

## WHO IS TO BLAME?

LET us suppose a vessel foundering at sea. We know the vessel to be exceedingly rotten, and so leaky that it is filling fast—that it must shortly go down. On shore the utmost effort is made. The life-boat, with capacity to hold every person on the sinking ship, is launched. The mariners pull alongside the rotten, sinking vessel. The captain of the life-boat begs every person on board immediately to let go the old rotten ship and trust himself in his hands in the life-boat, with the certainty of being brought safe to shore. The people on board resolutely refuse the invitation. One says, "The old vessel is not so bad; she only requires painting," &c. Another says, "Away with both you and your life-boat! we have a carpenter of our own, whose business it is to mend the old ship. Who do you think is going to leave this fine old ship and trust to that poor-looking boat?" The vessel fills and sinks. And now tell me, if every fool-hardy despiser on board goes down, *who is to blame?* Plainly themselves. *The life-boat was sent to them and they refused.*

Man is that rotten ship—fallen, ruined by sin, filling fuller and fuller of sins, until he sinks into perdition. Christ Jesus is the life-boat. God so loved this poor, ruined, sinking world that He sent the life-boat, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Did the world believe God? Oh no, they rejected even such love, so great salvation. They murdered the Son of God. The death of Jesus was the offering of Himself, the atoning sacrifice for sin, God raised Him from the dead; and the RISEN CHRIST becomes the *life-boat* of every soul that trusts in Him.

But, my reader, may I ask you a home question. Where are you—in the life-boat or in the old ship? Are you in Christ or trusting to the self-righteousness of old human nature? *Are you one of the redeemed?*

Can you say that you "have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins?" (Col. i. 14.) Or are you still in and of that world, which is guilty of rejecting and murdering the Son of God?

Perhaps you do not care for these things. Are you filling up the measure of your iniquity? You know when the old ship gets full it sinks, and when your last sin on earth shall be filled up and you sink into endless perdition, you will remember *who is to blame*.

But are you trusting to outward forms and ceremonies of religion? Now what good will this outside paint do? The ship is sinking, and if you stay on it, you will go down with the very paint-brush in your hand. Oh my friend! all the baptisms, and sacraments, and ordinances that man can perform will never keep one ruined sinner from sinking into hell! Woe be to your poor soul if you trust in them.

Do you say there are so many opinions—how am I to tell who is right? Whoever points you to Christ, the life-boat, is right; and whoever keeps you in the old ship, is wrong. Do you not see that?

Are you trying—no matter how—to *mend the old ship*; that is, your fallen human nature, called in scripture "the flesh?" Then you may be quite certain, sooner or later, if you continue in that condition *you will*, as the old ship, *go down*. Think where! Oh the bottomless pit—and *who is to blame*?

Oh! give up the vain attempt to mend the old ship. Own yourself a lost, undone, ruined sinner—believe the grace of God in sending you Christ the life-boat—trust Him with all your heart—confess Him with your lips and life. You cannot be in both. If you are in the old ship, no matter how self-righteous, you are sinking fast: there is not a moment to be lost. It is indeed great presumption for any one in the old ship to say, he knows he is safe. But if you are in Christ, the life-boat, you cannot be too sure. He never did and never will lose one.

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