

dle of Sir John de Stapleford, Vicar-General of the Bishop of Winchester, and he was condemned to be hung at Tyburn. "Louder and louder became the cries of the miserable culprit as he receded from the judges; and just when the sergeants were dragging him across the threshold, he clung to the pillar which divided the portal, shrieking with a voice of agony which pierced through the hall: 'I demand of Holy Church the benefit of my clergy!' The thief was replaced at the bar. During the earlier portion of the proceedings the kind-hearted Vicar General had evidently been much grieved and troubled by his enforced participation in the condemnation of the criminal. Stepping forward he now addressed the court, and entreated permission, in the absence of the proper ordinary, to try the validity of the claim. Producing his breviary, he held the pledge close to the eyes of the kneeling prisoner; he inclined his ear. The bloodless lips of the ghastly caitiff were seen to quiver. 'Legit ut Clericus,' instantly exclaimed the Vicar-General; and this declaration at once delivered the felon from death, though not from captivity. 'Take him home to the pit,' said the Vicar-General, 'where, shut out from the light of day and the air of heaven, he will be bound in iron, fed with the bread of tribulation, and drinking the water of sorrow, until he shall have sought atonement for his misdeeds and expiated his shame.'—*All the Year Round.*

PAUL'S LAST LETTER AND THE CLOAK.

The fourth chapter begins with a solemn appeal to Timothy to do his duty as a pastor "in season, out of season" because the time would soon come when men would turn away from truth to the fantastic doctrines of teachers who would answer them according to their own lusts. "Do thou then be sober in all things, endure sufferings, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. For I am being already poured in libation, and the time of my departure is close at hand. I have striven the good strife, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day; and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

That is practically St. Paul's last word. The remainder of the letter is occupied with personal information, given in the natural, loose, accidental order of a letter, mingled with earnest entreaty to him that he would come at once. "Do your best to come to me quickly." Demas, Crescens, Titus are all absent from him; Erastus did not come with him farther than Corinth; Trophimus was taken ill at Miletus; Luke only is left. Mark is useful to him for service—perhaps because he knew Latin—and, therefore, Timothy is to take him up somewhere on the way and bring him. Tychicus is already on the way to Ephesus so that he can take Timothy's place when he arrives. Timothy is to be on his guard against the pronounced hostility of Alexander the coppersmith. Then follows the touching allusion to his first trial and deliverance, on which we have already dwelt. Greetings are sent to Prisca, Aquila, and the house of Onesiphorus. Once more, "Do your best to come before winter"—if he comes after that time he may be too late. "Eubulus greets thee and Pudens, and Linus and Claudia, and all the brethren. The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you."

I have purposely omitted the one simple touching message, introduced so incidentally, and with such inimitable naturalness. "When you come bring with you the cloak that I left at Troas, at Carpus' house, and the books, especially the parchments." The verse has been criticised as trivial, as unworthy the dignity of inspiration. But men must take their notions of inspiration from facts, and not try to square the facts to their own theories. Even on these grounds the verse has its own value for all who would not obscure divine inspiration, nor obliterate the true meaning and sacredness of Scripture by substituting a dictated infallibility for the free play of human emotions in souls deeply stirred by the Holy Spirit of God. But even on other grounds how little could we spare this

verse! What a light does it throw on the last sad days of the persecuted Apostle! The fact that these necessary possessions—perhaps the whole that the Apostle could call his own in this world—had been left at the house of Carpus, may, as we have seen, indicate his sudden arrest either at Troas or on his way to it. A prisoner who is being hurried from place to place by unsympathizing keepers is little able to look after his property. But now the Apostle is settled again, though his home is but a prison, and he feels that it will be his home for life. Winter is coming on, and winter in a Roman prison, as he knows by experience, may be very cold. He wants to get back his rough travelling cloak. It was one of those large, sleeveless garments which we should call an "overall" or "dreadnought." Perhaps St. Paul had woven it himself of the black goat's hair of his native province. And, doubtless—for he was a poor man—it was an old companion, wetted many a time in the water-torrents of Asia, whitened with the dust of the Roman roads, stained with the brine of shipwreck when *Euro-Aquilo* was driving the Adriatic into foam. He may have slept in its warm shelter on the chill Phrygian uplands, under the canopy of stars, or it may have covered his bruised and trembling limbs in the dungeon of Philippi. It is of little value; but now that the old man sits shivering in some gloomy cell under the palace, or on the rocky floor of the Tullianum and the winter nights are coming on, he thinks him of the old cloak in the house of Carpus and asks Timothy to bring it with him. "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." The *biblia*—the papyrus books—few, we may be sure, but old friends; perhaps he had bought them when he was a student in the school of Gamaliel at Jerusalem; or they may have been given him by his wealthier converts. The papyrus books, then, let Timothy bring, but especially the parchments—the vellum rolls. What were these? Perhaps among them was the *diploma* of his Roman franchise; or were they *precious* rolls of Isaiah and the Psalms, and the lesser prophets, which father or mother had given him as a life-long treasure in the far-off happy days when, little dreaming of all that would befall him, he played, a happy boy, in the dear old Tarsian home? Dreary and long are the days—the evenings longer and drearier still—in that Roman dungeon; and it will be a deep joy to read once more how David and Isaiah, in *their* deep troubles learnt, as he had learnt, to suffer and be strong. A simple message, then, about an old cloak and some books, but very touching. They may add a little comfort, a little relief, to the long drawn tedium of these last dreary days. Perhaps he thinks he would like to give them, as his parting bequest, to Timothy himself, or to the modest and faithful Luke, that their true hearts may remember him when the sea of life flows smooth once more over the nameless grave. It would be like that sheep-skin cloak which centuries afterwar's, the hermit Anthony bequeathed to the Archbishop Athanasius—a small gift, but all he had. Poor inventory of a saint's possessions! Not worth a hundredth part of what a buffoon would get for one jest in Cæsar's palace, or an acrobat for a feat in the amphitheatre; but would he have exchanged them for the jewels of the adventurer Agrippa or the purple of the unspeakable Nero? No, he is much more than content. His soul is joyful in God. If he has the cloak to keep him warm, and the books and parchments to teach and encourage him, and Mark to help him in various ways, and if, above all, Timothy will come himself, then life will have shed on him its last rays of sunshine; and in lesser things, as well as in all greater, he will wait with thankfulness, even with exultation, the pouring out in libation of those last few drops of his heart's blood, of which the rich full stream has for these long years been flowing forth upon God's altar in willing sacrifice.—*Farrar.*

