

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

2 Cor. x. 12.

SHORT MEASURE.

(A PARABLE.)

IN the village there was a great sensation among the young men. Recruits were wanted for Her Majesty's Service; men of a certain height. The company who usually gathered to spend the evening at the corner of the "Black Bull" were discussing the matter with considerable interest. They had been busy measuring themselves by themselves for some nights. Poor little Tom, who measured only five feet four inches, was unceremoniously thrown to one side, and told by "Big Ben" he ought to go home and grow a bit, else he'd have no chance. Ben was the tallest of the company; he stood a good inch above all the rest on his stocking soles, and he knew it too. The testing day arrived; the standard and the line were brought forth. Of course little Tom went to the wall (everybody knew that), and a good many more beside him. At last Master Benjamin appeared, when, to the surprise of many, even he was half-an-inch too short; and he found himself among the "not wanted" somewhere not far from little Tom. This may illustrate greater things. God declares in His Word that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" and He further declares that "there is no difference" (Rom. iii. 23). Now the bulk of people do not believe this at all. They consider that there is a great difference between the "drunkard" and the "good templar,"

and between the respectable church member and the profligate. And so there is as regards the life that now is, and also in the character of their sin; but there is no difference in this, that both are sinners, and must be born again before they enter God's kingdom. It is not "how do you compare with Mr. So-and-So?" or "you are not so bad as many;" but the point is: have you come up to God's standard? Are you all that He requires you to be? If not, then you are condemned, and you will go down to the lake of fire just as certainly as the very worst and vilest sinner on earth. Deep down in a lost eternity, men learn in awful reality that there is "no difference." There the Christless drunkard and the unsaved church member meet, alike rejected as unfit for heaven.

Reader, have you believed God, and submitted yourself to his verdict? Or do you seek, in solemn contempt of the court of heaven, to justify yourself, and go about to establish a righteousness of your own?

"IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER?"

MARK VI. 3.

THOSE words of derision have come down, as it were, along the telephone of the ages, to the ear of every working man and working woman to whom the Gospel has come, or ever shall come, announcing Jesus to them as one whose heart would ever sympathise with them in their trials and in their rightful triumphs. Thanks to the enraged and contemptuous Nazarenes for this evidence that *Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, was one of the working classes, a mechanic, a carpenter!* They could have uttered no words which would have better told the working classes of every age and clime, that the Christianity which this despised and rejected Nazarene came to found, would be a true friend to them."

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