

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

"There were two thieves crucified with Him." "I am crucified with Christ."

I HAVE brought these two passages together, because, in their union, they bring out the complete truth on which we wish to dwell upon Good Friday. The cross before which we stand to-day has both its humiliation and its glory. It is a tragedy that bewilders and dismays us. It is likewise a proclamation of peace and hope. In the degradation of Christ, which compelled Him to be crucified with the thieves, there is a picture of how very low He stooped to our condition. In the triumph of Paul, at his participation with Christ, we see how the believer is taken into his Master's privilege. The two belong together. Christ was humiliated into our condition that we might be exalted unto His. Christ was crucified with man that man might rejoice in being crucified with Christ. Both the depth to which He went to seek man and the height up to which He would carry man, were set forth in the cross. Alas for him who, standing on Good Friday and looking at the crucifixion, does not see both of these, does not learn at once how low his Saviour went to find him, and how high he may go if he will make his Saviour's life his own! Let us look at both the scenes. Let us try to understand both thoughts—Christ's crucifixion with man, and man's crucifixion with Christ—and bind them both together in one humbling and inspiring truth. Turn, then, first to the cross upon Calvary, and let us think about Christ's crucifixion with man. In the prison at Jerusalem there are two robbers lying, waiting for their death. It is sure to come. Their crimes have doomed them to it. As they look back over their miserable lives they can see how from their boyhood, when their vice began, they have been steadily and certainly moving on towards this destiny. Their sin has deepened, and, with their deepening sin, the darkness of the coming death has gathered round them. They have known whither they were going. They have known that some time or other a life like theirs must bring a violent death. There is no record of their names, or anything about them. We do not separate or individualize them. To us, as they sit there in prison, they are simply wicked men waiting for the death which their wickedness has brought upon them. And now, at last, the time has come. The last morning dawns upon them. Sin is finished, and, on this solemn Good Friday, it brings forth death. The soldiers are at the door, and the crosses are waiting. You see how general, how typical, how little personal it all is. It is not these two men come to the ruin which their special sin deserves. It is wickedness, which, by the terrible necessity of its nature, has brought forth death. And now, with the black record of this wickedness in your minds, think of another life which comes to its crisis on this same Good Friday. There has been a man living in Palestine here for thirty years, and He has never done a sin. Nay, more than that, He has amazed the eyes of men with a positive holiness,

a picture of what it is to be absolutely good, such as they never dreamed of. This spotless, strong, pure goodness has all been poured out in love. The life has been all self-sacrifice. He has never seemed to think of Himself. Health and truth have gone out from Him to whoever touched Him. A life like the shining of the sun! A life of which, as men looked at it, they have felt that in it their best dreams of humanity were surpassed; that in it there was something more than human. Last night Jesus of Nazareth had sat with His disciples, and talked with them in words of spiritual wisdom which have ever since been the wonder of the world. They had gone out then, together, to the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus had plead with God, in agony, while His disciples slept with weariness and sorrow. By-and-by the soldiers came and took Jesus, and carried Him away to the High Priest. After that He was wholly separated from His friends—from everybody that believed in Him and loved Him. From the High Priest's house, where He is insulted and taunted, He is sent early on this Friday morning to the Governor's. There He is confronted with the cold, brutal unbeliever of the Roman magistrate. He is sent to Herod, and back again to Pilate, walking the familiar streets in disgrace and desolation. Then He is scourged. Then the people demand His blood. At last the Governor yields to them, and, with the sentence of a criminal, He is led away, and his procession meets the procession in which the two thieves are led to death, and they are crucified together.

We come to the profoundest knowledge and profoundest hatred of sin; when we come to this, that it crucified the Son of God, with wicked men, it made Jesus the sharer of human woe.

This, then, is the full truth of Good Friday, Jesus crucified with us, that we might be crucified with Him. He entered into pain that we might enter peace. He shared the shame of thieves that we might share His glory. Not till He who has stooped to us has lifted us up to Him on the cross, must we be satisfied. Not till He who hangs upon the cross beside us has said to us:—"To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."—THE REV. PHILLIP BROOKS.

AN EASTER MEDITATION.

O LORD and prince of life, Thou that hast been conqueror of death and the grave, what a bondage was that from which Thou didst then deliver the children of men! We, translated by that one victorious act of Thine, out of the kingdom of darkness and death into the kingdom of light and life, for the most part do but faintly apprehend what the nature and extent of that deliverance was; how earnest and yet how ineffectual the efforts thus far had been to roll away the stone from the Sepulchre in which the hopes of the children of men were buried. The revellers might crown their heads with roses, and fill their bowls with wine; might provoke themselves and one another to mirth, finding a ghastly incentive to a more frantic merriment in the skeleton which

they paraded through their banquet halls, and which should serve as a visible remembrance that even as that was, so they should be ere long. But there was no sincerity in this mirth of theirs. Death which should bring so soon the brief revel of life to a close was the great ill-joy of the old heathen world, and by voices and in ways innumerable, that world confessed as much that it may have bred many great, but none great enough for the task which here was before them. Surely there is no reading so pathetic as that of a collection of Greek and Latin epitaphs. What a voice of anguish and despair speaks out in these as we listen to one mourner and another,

"Who to the grave have followed that they love
And on the insuperable margin stand;"

but who feel that they can follow them no further, that these their beloved have trod the irremediable way entered upon the sleep which knows no waking, and the night which knows no dawn, even as the same unbroken sleep and the same night of darkness would presently encompass themselves.

And even they who did not count this present life to be all and the end of all, who dimly and darkly guessed at another life beyond the grave, they were not thereby delivered from the bondage of this fear, but only exchanged one form of the fear for another. Their consciences made cowards of them all. What they read in their own books; what their own mythologies told them of punishments prepared for evil-doers, as of the wheel of Ixion, of the stone of Sisyphus, of the whips of the Furies; all these might be fictions of poets, old wives tales, no better than evil dreams; while yet as they truly felt there lay a truth behind them all, a terrible truth whereof these terrors were but the outward, and it might be the fantastic setting forth, viz., that a day of retribution was coming in which all men should reap the just rewards of their deeds.

Neither fares it thus with the heathen only. The Old Testament saints themselves had not overcome this fear; were not delivered from the bondage of it. For them, also, this land beyond the grave was a land without form and void, peopled with the mysterious shapes and shadows of their fear. How they mourn in their prayer and are vexed as they contemplate it and their own near descent into it. Take Hezekiah, good man as he was, and yet how very far removed from the conclusion to which St. Paul had arrived: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Grant, Lord, that his choice may be ours.—*Archbishop Trench*

AN EVANGELICAL EASTER.

THE following narrative of a visit to the school where Montgomery, the evangelical poet, was educated, will be read with interest, and we trust with profit. This school, at Fulneck, in Yorkshire, was under the government of the Moravians, a body of Christians who were protestants centuries before Luther, who gave John Huss to the roll of martyrs, and who are, and ever have been, characterized by their intense zeal on behalf of evangelical doctrine and missions. Their dramatic and