

The Berean.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

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GOOD FRIDAY

O my soul, thy voice upraising,
Sing aloud in mournful strain,
Of the sorrows most amazing,
And the agonizing pain
Which our Saviour
Sinless bore, for sinners slain.

To, the ruthless scourge enduring,
Ransom for our sins to pay,
Sinners by his own stripes curing,
Raising those who wounded lay,
Bore our sorrows,
And removed our pains away.

He to liberty restored us
By the very bonds he bore,
And his nail-pierced limbs afford us
Each a stream of mercy rare ;
Us they fasten
To the cross, and keep us there.

When his painful life was ended,
Then the spear transfixed his side,
Blood and water thence descended,
Pouring forth a double tide
That to cleanse us,
Thy blood, O Jesus, is applied.

Jesu ! may thy promised blessing
Comfort to our souls afford ;
May we now thy love possessing,
And at length our full reward,
Ever praise Thee,
As our ever-glorious Lord.

REV. J. CHANDLER.

CHRIST'S PASSION, MEDICINE TO OUR WOUNDS.

Now it remaineth that I show unto you, how to apply Christ's death and passion to our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds ; so that it may work the same effect in us whereof it was given, namely, the health and salvation of our souls. For as it profiteth a man nothing to have salve, unless it be well applied to the part affected ; so the death of Christ shall stand us in no force, unless we apply it to ourselves in such sort as God hath appointed.

Almighty God commonly worketh by means ; and in this thing he hath also ordained a certain mean, whereby we may take fruit and profit to our souls' health. What mean is this? Forsooth it is faith. Not an unconstant or wavering faith ; but a sure, steadfast, grounded, and unfeigned faith. God sent his Son into the world, saith St. John. To what end? That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have life everlasting. (John iii.) Mark these words, that whosoever believeth in him, there is the mean, whereby we must apply the fruits of Christ's death unto our deadly wound. Here is the mean, whereby we must obtain eternal life ; namely, faith. For, as St. Paul teacheth in his Epistle to the Romans, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Paul, being demanded of the keeper of the prison, what he should do to be saved, made this answer : Believe in the Lord Jesus, so shall thou and thine house both be saved. (Acts xvi.) After the Evangelist had described, and set forth unto us at large, the life and the death of the Lord Jesus, in the end he concludeth with these words : These things are written that we may believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and through faith obtain eternal life. (John xx.) To conclude with the words of St. Paul, which are these : Christ is the end of the law unto salvation, for every one that doth believe. (Rom. x.)

By this then you may well perceive, that the only mean and instrument of salvation required of our parts, is faith ; that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God : whereby we persuade ourselves, that God both hath, and will forgive our sins ; that he hath accepted us again into his favour ; that he hath released us again from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of his elect people, not for our merits or deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion ; who became man for our sakes, and humbled himself to sustain the reproach of the cross, that we thereby might be saved, and made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This faith is required at our hands. And this if we keep steadfastly in our hearts, there is no doubt but we shall obtain salvation at God's hands, as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob : of whom the Scripture saith, that they believed, and it was imputed unto them for righteousness. (Gen. xv.) Was it imputed to them only? and shall it not be imputed unto us also? (Rom. iv.) Yes, if we have the same faith as they had, it shall be as truly imputed unto us, for righteousness, as it was unto them. For it is one faith that must save both us, and them, even a sure and steadfast faith in Christ Jesus ; who, as ye have heard, came into the world for this end, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have life everlasting.

But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God through an unconstant and wavering faith ; but that it be strong and steadfast to our lives' end. He that wavereth, saith St. James, is like a wave of the sea ; neither let that man think that he shall obtain any thing at God's hands. (James i.) Peter coming to Christ upon the water, because he fainted in faith, was in danger of drowning. (Matt. xiv.) So we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared lest we shall sink as Peter did ; not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell-fire. Therefore I say unto you, that we must apprehend the merits of Christ's death and passion by a strong and steadfast faith, and that which is a strong and steadfast faith, nothing doubting, but that Christ, by his one oblation and offering of himself upon the cross, hath taken away our sins, and hath restored us again into God's favour,

so fully and perfectly, that no other sacrifice for sin shall hereafter be requisite or needful in all the world.

