

"THERE WERE TWO."

People say sometimes, "I shall take my chance with the dying thief" Ah! but which one of them? There were two."

These were the words I heard from some one preaching in the open-air as I passed the railway station at—, and my mind has again and again recalled that solemn story of Luke xxiii. *There were two*" Yes, indeed. One went from the side of the Lord Jesus to the paradise of God, the other went to reap eternally the wages of his sins.

Reader, "*there were two.*" With which of them will you spend eternity? Ah! ponder the solemn thought, the awful alternative; and eternity of unsullied bliss with Jesus, or the blackness for ever with the devil and his angels.

"*Be reconciled to God.*" That gracious Saviour's heart is the same today as when He hung upon that cross. He says still, "*Come unto me*" Reject not this offer of mercy; it may be your last.

A BROKEN HEARTED FATHER.

An affecting scene—one of the saddest—occurred lately at the visiting window of the goal in an American city. A boy about eighteen years old was imprisoned, awaiting transportation to the penitentiary, where he is to serve a six years' sentence. The prisoner was a fine-looking young fellow. His father—an aged minister—had come to visit him. The son stood with shamed face on one side of the grating, and the grief-stricken father on the other. Drink had been the cause of the boy's trouble. The father pleaded earnestly with his child to reform while in prison, to read his Bible, and improve all spare time in study.

"Son," continued the father, "if you had the grace of God in your heart you wouldn't be here. If those cursed grog-shops were swept away, I'd have been spared all this. Let it be a lesson to you, boy. This is the last time you will probably ever see me. I am old, and probably won't live to see your six years out. O, my boy, promise me to give yourself to God, that I may see you over yonder."

The boy promised, and the old man went his way.

While this father returns to his home to go down to a premature grave in sorrow, the man who ruined his son is now engaged in ruining other sons. Which shall we have, "the home or the saloon?"

THE MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

During the examination of one of the candidates for the gospel ministry before the Presbytery of Osage at its late meeting the young man was asked to state what peculiar influence, if any, led him to seek the gospel ministry. He said there was one influence which no doubt had been leading him to this choice, although he was unconscious of it. "After I had decided to seek the ministry I was informed that my mother, who died many years ago, had dedicated me to the gospel ministry. And although I knew it not, my mother's prayers and devotion were prevailing to lead me to offer myself, as she had offered me in my infancy, to this work of the Lord."

All present were profoundly impressed with this added testimonial to the faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God, and to the value and efficacy of a mother's prayers. "Who will go for us?" would find an answer in an enlarged number of young men devoting themselves to the gospel ministry, if Christian mothers were to dedicate their sons thus to the Lord.

"THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Going into her flower garden one bright, warm day, a lady remarked to the gardener how she admired the sun.

He did not reply but on her repeating the words, said:

"Oh, ma'am! how you would admire 'the Sun of Righteousness,' the Lord Jesus Christ, if you only knew him."

The lady made no answer; the Holy Spirit had touched her heart. Returning to her house, she opened the Bible, and continued to "Search the Scriptures" until "the Sun of Righteousness," the Lord Jesus Christ, arose on her soul, "with healings in His wings."

SORROW.

The sorrow which appears to us nothing but a yawning chasm or hideous precipice may turn out to be but the joining or cement which binds together the fragments of our existence into a solid whole! That dark and crooked path in which we have to grope our way in doubt and fear maybe but the curve which, in the full day light of a brighter world, will appear to be the necessary finish of some choice ornament, the inevitable span of some majestic arch!—
Dean Stanley.