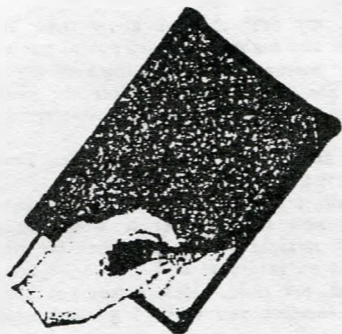


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STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN



Abridged by OSWALD J. SMITH, Litt.D.

STRAIGHT TO HEAVEN

"Mother," said a dying girl, "it is hard to die and leave this life."

"Yes, my dear, but you have confessed and received absolution, so you need not fear."

"'Tis true," said the dying girl, "I confessed all the sins I could think of, and the priest gave me absolution. But with all that, I shall soon be in purgatory, and you know, dear mother, that you are so very, very poor that you cannot have masses said for my soul."

"Yes, my dear child, I know that, but I'll work day and night to get you out of purgatory."

"Dear mother, I so often think of my cousin Mary. She was so happy before she died, and she never confessed to a priest nor received absolution."

"My child, don't think about her. Leave all to the priest. Try and rest now."

"I will try, dear mother, but I can't help thinking how much better it would be if we could go straight to Heaven when we die, and not go to purgatory at all."

"Hush, my child. Here comes your brother; he will comfort you while I go and finish my work."

"Dear Sister," said her brother, as he sat down beside her bed, "what were mother and you saying about Cousin Mary?"

"I was saying how glad I would be if I were as happy as she was. She had no fear of death."

"She had no reason to fear for she knew God's Word. Dear sister, I, too, have read the Bible and I have found it so full of love for poor sinners that it has become more precious to me than all the world."

"Oh, my brother, tell me, quick, is there anything in the Bible about purgatory?"

"I have searched from beginning to end of the Book, and have not found one single word about purgatory. I assure you, dear sister, there is but one thing that will make you as happy as Mary."

"What is it, my brother? I would give all the world to be sure that my sins are forgiven."

He drew from his pocket a Roman Catholic Bible and read John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." And then he read I Tim. 2:5—"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus."

"Those are beautiful words," said the dying girl, "but how can I know they are for me?"

"My dear," replied her brother, "Jesus said, 'Come unto me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.' (Matt. 11:28.) He forgave even the dying thief on the cross with the words 'Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise' (Luke 23:43); not 'in purgatory'.

"Could you think for one moment, dear sister," he continued, "that Jesus would have suffered half the chastisement and leave us to suffer

the other half? When you leave this life you will go straight to Him, for to be 'absent from the body' is to be—where? In purgatory? No—'at home with the Lord.'" (2 Cor. 5: 8.)

The young man ceased to speak. His words had entered his sister's soul. The look of anxiety and despair had gone, and a holy joy now lighted up her countenance. The Son of God had set her free, and she was free indeed.

"Now," she said, "I know why Mary was so happy: she had good cause to be. So have I. Jesus has paid the debt, and *I am saved.*"

A few more days were spent in the suffering body, and then leaving behind a fresh testimony to the power of the Word of God, she passed peacefully into the presence of her Saviour and Lord.

My friend, you, too, can have the same assurance and you can have it now. Look to Jesus. Receive Him as your own personal Saviour (John 1: 12). Pray, "O God, be merciful to me the sinner," and the Lord Jesus will answer: "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt. 9: 2). "Thy faith has saved thee; go in peace" (Luke 7: 50). Then when you die, you too, will go straight to Heaven. Will you do it? Do it and do it—NOW!

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