

A Midnight Alarm.

BY FANTORIC W. TOWNSEND, OF ST. MARTIN'S, NEW BRUNSWICK.

In the tower of our church at St. Martin's the town clock is placed, which was given to the community several years ago by a wealthy citizen, who was also a Baptist. The clock is thus a striking symbol of a Christian who, while adhering consistently to one communion, is a blessing to all sorts and conditions of men. On each of three sides from which a view of it can be obtained a large dial tells the unceasing march of time. Connected with the clock is a powerful bell which strikingly sounds forth the passing hour, and also serves to announce our Sunday and week-night services. I may explain that our parsonage faces the church on the opposite side of the street.

On one of the coldest nights of last winter, my wife and I were suddenly aroused from our slumbers, by the sharp, loud, somewhat jerky, but continued ringing of the afore-said bell. We knew by the manner and continuance of the sound that it was more than the ordinary stroke of the clock. To be awakened thus, in what Shakespeare calls "The dead vast and middle of the night," is startling, indeed. And there is, one fancies, something more solemn in such a summons coming on a cold winter's night. In summer one seems to sleep more lightly, and waking is a more genial experience—it strikes me that when the great dramatist, ere the appearance of the ghost upon the platform at Elsinore made one of his characters exclaim "Tis bitter cold," it was not accidental, but part of his design to prepare us for the shuddering fear which the sight of the dread apparition should occasion. Anyway, it was far from comfortable to have to leave a warm bed when the thermometer is below zero.

Then there was something mysterious about the alarm we knew not what it foreboded. At first we thought it might mean fire, or that, perhaps, a ship was in distress (for on this coast several disasters have happened) and that some one on shore who knew of it was summoning a rescue party. As we hastily dressed we could say with Edgar Allan Poe:

"Hear the loud alarm bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbidency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!

I may add that after some minutes of agitated ringing the bell ceased. We were speedily downstairs, and I was soon on the street. The church door was closed and locked, so that if any one had entered the tower for the purpose of ringing the bell he must quickly have left again. No glare of fire was anywhere visible. Not a person was in sight. So after studying myself that no real cause for alarm existed, I went indoors, and concluding, which proved to be a correct surmise, that something had gone wrong with the works of the clock, we retired again. Soon we heard once more the now familiar sound, but this time we refused to heed the "mad expostulation" of an irresponsible and unreasonable bell, and betook ourselves to sleep. We learnt next day that, through the cold, the works had become disordered, which accounted for the automatic ringing of the bell. Others had heard it, several of whom, remembering a similar occurrence in the past, judged rightly as to the cause; while a few, like ourselves, had got up, and, living at a greater distance from the church, had appeared upon the scene of error investigation was over.

Such a circumstance set me thinking of the time when the real summons shall come to each of us to meet our God. It may come very suddenly, perhaps, when we are least expecting it, what will it mean to us to leave the warmth, cheer, and comfort of life, and enter upon the cold of death? If we are reconciled to God through Christ Jesus, and are faithfully doing the work he gave us to do, we need not fear. In answer to a remark—"That death which we all dread," Francis Ridley Havergal wrote, "I do not fear death. Often I wake in the night and think of it, look forward to it with a thrill of joyful expectation and anticipation, which would become impatience were it not that Jesus is my Master as well as my Saviour, and I feel I have a work to do for him that I would not shirk, and also that his time to call me home will be the best and right time, and therefore I am content to wait." And she tells how she was once in the dark, and felt it might be her last conscious hour on earth, and she adds, "I never spent a calmer, sweeter hour than that. So should it be with every believer, since Jesus came to deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. But if we are without Christ, and consequently without hope, death surely will be to us the King of Terrors. When we are called to meet Him—"How that summons will the sinner's heart confound."

Many Christians, however, do not look for death; but are longing for the glorious appearing of their great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He will come as a thief in the night "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him!" How will that cry fall upon our ears—as the sound of wedding bells, or with a melancholy menace in its tone? When He cometh will he find us watching or sleeping? Oh, let us all examine ourselves and seek to be ready! It has been well said that the voice of corrupt nature to Christ is "Depart"; the voice

of luke-warm profession says, "Linger"; the voice of longing love says "Come." Let us each watch with the glad welcome on our lips: "Even so, Come Lord Jesus." Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing!

