When did he live? And the poor man could only repeat I don't know. Well, what do you know, they sneered? I know he saved me! He didn't know much about the kingdom, but he knew the King.

^{Lord} ~~Jesus~~, remember me. The dying thief knew little. But he did know he needed to be remembered. And that is more than some people know today. He knew too, that Christ could remember him and that if Christ did remember him that would be sufficient. He knew also, and he knew it full well that he was guilty and that Jesus was innocent. There the two hung on their crosses beside each other, one the Most High God, the other, the most miserable of men; miserable assuredly, but blessed in this, that he recognized who hung beside him. Many people stood scornfully before that scene. Some of them had seen Christ raise the dead and had not believed, the thief saw him put to death, and recognized the ~~Version~~ ^{acknowledged} ~~the~~ ^{Lord & King}.

This was an immediate revolution in that malefactors character. It was a sudden change wrought by God. It was God working instantaneously. There was ~~no process of~~ ^{not much} education, no gradual leading- to his conversion. It wasn't education at all, it was Salvation. ~~It may be that children of godly parents can be educated into Christianity.~~ They become Christians as they grow, gradually, and when grown, they cannot put their finger on a calendar and say, on such a day I became a Christian. I was attending a meeting of a Sabbath-School Supts Asso and the lecture was on evangelism. We were asked how many of us could give the date of our conversion. Of several hundred men in the

I King is a standard illustration for a. ① death bed repentance. Perhaps often in vain - but possible. ② Saved without much loss. Still he was not totally ign. for you could pick up he knew several ps. But enough into G. to believe it is a reminder

✓ Confession

G. would instrumentally in children. The parents are change in not observable outwardly by us nor inwardly by child, or at least be forgot.

God works in families - show mercy to thousands of generations - rich iniquities do 3 or 4 of them. I converted in Mr. included children.

room, only two or three raised their hands, and when questioned, admitted that they had been converted after the age of twenty. So a child may gradually grow into being a Christian. But if a man grows up an unbeliever, unsaved, and is then converted, he will know that at a certain time he made a definite decision for Christ. It may be vague or it may be vivid. But surely ~~there must be some idea~~ ^{he can say} ~~of the great transaction done~~. It is a point in time. He had been walking to hell, his back was to God, and he turned. He turned his back to hell and the devil and faced the Lord Jehovah. That turning in conversion. All thru the life of the thief on the cross, he had not known God. Now in the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute, he turns and says, Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

So even the child can know & know how.

It is decisive against purgatory.
The answer that was returned to him was ~~all that~~ ^{all that} he expected, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. That morning the malefactor was one of the three worst criminals in the land. Barrabas, the worst, escaped his punishment thru the Jews' hatred of Christ. And these two thieves were the next worse to Barrabas, the worst criminals that could be found to be put aside of Jesus and disgrace him. That morning he was a condemned criminal in a Roman court; that evening he was a redeemed saint before the throne of God.

It paid him well to be crucified that day. Had he escaped his punishment as did Barrabas, or had he been put in prison or flogged, had they done anything with him but crucify him, he would have been a lost man. Since, however he was crucified, he was a saved soul. He was ^{in a sense} the first ~~real~~ Christian, and the only one who took Christ's part that day. Dying he lived. Perishing he was saved. And what God has done, God can do again.

But, remember only one thief was saved. The other was lost. The one man took the opportunity that was offered. It was his only opportunity. He never had one before, and certainly he would never have one again. It was his only chance. And he made the most of it. It was the other man's only chance too, but he passed it by, and was lost. You too can be saved; you too can be lost. ~~And this may be the decisive moment.~~ ^{and this may be the} Today is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time. ~~Will you echo the thief's prayer:~~ ^{Will you echo the thief's prayer:} Jesus, remember me.

* 'Tis done, the great transaction's done
I am my Lord's & he is mine. "
- "O Happy Day"

The purpose of the church is certainly to save sinners as much as to instruct saints. It is a witness in a world of sin. If the church of Christ does not tell the story of redemption, it will not be told. Christ didn't send angels to preach the gospel, but sinners who had been converted.

At the Volunteer hall, not a week goes by without some person coming to the altar, and accepting Christ as a Saviour. Every week there is at least one convert.

Bethel Church, I am afraid, can point to no such record. Is this church derelict in its duty? We must proclaim the gospel and try to save sinners. Therefore I give the call. Who will accept Christ? Who will do as the dying thief? Who will accept salvation under the blood of Jesus?

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners-plunge beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And so may we, tho vile as he,
Wash all our sins away.

Volunteers 9th Vine	Aug. 8.	1924.
Bethel	Sept 7	1924
Wildewood	Oct 4	1924
Tabernacle. Whiston	Aug. 13	1939
Whiston College Radio	Nov. 5	1939
Willow Grove	May 20	1945
Free Teaching my Indians.	July 27	1945