

Is That So?

The 20th question of "the Free Church Catechism" is this:

Ques.—"What must we do in order to be saved?"

Ans.—"We must repent of our sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

Is that so? Is that God's way of it? Is that what Paul said to the Phillipian jailor? Is that what you, or I, would say to any anxious enquirer after salvation? Suppose a common case. A youth calls on me in my study, and with a tremulous voice, says, "My pastor, I feel very anxious about my soul, I want you to tell me what must I do in order to be saved?" Shall I tell that anxious soul what the above answer tells me? Shall I say to him, you must begin with repentance. First and foremost you must repent of your sin. Is that what I ought to say to him? If I should do so—which God forbid that I should, would I not be leading him out of the way of life? Would I not be presenting to him a bit of law, that his legal heart is too prone to acquiesce in? Yes, he says, I see, you want me to feel more, to weep more, to pray more, to do more penance. Well, I'll take your advice. I have already done a good deal of that, but I'll do more. That, perhaps, will fit and finally enable me to believe in Jesus and be saved.

Have I rightly told that anxious soul what he must do in order to be saved? No indeed, I have told him just what he ought to do in order to remain unsaved. I may, indeed have told him that after he has repented he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But if I told him that he must do that in the second place, that is, after he has repented of his sin, I told him what is not true. It is not repentance, but faith in Jesus, that comes first in order to be saved. This is surely not carping, nor even criticising, but calling attention to another Gospel than that we have received.—F. M. C.

Suggestive Thoughts.

Dr. Andrew Bonar, preaching one Sunday on the image of God being restored, and the time when "we shall be like Him, or we shall see Him as He is," suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! my people, you won't know your minister on that day!" On another occasion he said: "I am more than ever convinced that unholiness lies at the root of our little success. Holy men of God spake to the fathers. It must be holy men still that speak with power. The only good thing I feel at present is the Word, and God there." "He watched himself with almost painful carefulness, and stirred others up to the same prayerful vigilance. One of his solemn sayings in regard to ministers was: 'The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins'; and he often quoted a remark about the Old Testament saints, 'Beware of the bad things of good men.'"

You cannot get more out of life than you put in it. If you desire your children to have fullness of days, put into their training all of energy, intellect, and love that you possess.

Do not fear the north wind. "Gold cometh out of the north," and the bracing breeze has its part to play in causing "the spices to flow out," as much as the south wind. God does not want His children to be hot-house plants.

Wherever there is a real work of grace in any soul, it begins with pulling down; the Holy Ghost does not build on the old foundation.

The less I can spend on myself, and the more on my Lord, the richer I am. He is richest who truly gives all he can.

The Tree God Plants.

The wind that blows can never kill
The tree God plants;
It bloweth east, it bloweth west,
The tender leaves have little rest,
But any wind that blows is best.
The tree God plants
Strikes deeper root, grows higher still,
Spreads wider boughs, for God's good will
Meets all its wants.

There is no frost hath power to blight
The tree God shields;
The roots are warm beneath soft snows,
And when spring comes it surely knows,
And every bud to blossom grows.
The tree God shields
Grows on apace by day and night,
Till, sweet to taste and fair in sight,
Its fruit it yields.

There is no storm hath power to blast
The tree God knows;
No thunder-bolt, nor beating rain,
Nor lightning flash, nor hurricane—
When they are spent, it doth remain.
The tree God knows
Through every tempest standeth fast,
And from its first day to its last
Still fairer grows.

—The Christian Register.

Well is the life of the righteous likened to a palm in that the palm below is rough to the touch, and in a manner enveloped in dry bark; but, above, it is adorned with fruit, fair even to the eye, below, it is compressed by the enfoldings of its bark; above, it is spread out in amplitude of beautiful greenness. For such is the life of the elect; despised below, beautiful above; down below, it is, as it were, enfolded in many barks in that it is straitened by innumerable afflictions; but on high it is expanded into a foliage, as it were, of beautiful greenness by the amplitude of the reward.—Gregory.

True righteousness is found only in the dweller with God, and they who anchor themselves in him, as a tree in the earth, are both stayed on and fed from him.—Alexander McLaren, D.D.

In giving, a man receives more than he gives, and the more is in proportion to the worth of the thing given.—George Macdonald.

The School of Obedience.

By Rev. Andrew Murray.

Let us specially notice, how, with any new beginning in the history of God's kingdom, obedience always comes into special prominence. Take Noah, the new father of the human race, and you will find four times written (Gen. vi. 22; vii. 5, 9, 16), "According to all that God commanded Noah, so did he." It is the man who does what God commands to whom God can entrust His work.

Think of Abraham, the father of the chosen race. "By faith Abraham obeyed" (Heb. xi. 7). When he had been forty years in this school of faith-obedience, God came to perfect his faith, and to crown it with His fullest blessing. Nothing could fit him for this but a crowning act of obedience. When he had bound his son on the altar, God came and said: "By Myself have I sworn, in blessing I will bless thee; and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice." And to Isaac He spake (Gen. xxvi. 3, 5): "I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham, because that Abraham obeyed My voice." Oh! when shall we learn how unspeakably pleasing obedience is in God's sight, and how unspeakable is the reward He bestows upon it! The way to be a blessing to the world is to be men of obedience; known by God and the world by this one mark—a will utterly given up to God's will. Let all who profess to walk in Abraham's footsteps walk thus.

Sin had made us believe that it was a humiliation always to be seeking to know and do God's will. Christ came to show us the mobility, the blessedness, the heavenliness of obedience.

In a world where disobedience reigns unto death, the restoration of obedience is in Christ's hands. As in His own life, so in us, He has undertaken to maintain it.

How unspeakably gracious that in the morning hour the bond that unites us with God can be so firmly tied, that during hours when we have to move amid the rush of men or duties, and can scarce think of God, the soul can be kept safe and pure; that the soul can so give itself away in the time of secret worship into His keeping, that temptation shall only help to unite it closer with Him! What cause for praise and joy that the morning watch can so each day renew and strengthen the surrender to Jesus and the faith in Him, that the life of obedience can not only be maintained in fresh vigour, but can indeed go on from strength to strength.

The loyal support of the Church paper is not only needful for its maintenance, but for the promotion of a Church's life and activities.

Rest assured that the person who hasn't time to pray now won't have much time to praise God in eternity.