

THE RECEIPT.

Some time ago, I was standing with a commercial gentleman in his office, conversing with him about his eternal prospects. He was one who had manifested some anxiety as to the great question of his soul's salvation, and I had frequently spoken to him before. On the occasion to which I now refer, we were speaking about the ~~ground of a sinner's peace~~ in the presence of God. There were some files hanging up in a corner of the office, and pointing to them, I said, "What have you got upon those files?" "Receipts," said he. "Well," I said, "are you not anxious about the amount of these various bills?" "Not in the least," he replied; "they are all receipted and stamped." "Are you not afraid," I continued, "lest those persons from whom you received the bills should come down upon you for the amount?" "By no means. They are all legally settled, and do not cost me a single thought."

"Now, then," said I, laying my hand upon his shoulder, "will you tell me what is God's receipt to us for all that we as sinners ever owed to Him as a righteous Judge?" He paused to consider, and then replied, "I suppose it is the grace of God in the heart." "Nay; that would never do. God's grace in my heart is no receipt for all I ever owed Him." My friend paused again, and then said, "It must be the knowledge of salvation." "No; you have not laid hold of it yet. You cannot but see the difference between your knowledge that these bills are paid, and the receipts which you have on your file. You might know they were paid, and yet, if you had no receipt, your mind would not be at ease." "Well," said he, "it must be faith." "Not right yet," said I. "Faith is no receipt." At length, feeling assured he had the true answer, he exclaimed, "It is the blood of Christ." He seemed a good deal disappointed when I still demurred, and quite gave up the attempt at further reply.

"Now," said I, "it is most blessedly true that the blood of Christ has paid the debt which I, as a guilty sinner, owed to divine Justice; yet you must admit there is a difference between the payment of a debt and the receipt. For even, though you had seen the full amount paid down, yet until you were in possession of the receipt, your mind would not be at ease, inasmuch as there was no legal settlement of the transaction. You must have a receipt. What, therefore, is God's receipt for that heavy debt which we owed Him? Blessed be His name, it is a risen Christ, at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The death of Christ paid my debt; His resurrection is a receipt in full, signed and sealed by the hand of Eternal Justice. Jesus "was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification." Hence, the believer owes not a fraction to divine justice, on the score of guilt, but he owes an eternity of worship to divine love, on the score of free pardon, and complete justification. The blood of Christ has blotted out his heavy debit; and he has a risen Christ to his credit.

"How marvellous that a poor guilty creature should be able to stand as free from all charge of guilt as the risen and glorified Saviour! And yet so it is, through the grace of God, and by the blood of Christ. Jesus has paid all our debts, discharged all our liabilities, cancelled all our guilt, and has become, in resurrection, our life and our righteousness. If it be true that, 'If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins,' it is equally true that, if He be raised, we who believe in Him are not in our sins."