Thus have you heard in few words the mean whereby we must apply the fruits and merits of Christ's death unto us, so that it may work the salvation of our souls ; namely, a sure, steadfast, perfect, and grounded faith. For, as all they which beheld steadfastly the brazen serpent were healed and delivered at the very sight thereof, from their corporal diseases and bodily stings ; even so, all they, which behold Christ crucified with a true and lively faith, shall undoubtedly be delivered from the grievous wounds of the soul, be they never so deadly, or many in number.

Therefore, dearly beloved, if we chance at any time, through frailty of the flesh, to fall into sin—as it cannot be chosen but we must needs fall often—and if we feel the heavy burden thereof to press our souls, tormenting us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation ; let us then use that mean which God hath appointed in his word, to wit, the mean of faith, which is the only instrument of salvation now left unto us. Let us steadfastly behold Christ crucified with the eyes of our heart. Let us only trust to be saved by his death and passion, and to have our sins clean washed away through his most precious blood ; that in the end of the world, when he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, he may receive us unto his heavenly kingdom, and place us in the number of his elect and chosen people ; there to be partakers of that immortal and everlasting life, which he hath purchased unto us by virtue of his bloody wounds : To him, therefore, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, he all honour and glory, world without end.—Amen.—Book of Homilies.

THEY PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET. Ps. xxv. 16.

Of all sanguinary punishments, that of crucifixion is one of the most dreadful. No vital part is immediately affected by it. The hands and feet, which are furnished with the most numerous and sensitive organs, are perforated with nails, which must necessarily be of some size to suit their intended purpose. The tearing asunder of the tender fibres of the hands and feet, the lacerating of so many nerves, and bursting of so many blood-vessels, must be productive of intense agony. The nerves of the hand and foot are intimately connected, through the arm and leg, with the nerves of the whole body ; their laceration therefore must be felt over the entire frame. Witness the melancholy result of even a needle's puncture, in any of the remotest nerves! A spasm is not unfrequently produced by it in the muscles of the face, which locks the jaws inseparably. When, then, the hands and feet of our blessed Lord were transfixed with nails, he must have felt the sharpest pangs shoot through every part of his body. Supported only by his lacerated limbs, and suspended from his pierced hands, our Lord had nearly six hours' torment to endure.

Our Jesus is thus THE PIERCED ONE. He was pierced in his head by the thorns : he was pierced in his back by the scourge ; he was pierced in his hands and feet by the nails ; and he was pierced in his side by the spear. This forms one proof that he is the true Messiah. O Jew, reach hither thy finger, and behold his hands ; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into his side, and be not faithless but believing! The promise is sure that this shall one day be the case ; and may the Lord speedily fulfil his word : " I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplications ; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son : and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Zech. xii. 10. Our New Testament testifies the same truth with the Old Testament, which the disciples of Moses venerate. They were written by the same Spirit of inspiration. The light which guided the pen of Zechariah, directed that of John ; and because the period of accomplishment is so much nearer, the latter proclaims, " Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, even so, amen." Rev. i. 7. O that multitudes of Jews and Gentiles may be prepared for that day ! May the Spirit of life come into the dry bones, and may an exceeding great army be raised up, who, as faithful soldiers of the cross, will not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but will fight manfully under his banner against sin and the world, against Satan and the flesh.

Look hither, also, O Christian ! The bleeding Saviour is raised up, and whosoever looketh unto him may be healed. As the Israelites of old were saved from instant and painful dissolution, by turning their weeping eyes to the brazen serpent ; so now by the eye of faith, when thou lookest to Jesus exalted on the cross, thou shalt be delivered from spiritual and eternal death. " Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." As it is a spiritual or moral looking, so is it a spiritual or moral salvation. We behold in Christ's body the effects of sin, and we learn to hate it, as the cause of evil to our best friends. We see the nails driven through his quivering flesh, and we would fain pluck them out again, and cast them away. But we learn that our sins were the sharpest piercings which our Saviour felt, and we hasten to remove them. As we would turn, with dismay and abhorrence, from the sharp spear, and bloody nails, that pierced the Saviour's body, so should we from our own sins and transgressions. This is the healing of the soul by the wounds of Jesus, when the piercing of his body affects our hearts with hatred against sin. It is

