

JESUS PIERCED.

Perhaps you have heard of that little boy who, when he read of the man who struck Christ with the palm of his hand, said, "Did not that hand wither?" He thought very naturally that surely the hand that so wickedly struck Christ must be at once blasted.

In the days of the French Revolution, there was an atheist in Paris, who said that he would prove whether there were a God or not. Taking out his watch, he said that he would give God five minutes to prove his existence; for if there were a God, surely he would strike him dead. When nothing happened to him, the foolish man said that there was no God! Poor, blinded man! If God had struck him down, it would not have been God-like; for our God is long-suffering, and though he treasures up judgment for another day, he waits to be gracious now.

Even so here: it was not fire that flashed out from the Saviour's side to consume the man; it was blood and water.

Blood flowed along the spear. Suddenly the soldier sees its point glitter less brightly, and then, lo! his hand is bathed in blood that has flowed along the spear! Now, every Jew knew, as written in Levit. xvii. 11, that "*it is the blood which maketh atonement for the soul.*" Hence this event had a remarkable signification. Jesus is offering his blood to take away the soldier's guilt! for see! the blood that makes atonement for the soul is flowing towards this wicked man! But again, chasing the blood there was a stream of *water*, and the soldier, with amazement, perceives this too! Now, water is an emblem of the Holy Spirit, who makes us new creatures, and takes away our enmity; for Isaiah xlv. 3 speaks of "*pouring water*" as the same thing with "*pouring the Spirit.*"

Thus you see the free love of God! What a gracious return he made to the malignant cruelty of his foes! Instead of revenging their sins upon them, he hastens to forgive! Dear children, think on all this. Do you ever strike back, because some one struck you? Or revile because some one reviled you? Or resolve to take revenge for a wrong done you? or try to make one feel sore who has slighted you? This is not God's way. When the soldier pierced Christ, God's return was to give *blood and water*. Learn to return good for evil, like God.

You may have read an instructive incident regarding a soldier, who had frequently been imprisoned and punished on account of his conduct. One day, on account of a recent misdemeanour, he was about to be called up for further punishment, when it was asked, "Have we tried every means of curing him?" One present remarked, "We have never tried the effect of a pardon." The suggestion was taken, and the sergeant-major was sent to tell the soldier that he was pardoned. The man was amazed! He had been doggedly preparing himself for severe punishment; but, melted by this kindness, he from that day set himself to guard his conduct, and no one had further trouble with him. This is somewhat like God's way with sinners. He gives *pardon* that there may follow thereon a *change of character*, as in the case of this soldier. Was there not here first pardon, then reformation? So, when you have got the *blood* you will also get the *water*.