"LOOKING UNTO JESUS."

The early Christians lacked many privileges and advantages that we enjoy. They had no printed books.

They worshipped God in dens and caves and upper chambers, had few and simple ecclesiastical garments, and often received the Lord's supper in vessels of wood, and not of silver or gold. They had little money, no church endowments, and no universities. Their creeds were short. Their theological definitions were scanty and few. But what they knew they knew well. They were men of one Book. They knew whom they believed. If they had wooden communion vessels, they had golden ministers and teachers. They "looked unto Jesus," and realized intensely the personality of Jesus. For Jesus they lived, and worked, and died. And what are we doing? And where are we in the nineteenth century? And what deliverance are we working on earth? With all our countless advantages, our grand old cathedrals, our splendid libraries, our accurate definitions, our elaborate liturgies, our civil liberty, our religious societies, our numerous facilities, we may well doubt whether we are making such a mark on the world as Clement and Justin Martyr and their companions made 1700 years ago.

I know we cannot put the clock back and return to the A B C of early Christianity. But one thing we can do: We can grasp more firmly the grand old primeval principle around which our modern Christianity has clustered and swelled, and grown to its present proportions. Such a principle is that laid down in our text, "Looking unto Jesus." Then let us covenant with ourselves that for the time to come we will try to run our race, fight our battles, fill our position, serve our generation, like men who are ever "Looking unto Jesus." So looking while we live, we shall see face to face when we die. We shall joyfully exchange faith for sight, see as we have been seen, and know as we have been known.—*Bishop Kyle, on Heb. xii. 2.*

"HOW MUCH OWEST THOU?"

It was my lot to live for some years in one of those antiquated Welsh towns with an unpronounceable name (to a Saxon) of which a willingly incredulous stranger might say, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

Among the members of my class was an old Welsh lady, Mrs. O—.

Providence had once smiled upon her in temporal affairs, but the Father tried his child by taking away from her the light of her eyes, as "by a stroke," and children withered and died, one by one, so that she lived "alone, yet not alone."

"'Twas little she could do," for poverty, as is often the case, was accompanied by sickness so that by the earnings of her needle she barely subsisted. Parish authorities added to it a weekly pittance, and this was all she had, save the kind gifts of friends.

I often visited her in her little room, and often found her confined to her bed.

When tickets were renewed, if she were not present, I hastened to take her ticket, knowing what pleasure it gave her to receive it.

Visiting her one day for this purpose, I found her in great weakness.

On handing her the ticket, the conversation ran thus:

"I have brought you your ticket Mrs. O—, but you need not give anything."

"Oh! but I must."

"No! no! I'll see that your name stands all right in the class book."

"Sir, if you will look in the little cup on the shelf you will find the *Lord's money*."

"But the Lord does not wish you to give to His cause what you absolutely need, I can't take it."

And then the "hot rain" fell down her aged cheek, as she said, "'Tis but little I can give to the Lord, but what did He give for me? He loved me and gave Himself for me. Take it, sir, I can't eat my morsel happily if you don't."

And so I took it, and murmured blessings on the head of her whose heart "the love of Christ" did so "constrain," and prayed evermore I might remember, "Ye are not your own." Reader, "how much owest thou unto the Lord?"—*Rev. Samuel Wilkes.*