

THE GREAT LOSS.



TOWARDS the close of the last century, there was a preacher living in Cardiganshire, named David Morris. He had a son who far surpassed him in talents, but the father was a man of note, because by his ministry God wrought wonders of grace in some parts of Wales, especially in the north.

Like most of the great preachers of his day, he made frequent tours—evangelistic excursions we might call them—preaching two or three times a day as he proceeded on his journey. Some of these preaching expeditions were very successful. There was scarcely a sermon delivered by him that was not made the means of the conversion of souls, and in several cases a great number were brought to God by the means of one discourse.

On one of these journeys he preached at a place near Rippont Bridge, in Anglesea. The text was: "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The state of the people in Anglesea at that time was deplorable. There was but little true religion, and vice and ungodliness walked abroad openly with bold front and brazen face. The people generally were given to impiety. He knew, he saw, he felt their condition, and he travailed in spirit for their salvation. His heart was melted with compassion for them in their ignorance, sin, and shame. He warned them of their danger, and told them of their mercy in being permitted to hear the good tidings of salvation—the voice of Mercy Incarnate: "Deliver him from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom."

So deeply was he moved at the sight of the multitude before him, perishing in their sins, as he feared, through the neglect of the things that make for peace, that he burst into a long and dolorous shout, while every line of his face bore witness of his intense feeling: "Oh, ye people of the great loss—the great loss!" But the English does not at all fully convey the idea, or express the feeling of the preacher in his native Welsh.

It was an awful crisis. It was the bursting forth on the people of the tempest of feeling in the preacher's soul. They swayed before his words like reeds before a strong wind. It was a time of love; a season in which the mighty power of God was put forth; a crisis of deliverance, of victory, and of joy. Many were brought to repentance, many were led to Christ; and the churches in the neighbourhood received numerous accessions as the result of that one sermon. Though well on towards a hundred years have passed since then, there are old people in Anglesea who still talk about that sermon, as they heard of it from their fathers and mothers, as "the sermon of the great loss."

What cannot the power of God do, when He puts forth His might? And what may not one man, or

one voice, or one pen be the means of accomplishing, when the fire from off God's altar burns on the heart?

But the great loss. Alas! how many everywhere are in the same wretched plight! Money, health, possessions, earthly wisdom, are nothing as weighed against the soul. The possession of the whole world could not counterbalance the loss of one soul. Remember it is your own soul. You may not have riches, you may not have wisdom, you may not have many earthly friends, but the poorest and meanest has something more and better than all—he has a soul, a precious soul, an immortal, never-dying soul. It is your own in a sense in which nothing else is your own. No one can share its responsibilities; no one can answer for its misuse of opportunities; nothing can make up for its loss.

Lost we all are by sin, and sinful wanderings from God. But Christ, the Good Shepherd, came to seek and save the lost. The Gospel shows us the way. He is the way. Forsaking sin, believing in Jesus, accepting salvation at His hands as God's free gift of love, we shall never perish. All sin's loss will be retrieved; all our transgressions forgiven, our offences blotted out. Our peace, our portion in God, our eternal happiness, will be secure for ever. Committing our souls to the care and keeping of Him who died to save us, we shall never perish, but have everlasting life. But oh! beware of neglecting your salvation, lest you have to mourn, and others because of you, "the great loss, the great loss!"

R. S.

ALL IS WELL.

THESE were the last words of a dying believer. For more than thirty years she had been a consistent follower of the Saviour. Her last sickness was brief. She was unexpectedly called to face the realities of the unseen world. She was naturally self-distrustful, and had anticipated death with dread.

But when she at length came to die all her fears were gone. She said that death was a different experience from what she had thought. Grace abounded towards her. She was enabled to adopt as her own the words, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." She had great confidence in God. In her distress again and again she said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Her end was peace. Her experience was that of many a friend of Christ—

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,
While on His breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there."

The blessed religion of the gospel is what we all need. We need it in the changes and trials of life, and, above all, we need it when we come to die. Then, if this treasure be ours, we can truly say, "All is well." We shall go to be with Christ, and with Him all will be well with us for ever.