

**GOSPEL  
QUESTIONS  
AND ANSWERS**

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Gospel questions and answers by James Denney

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**JAMES DENNEY**

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*TENTH THOUSAND*

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## THE QUESTION OF MIS- GIVING

\* What lack I yet?—MATT. xix. 20.

MOST people would have envied the man who put this question to Jesus. He seemed to have everything that heart could wish. He had youth, which means hope and inspiration and an unknown inheritance in the future. He had social position, which usually tends to satisfaction with one's self. He had wealth, which attaches the soul so powerfully because it is on the borderland, as it were, of the material and the spiritual—not bad, if not good, but a permanent possibility of doing



and of enjoying most things that men wish to enjoy or to do. He had character, too, which was better than all: he could hear the commandments recited by Jesus with no qualms of conscience. Neither rank nor wealth nor youthful passions had hurried him into any of those excesses which can never be forgotten, and which make memory a curse. But in spite of this extraordinary happiness, in spite even of his good conscience, his soul was not at rest. He felt that something was wanting; he could not say he had eternal life, and it was a divine prompting that brought him to Jesus with the question, 'What lack I yet?'

No situation is commoner in the Church than that of this man.

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There are hundreds and thousands who have been brought up in Christian homes, and recognise more or less their own likeness in him. They, too, have kept the commandments all their life. There is no great stain upon their conscience that makes them hopelessly miserable. If they have not rank or wealth, at all events they know that it is not rank or wealth that would make any difference to them. They have been, as a rule, pure, truthful, kind, respectful to their parents, considerate of the rights of others, reverent to the law of God ; but they are not satisfied. They know that at the very heart they are not right. They have religion, of a kind, but it is not the religion of the New Testament. They do

not take it with rapture. The characteristic note of New Testament religion—its assurance, its confidence, its joy in a life which leaves nothing to be desired—is the very one which their voice does not command. They are perpetually asking, ‘What lack I yet?’

Jesus answers the question with the utmost plainness. But the answer was in more than words. ‘Fastening His eyes on him, He loved him.’ He appreciated all the good there was in the man, and still more his wistful inquiry after a more perfect good. Christ and a young man, as Samuel Rutherford said, is a meeting not to be seen in every town, but it is a grateful meeting to the Lord. No one can be surer of Christ’s