for this reason that he is named Jesus, for he saves his people from their sins, Matt. i. 21. The salvation of heaven is not only secured to them at last, but the salvation of holiness is imparted to them at present. They are saved from the love of sin, saved from the practice of sin, and saved from the dominion of sin. The sight of a crucified and pierced Saviour, accomplishes this great work in their hearts. When the Spirit of Light opens their naturally darkened understanding to apprehend what Christ the Lord has suffered on their behalf ; when they thus " look on him whom they have pierced ;" they learn to mourn that their best friend should so severely suffer, and that their sins should be the cause. A full and generous grief takes possession of their breasts. They feel as if they had a right to weep over One, whom they have slain, and yet who loved them. Like Mary, his mother, a sword now pierces through their own soul also, Luke ii. 35, when they think of their torn and pierced Saviour. Every one mourns apart. In the secret of the closet, when no eye sees them, they bitterly mourn over the sins by which they have pierced their Lord. And in proportion as the Spirit of grace and supplication is received, so is the depth of their sorrow, and the bitterness of their lamentation. In this world alone do they weep. The days of their mourning terminate when they behold the Saviour in his glory. Therefore they will not restrain their tears, since God himself is twice their away for ever. And though they would gladly rather depart and be with Christ, which is far better ; yet do they feel to be a sacred, unutterable blessedness, to be in thought at his bleeding feet, and to water them, as it were, with genuine, grateful tears, from their pierced and broken hearts.—From *Christ on the Cross*, by the Rev. John Stevenson.

THE GOSPEL EXCHANGE.

We are thus taught to read the thoughts of God in his works. Every owl of the air, every lily of the field, is a witness for the Creator, to confound the distrustful heart of man. The very hair on our head, and the measure of our stature, are made to proclaim not only the utility of our anxiety, but also the minuteness and exactness of the care of God. Those witnesses, too, are daily testifying ; these proofs are hourly at hand ; nay, they are part of ourselves. Our perishing flesh lies the lie to our doubts and fears. If all inanimate nature could speak, it would say, " Trust the all-wise Ruler." "But," rejoins the desponding Christian, "he immaculate Redeemer may well make such an appeal. He may argue from his birth, from his life, from every thing he pleases, and gain success in all. But my birth ushered me into the pollution of my nature. My life is forfeited. My body is corrupt through sin. How, then, can I build any argument upon them?" The very birds, and flowers, the animate and inanimate creation, are better in his respect than I am. They are free from that sin by which I am overwhelmed." Thy words are true, O despondent ; but thy reasoning proceeds on premises that are false. In thus speaking, thou forgettest two things ; first, that Christ has taken thy place, and speaks in thy name ; and, secondly, that thou must put thyself on the merits of Christ's righteousness, and present every plea and prayer in his name! This is the Gospel exchange, of which, in the time of temptation, too many lose sight. To this, however, all must come for peace and strength ; whether sooner or later, there is the same necessity. To trust in Christ's suretyship, and build all our arguments on his righteousness, is the only source of relief and comfort to the burdened heart. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you." If the wearied soul come instantly it finds rest. If it labour on for many years, and imagine itself not yet weary enough, or heavy laden enough, to come to the Saviour, or to be accepted of him, it must come to him at last ; for no where else can it find rest. How much better, then, to come at once and as the sinner is, than to carry so long the heavy burden on his own shoulders! This is "voluntary humility," which is displeasing to God. How much more like an obedient child, to comply the instant we are enjoined, than to delay long before we submit! Under the appearance of being too afraid of self, it exhibits a degree of ignorance and of self-will, which is most dangerous and sinful. We must learn to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child. As an infant receives that once doubtful inheritance which his surety has secured for it, and lives and grows up in the enjoyment of all its privileges, without doubting or rejecting the guardian's deed, so must we. Without asking our adviser's consent, a Trustee was appointed by our heavenly Father to manage our concerns. He occupied his whole time, and spent his very life, to set them right. He conducted them to a successful issue, and calls on us to enter into the enjoyment of them. Receive the kingdom of God, then, at the hand of your spiritual Surety, as a child receives an earthly estate at the hands of a temporal trustee. Do not cancel his act. Do not frustrate his work. Grieve not his Spirit. True it is, you are a sinner, but your Surety's blood has removed all guilt from between you and your heavenly Father. True it is, you have no right to any thing in yourself, but Christ has made over his right to you. True it is, you can lay no claim to any thing, but Christ has preferred one on your behalf. Your life was forfeited, but Christ has paid the penalty ; and your present existence, is a loan for which you are indebted to the death of Christ. Your body is indeed corrupted, but there is a time coming, when, if you believe in him, Christ will

"change your vile body and make it like unto his own glorious body!" Pray, then, to the Spirit of Light, to enable you to perceive the meaning, and to feel the power, of this Gospel exchange. It is one, remember, which has been already made on Christ's part. He never consulted you before he took your nature, and died in your stead. But on your part, also, this exchange must be made as well as on that of Christ. As he took your nature voluntarily, so must you accept his suretyship. You must renounce all your own grounds of confidence, and place your whole trust on the merits of what he has done and suffered.