The Faith that Saves.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

"When I was in College," said the Rev. Dr. B.—"one of the professors tried hard to explain faith to me, but it was a muddle until I came and trusted my soul to Jesus Christ. When I did it I understood it." It is the simplicity of faith that often puzzles people. They are discussing a doctrine when they ought to be doing an act. They worry their brains when they ought to be yielding their hearts.

Faith is sometimes defined as an assent to the truth of the gospel which God has given us. But this is an intellectual act that is not sufficient to save a soul. Intellectual belief in the gospel is entertained by millions without the slightest penitence for sin or the least step towards following Christ. There are plenty of intellectual believers in the world of woe where the devils also believe—and tremble? Faith has also been defined as "taking God at his word." A very important mental act is this too but does any word of our Heavenly Father save our souls? Did the apostles ever preach, "believe the word and be saved?"

Paul and Silas were confronted by the mightiest question that ever agitates a human soul, when that poor jailer at Philippi lay trembling before them. They did not stop to expound a doctrine, they enforced a deed; they did not point to a system of truth but to a personal Saviour,—to an almighty Person to a Divine Person, whose atoning blood cleanseth from sin "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Not in Christianity but on Jesus Christ. That is what they told the jailer.

Mark that little and yet supremely great word "on." It is not enough to believe in Christ. Millions of unconverted people believe in Jesus just as they believe in Howard as a noble philanthropist, and in Washington as a pure patriot and in Newton as a profound philosopher. But they do not trust their souls to Je-sus. They do not rest on him for salvation; they do not build their characters on him as the only foundation.

One of the survivors from a burning hotel tells us that when he was driven back by the flames in the hall, he seized the escape rope, in his bedroom, and from an upper story he lowered himself through the smoke down to the sidewalk. He had seen that rope before, but had felt no need of it. He had a good opinion of the strength of the rope; but it was only an opinion; he put it to the test when he swung out the window and trusted his life to it. Now that was a saving faith; he let go of everything else and committed his whole weight to these well braided strands of hemp. And when a human soul lets go of every other reliance in the wide universe and lays hold of the sin atoning Redeemer for salvation that soul "believes on Christ." He entrusts himself to Jesus for pardon, for acceptance with God for grace, for strength for guidance, and for a full salvation.

Some anxious inquirer who reads this article may say if Paul told the jailer to believe on Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter had previously told a company of sinners who were "pricked in their hearts" their first duty was to "repent." Very true; and, my friend it is your duty also if you would have a new life here and an eternal life hereafter. But just what is genuine and scriptural and effectual Repentance? It is sorrow for sin? Yes; it is a vast deal more than that, it is the act of a soul that, with not only a sorrow for sin but a hatred of sin, turns from it to God with an endeavor to obey and follow Jesus Christ. Evangelical repentance and faith go together. They are inseparable. They are the two halves of one globe. Sorrow, shame and self-reproach will all end in nothing unless you lay hold of him who alone can give you new life, new character, and the new conduct. Is the Holy Spirit working upon your heart? Yes; and you must move whither he points; he is pressing you right towards Christ.

Repentance is more than a mere feeling; it is an act. Saving faith is more than an opinion, or a good resolution, or a devout purpose. It is the act of yielding your heart up to the sin atoning and loving Saviour, and joining your soul to him as your Redeemer and Lord. When Jesus Christ called Peter and James and John, he said to them, "Follow me!" They did not sit down and cry; they did not consult anybody; they did not promise the Christ that they would at some future day obey him. Straightway they left their nets and followed him. There, my friend, is the example for you. Begin to do the first thing that the Spirit working on your conscience bids you do. When you honestly take any step either in abandoning a sin, or in doing a duty, and do this simply to please Jesus Christ, then conversion has begun. You have changed masters. To be willing to trust in Christ, and to go with Christ even for a single important step, is the beginning of a genuine, Christian life.

