

JOINING THE CHURCH.

Do men go to school because they know so much, or because they know so little; Do men go to a physician because they are sick, or do they wait till they are well and then go! Yet to hear people speak of uniting with the Church one would suppose that they thought it their duty to stay out till they were perfect, and then to join it as ornaments. They who are weak, but who wish strength; they who are ignorant, but hunger for knowledge; they who are unable to go alone, and need sympathy and society to hold them up; they who are lame, and need crutches; in short, they who know the plague and infirmity of a selfish heart, a worldly nature, a sinful life and who desire above all things to be lifted above them, have a preparation for the Church. If you could walk without limping, why use a crutch at all; if you are already good enough, why go into a Church; but if you are so lame that a staff is a help, so infirm that company and ordinances will aid you, then you have a right to the fellowship of the Church. To unite with a Church is not to profess that you are a saint, that you are good, and still less that you are better than others. It is but a public recognition of weakness and your spiritual necessities. The Church is not a gallery for the better exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, an hospital for the better healing of those who need assiduous care.

He Is our Peace.

"Why are there so many Christians who have no true peace? We must go to the sources of life to find the cause. Leave aside the people of the world, in the vanity of life. It is clear that vanity cannot give peace. Do not let us speak of those Christians of the Church whose foundation is their dead works. Routine no more gives peace than vanity.—Let us speak of those who are truly awakened. Why are there so many Christians in whom there is verily a work of God, and who, notwithstanding, have no peace? For some, the reason is, that they still *sow among thorns*. They are disturbed, but they cannot resolve to break with some special sin, nor to be detached from this or that idol. It is their *divided heart* which takes away their peace. Others will draw peace from depths in them-

selves; they mix up strangely faith and their own righteousness; the mystery of grace is still hidden from them. Others, again, build upon a peace which they have felt once, but which presently escapes them; they rest on what they experienced, and because they no longer experience anything, they no longer believe anything. Others, again, make their peace depend on the degree of their sanctification; when they see that they do not advance, or when they see others who pass them, they are saddened, and their sadness takes away their peace. We would like to engrave on the heart of every one of them the words of the apostle *He is our peace*. Our peace is not first of all a state, it is first of all a Person. *It is Jesus Christ*, it is His body crucified that is *our peace*. Seek your peace upon the cross and no one will take it from you.—It is the great fact of Calvary which contains and proclaims your peace. What comes from us can never serve as a foundation, for *other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*. Once founded on the Rock of Ages, we no longer look to our nature. It creates daily perplexities, but it is for these same perplexities that Jesus Christ is come, that once for all we might look to Him, to His blood, to His righteousness, to His word, and to His promises. There is the Christ who lives eternally, and *He is our peace*."

PRAYER ANSWERED.

"Lord, save me."—MATT. xiv. 30.

A minister asked the maid at an inn in the Netherlands if she prayed to God. She replied, "She had scarce time to eat; how could she have time to pray?" He promised to give her a little money, if, on his return, she could assure him she had meanwhile said three words of prayer, night and morning. Only three words and a reward caught her promise. He solemnly added, "Lord, save me!" For a fortnight she said the words unmeaningly; but one night she wondered what they meant, and why he bade her repeat them. God put it into her heart to look at the Bible, and see if it would tell her. She liked some verses, where she opened, so well, that next morning she looked again, and so on. When the good man went back, he asked the landlord for her, as a stranger served him. "Oh, sir, she got too good for my place, and lives with the minister!" So soon as she saw the minister at the door, she cried, "Is it you, blessed man? I shall thank God through all eternity that I ever saw you; I want not the money; I have reward enough for saying those words!" She then described how salvation by Jesus Christ was taught her by the Bible, in answer to this prayer.