"But," the despondent may add, "I cannot, like Christ, say, ' My God.' He had a right to use this language. I have none?" We answer, True, you have no right in yourself, and what is more, you never can have. A sinful creature can have no personal right to address God, by this endearing and connecting name. And if we may not trust in God till we possess this right, then we are utterly undone! The only characters by which a sinner may claim connexion with the Most High, are such as these, Creator and Judge. Yet even in these, every human being possesses a right, and is bound to say, my Creator and my Judge. God stands connected with us in these indissoluble relations. He is prepared also to fulfil every duty towards us which these names imply. In condescension to the weakness of our faith he meets us as a Creator with this encouraging promise, " I have made and I will bear." He is indeed our Creator, but if we do not love and trust him as such, he will be our Judge to condemn us. But, alas, consciousness of sin makes us afraid of God. We know that as our Creator, we have violated his laws ; we feel that as our Judge, we deserve his condemnation ; and therefore the consideration of God, under these relations, naturally tends to drive us farther from him. But, blessed be the Father of all mercies, our bankrupt name is exchanged for that of Christ ; our ruined cause undertaken by a Surety ; our forfeited estate is bought back for us by a heavenly Redeemer. A Trustee is provided to take our name and nature, to pay our debts and penalties ; and to make over all his rights and privileges to us. In Christ we can call the Almighty Creator and Judge, our God and our FATHER. In Christ it is our duty to regard God as *ours*. We sin against Christ when we address the Most High in any other manner. We virtually deny our obligation to obey the commandments, when we do not call *God our God*. The beginning and basis of both tables of the law is this, " I am the Lord thy God." What a blessed necessity is thus laid upon us to regard the Great Creator as our God! What an acceptable revelation is this, which makes us acquainted with one, whom we can call our own!

Personality of interest in any matter, gives it sure influence over our selfish hearts. We are captivated by the generosity of Him, who makes it our first duty to appropriate his blessings. This one act may be called the beginning, continuance, and end, of a Christian's work. " Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30 ; and our whole duty in regard to him as such, is that of *appropriation*. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not ; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." John i, 11, 12.

We must receive Christ ; that is, take him as given ; use him as made over to us ; be wise through his wisdom ; accepted before God in his righteousness ; inwardly pure and holy by his sanctification ; and finally and eternally delivered from all sin and corruption, from Satan, death, and hell, by his redemption. This is the glorious privilege to which we are invited ; this is the first, last, and constant duty, which the Scriptures enjoin. We are all welcome thus to apply Christ's fulness to our own use. The work of appropriation is an everlasting employment. In heaven itself we shall be continually drawing out of the fulness of the freely-gifted Saviour. Let the Christian, then, enter on this duty with alacrity. Let him be as willing as he is welcome, to be always putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ; and to be daily appropriating something more from Him in whom *ALL-FULNESS DWELLS*. This the apostle did continually. He laid hold more and more of the things of Christ, and made them his own. At last he was able to say, " All things are mine." Let every Christian, then, appropriate what Christ freely gives. May the Holy Spirit enable us to do so more and more ; till we are able, even when looking back on the feebleness of infancy, or when feeling our nothingness by nature, and our vileness through sin, to cast ourselves upon the care of an Almighty Creator, and to say, through Christ, " Thou art my Father and my God."

An Absent Friend, at the distance of several weeks' mail conveyance, writes with reference to the above, which is found in Stevenson's *Christ on the Cross* ; " how I should like to see the extract in *The Berean*! When his letter reached us, we had commenced our selections from that excellent work, and we have great pleasure in finding our choice to fall in with that of our Correspondent.—Ed.]

JUSTIFICATION.

The Tridentine System, and the Anglican System.

The one system grounds our justification upon our own intrinsic righteousness, infused into us by God, through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The other system grounds our justification upon the extrinsic righteousness of Christ, appropriated and forensically made our own by faith as by an appointed instrument.

The one teaches : that we are not merely reputed, but actually made, righteous, to an amount sufficient, through this precise

medium, to procure and effect our justification before God. The other teaches : that we are justified only on account of the perfect righteousness of Christ through the medium of faith, which we have imputed to us (as the Apostle speaks) instead of righteousness which we have not.

