

THE VICTORY WON.

FEW Christians, brought up with a knowledge of the Word of God, can understand what is the struggle in the heart of a sincere Roman Catholic, when he is brought face to face with the truth, that his doings are nothing, and salvation must be a free gift. So much that he has depended upon must be given up. The very foundation of his faith is shaken. With a trembling hand he takes the Word of God, so long forbidden; he searches into its wonderful treasures, at first with a feeling that he is enjoying "stolen waters," and then with the consciousness that it is God's Word, which men dare not forbid him to read. Yet the old fear clings to him, and the struggle is renewed again and again.

One cold evening, an assembly of poor people gathered in a mission building in Dublin, to hear a lady tell of a scheme for providing for poor children in Canada.

After the meeting was over, a poor man, who had evidently seen better days, remained, amongst others, to speak about his little boys. His flushed cheek and hacking cough told of fatal illness, and our sympathies were enlisted for him, almost more than for the sorrowful little boys of six and eight years who were with him.

Seeing this poor man's dangerous condition, we told him to come up to our own house on the following morning, for further conversation.

When asked what he intended to do if his boys were taken, he said his wife meant to go to service; that he himself would go to the poorhouse, where, he said, "I shall have time to make my soul." "I shall make a good confession," he added, "and have penances put upon me, and I will do them."

"And what then?" we asked.

"Then I shall go to purgatory; and, God help me, I have no money to pay for masses." As he said this, tears poured down his cheeks; he seemed in real trouble.

A Douay Testament lay on the table, and opening it, the lady who was talking to him said, "This is a copy of the Word of God, and there is not one word in it about penance, or masses, or purgatory; but it tells us that 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from ALL sin.' That eternal life is the gift of God."

For more than two hours she talked with him, reasoning out of the Scriptures. At length he laid his hand on the Book, saying, "Yes, it's a beautiful religion; it is a pity it is not true."

"It is true, all of it," she said; "it is the Word of God."

"Pardon me, ma'am. I've lived all my life amongst Protestants, and what you would call Christian Protestants; but no one ever said to me, 'You're wrong.' If I believed what you have said, I would not rest until I had told every friend I have such glorious news."

"Well," she said, "take this Book and read it. In a few days I will come and see you. I will pray for you." She gave him a little money for the supply of present necessities, and he left her.

A few days afterwards she went to see him; he was lying on a straw bed on the floor, a cup of water beside him. The Testament was in his hand; he was so intently reading, that he hardly noticed her coming in. He had been searching the Scriptures as for hid treasure, and had several verses marked which he wanted explained. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth." Did that mean Jesus? If so, none was delegated to the blessed Virgin. "Whosoever sins ye remit." What power was that? Was it not the forgiveness of sins by the apostles? When the verse in Acts iv. 12 was pointed out to him, he saw immediately that the apostles did not understand



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it so, for they plainly declared that by Christ alone could forgiveness come. "And there is none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved." "I see," he said, "it is by comparing different parts of Scripture together, and with the teaching of the Spirit, we understand it."

"I can't help wondering," he said, some time afterwards, "at the patience God has had with me these thirty-three years, especially the last ten. He has followed me, and I know now He was often calling to me; still, I trusted in anything but in Him. I wish I could know my sins were forgiven. I feel quite sure that Jesus died for sinners, and I believe in Him. I see He says Himself, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life.' I know then that I am saved; but I have not yet got right hold of it. Won't you kneel down and pray for me now?"