Have you a little faith? Use what you have and pray for more. Christ will help you when you begin to follow him, as a child that is learning how to walk. Don't be satisfied with half-way work: no number of half Christians

can make a whole one. Make a clean break with your old sins and old self, and lay firm hold on the almighty Saviour. There was a good deal of pith in the answer of an humble servant-maid, who, when applying for admission to the church was asked by her pastor what evidence she had of her conversion. Her reply was, "Well, for one thing, I sweep now under the rugs and the door mats." The fatal mischief with some professors of religion is that they have left a sad amount of sin and selfishness under the doormats. "Faith without works is dead." The only proof you can give that you are trusting on Christ and following Christ is that you begin to keep Christ's commandments.

Motives to Cheerfulness.

BY G. B. F. HALLOCK, D. D.

As a little girl was eating her dinner one day the golden rays of the sun happened to fall upon her spoon. Putting the spoon to her mouth she exclaimed: "Oh mamma, I have swallowed a whole spoonful of sunshine!" We believe it would be an excellent thing, doing more good than food or medicine, if a lot of us professed Christians should swallow not only one but many spoonfuls of sunshine. "A merry heart," the wise Solomon says, "doeth good like a medicine," and we believe that a little "sunshine in our souls" would not alone do us good, but would be the means of good to thousands of others who might be made better and happier through our cheerfulness.

It might prove a motive to cheerfulness, though not a very high one, if we would remember that others have troubles as well as we. Your neighbor may not have your troubles, but he has troubles just the same. Rich and poor, the high and the lowly alike, do not escape them. We have read that the Czar of Russia cannot trust even the members of his own household; that the doors of his study are so made that only two or three persons know how to open them; that the walls of his room are lined with steel, and that there are five or six tables distributed around the room, so that no one will know at a given time in what part of the room the Czar is sitting. He has not your trouble. He may not need to worry about his house rent or grocery bills, but the Czar of all the Russians, the crowned head of one hundred million people, has his troubles as well as you. If you wait until you have no troubles in order to become cheerful you will never be cheerful. So our advice is as you think. You may have been just to remember that everybody has troubles, and cheer up and bear those you may have bravely and with a hopeful heart.

But you may not be as badly off making the mistake of magnifying your troubles. You may really be in a much better condition than you suppose. Your troubles may be partly imaginary. We have read of an old gentleman who had the rheumatics so badly he could not walk a step. All day long he sat helpless in his chair, out und r the shade of a tree on his lawn. There he sat, perfectly helpless, looking at the birds, and the flowers, when suddenly a mad dog, foaming at the mouth, leaped over the fence and made toward the invalid and his attendants. The attendants, forgetting the man, rushed toward the house. The poor, helpless invalid, who could not take a step, sprang from his chair and beat his attendants in the homeward race. He did not know what he could do till he had to; he was not in as bad shape as he thought he was. That story may not be true, but we knew of a woman who had kept her bed for twenty years, and at an alarm of fire leaped from her bed and rushed out into the street. We are glad to say that she was not so foolish as to take her bed again. She was not in as bad shape as she thought she was. So may it be with you. Cheer up! Get your mind off your troubles. Do not think about them. Think of the bright things in life. Think gratefully of the good things you have and be cheerful.

It is a fact worthy of consideration that cheerfulness pays well. It is always a profitable investment. Some one has well said that "of all the virtues cheerfulness is the most profitable. It makes the person who exercises it happy and renders him acceptable to all he meets. While other virtues delay the day of recompense, cheerfulness pays down." Dr. Marshall, we are told, frequently prescribed "cheerfulness" for his patients, saying that it was better than anything he could get at the druggists. "Mirth is God's medicine," says a wise writer, "and everybody ought to bathe in it." It was a favorite saying of Bancroft, the historian, who was a vigorous old man at ninety, that the secret of a long life is in cheerfulness—in never losing one's temper. Modern science shows that our mental moods have power to produce disease. Our personal well being and desire for length of life should prompt us to a life of cheerfulness.

We all love the cheerful man, woman or child. We shun the gloomy and melancholy. We may pity them and wish them well, but we do not enjoy being with them and avoid them as much as our consciences will allow. It will pay you well in friends and appreciation for you to be full of good cheer. "The cheerful live longest in years, and afterwards in our hearts"

Cheerfulness also increases our enjoyments. "I have been told," says Southey, "of the Spaniard who always put on