

I once conversed, that it hangs upon our own personal goodness. Speaking of a deceased gentleman, whom she held in high esteem, she said, "If there is one man in heaven, he is sure to be there, for he was such a good man." "Well, ma'am," said I, "if that man is in heaven, he could not be there but on the same ground as the dying robber—as a guilty sinner cleansed from his sins by the precious blood of Christ, and saved by God's sovereign grace." "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. ii. 9.

No one was ever fitted for heaven on the ground of his own goodness. "There is none righteous, no, not one." Romans iii. 10. "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." Romans iii. 12. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans viii. 8. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah lxiv. 6.

An old bishop, when he was dying, said to some friends gathered around his bed, "I have just taken all my good works and all my bad works, and thrown them right overboard, and I am floating into heaven on the plank of free grace."

Nothing but the work of Christ can give us fitness, or title, to stand in the light of God's holy presence. The moment a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and has received the Holy Spirit, he is as fit for heaven as if he had been there for fifty years. In Col. i. 12, Paul does not say, "which is making us meet." We give thanks to the Father for what is already done, namely, that we who believe in Christ are fitted for the very light of God's glory. Christ Jesus is, of God, made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness,

and sanctification, and redemption." 1 Cor. i. 30.

If we take the dying thief as an example, we find, after he confessed his guilt, that he turned to Jesus and said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." His hands and feet were nailed to a cross, and he was, therefore, powerless to do anything to fit himself for heaven. However willing he might be to perform good works, if such could have atoned for his past guilt, he could not do them.

How, then, did the Lord meet his sad case? Did He tell him that he was too great a sinner to be saved? Did he bid him wait until, by doing better for the future, he had reformed his wasted and mis-spent past? Nay! nay! there was no time for that. The man was in the iron grip of death, and was about to pass into eternity to meet a holy God. He wanted salvation immediately, or he must perish in hell-fire everlastingly. His request was listened to at once. Nay, he got far more than he asked for. Instead of waiting to get the glory of the kingdom, Jesus says, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Luke xxiii. 43. What a glad surprise!

What, then, fitted the dying thief for such holy companionship, for such a blessed place? Not, surely, his prayers, for he only uttered one prayer that we read of, and that a very short one. Not even his penitential tears. There is no divine record of such. And certainly not his attending feasts or fasts for the purification of his soul, nor performing good deeds of any kind. No, no, it was nothing less than the all-cleansing blood of the