The one identifies the righteousness of sanctification which is inherent but not perfect, with the righteousness of justification which is perfect but not inherent. The other carefully distinguishes, both in office and in character and in order of succession, the perfect righteousness of justification, which is Christ's, and the imperfect righteousness of sanctification, which is our own.

The one maintains : that the confessedly imperfect but inherent righteousness of sanctification justifies those, who, before the infusion of that heaven-born but in this world sin-intermingled quality, were among the impious or ungodly. The other maintains : that, although the imperfect and inherent righteousness of sanctification is ever present (as the writer of the Homily speaks) with those who are justified, yet it has no hand in procuring and effecting their justification ; inasmuch as the one follows after the other, and therefore, in the very nature of things, cannot be its antecedent cause.—Rev. J. S. Faber, B. D.

JACOB'S LADDER.

We address you, in conclusion, as beings confined, for a while, to a narrow and inconsiderable scene, but whose home is far away, in those regions of light where Deity is specially manifested, and where the angel and archangel have their abode. We point you to the everlasting hills, whose glorious and gold-lit summits come out to the eye of faith from the mighty expanse ; and we tell you that those hills must be climbed. We point you to a city which hath foundations, the Jerusalem which is above ; we show you its stupendous walls stretching interminably upward, and we tell you that these walls must be scaled. And you are staggered at the greatness of the demand. How can we ascend hills which are not based on this earth ; how surmount walls of which no eye can take the altitude? We lead you with us to Bethel, and bid you behold that on which the Patriarch gazed. " There is a ladder, set up on the ground, but its top reaches to the summit of the mountain, and to the gate of the city. Are you willing to go up, to leave the prison, and to seek the palace? Then in the name of the living God, we bid you plant the foot on the first step of this ladder : forsake evil courses, break away from evil habits, and take part with the disciples of Christ. Christ casteth out none who come unto Him ; and he who strives to turn from his iniquities at the call of his Saviour, is beginning to lay hold on that propitiation, through the grasping of which in its several parts he will be gradually raised to the blessedness of immortality. Are you afraid of trusting yourselves to this ladder? Thousands, in every age, have gone up by it to glory ; and not a solitary individual has found it give way beneath him, however immense the burden of his sins. And why afraid? The ladder is He, who is able to save to the uttermost ; all who would go unto God through Him ; and the angels are ascending and descending upon it, for they have charge over the righteous to keep them in all their ways ; and the Almighty himself looks down on those who are climbing painfully upwards, that He may send them succour, when the hand is relaxing, and the foot failing. I can answer for it, that every one of you may, if he will, mount by this ladder ; seeing that Christ took human nature, and thus united earth and heaven, as the substitute of all. I can answer for it, that none, who strive to mount by this ladder, shall fall of everlasting life ; for those who believe on Christ can never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand. The canopy of the sky seems lined with the cloud of witnesses. Those who have gone before are bidding us climb, through the one Mediator, to their lofty abode. We come, we come. Your call shall be obeyed. Your voices animate us, as they steal down in solemn and beautiful cadence. And, God helping, there shall not be one of us, who does not seek salvation through the blood and righteousness of Jesus ; not one who shall not share with you the throne and the diadem."—Rev. Henry Melvill, B. D.

CANTON DE VAUD.

FRATERNAL ADDRESS TO THE PASTORS OF THE CANTON DE VAUD, SWITZERLAND.

Beloved Brethren and Fellow labourers in the Lord.—We, the undersigned Ministers of the United Church of England and Ireland, having heard of the persecution which you are now suffering for conscience' sake, desire to express our Christian sympathy with you in your present distress, as members of the same mystical body : we have seen with deep regret your Christian liberty infringed by the secular power, and whilst we have been shocked at the oppressive exercise of authority in a country which boasts of its liberty, and emblazons the very word on its banners, we have been consoled in witnessing the power of the Gospel, and in seeing that there still exists, in the Protestant Canton of Vaud, a noble army of confessors who are ready to suffer for righteousness' sake. We hope that by the act of resignation of your benefices, whereby upwards of one hundred pastors have left their homes, with their wives and their little ones, at the commencement of a winter which threatens more than ordinary rigour, you may yet save your country and your church from the invasion of that Rationalism and Infidelity which half a century ago deluged a neighbouring nation with blood. It is right, to refuse to give up your pulpits where you preach the doctrines of a