

er-meeting, for "the prisoners heard them." Paul and Silas might have thought only of the ignominy and shame of their position, of the cruel stripes and lashes they were still suffering from, of what the morrow was to bring forth.

Oh what courage and cheer God gives His servants suffering for righteousness sake. How He makes even the wrath of man to praise Him. The magistrates thought that in a prison there would be no further spread of christianity, but even there God converts souls and one of them is their own servant the jailer.

What a plight the poor fellow is in as the earthquake shakes the prison and gives the prisoners opportunity for escape. In his despair he is about to put an end to his life with his own sword, when Paul cried out "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

III. THE JAILER'S QUESTION.—Where had the jailer gotten hold of that word "saved." "Sirs what must I do to be saved." We must remember that the damsel of divination went up and down the streets crying. "These men are the servants of the most High God which shew us the way of salvation." Possibly he had seen and heard her; and terrified at the earthquake and attributing it no doubt to the power of these men in their wonderful psalms, he bursts in upon them with the most pressing and urgent question a man could ask.

Note (1) that it is a personal question. He's not even asking for an explanation or theory of the earthquake, but "what must I do to be saved." The meaning of the term "anxious enquirer" is here illustrated to the life.

(2). It is an imperative question demanding an immediate answer. He is in an agony till he hears the reply. Convicted before God of sin he cannot rest. It is after midnight, but he cannot wait till morning. His soul may be lost before then.

IV. PAUL'S REPLY.—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Oh how soothing these words fell on the perturbed and awakened conscience of the jailer. Anxious as to the condition on which salvation is to be had, he finds he can fulfil them all. Only believe and salvation is assured. This is the only way to obtain salvation. No other way than by believing on Christ, and no danger of not being saved if we do believe on Him.

Faith is trust in a person.

V. "AND THY HOUSE."—Not only is the blessing to himself but also to his house. Here we have what Dr. Taylor calls "the federal unity of the household in its head." The household is dealt with as a unit on the faith of its head. Jesus said to Zacchaeus "This day is salvation come to this house." The conversion of the head of a household sanctifies the household and must have an effect upon all its members—And if salvation has not come to our households through our own faith as heads of the household, we ought to take ourselves to task very seriously to find out what is wrong.

VI. EFFECT OF CONVERSION.—The conversion that does not show itself in loving deeds and acts of kindness may well be called in question.

This man begins at once to make all the amends in his power, to those whom he had wronged. That is the invariable result of genuine repentance. Zacchaeus if he took anything from any man by false accusation would restore him fourfold. Whenever a man is genuinely saved he will at once begin to undo the evil works of the past.

VII. THE JOY SALVATION BROUGHT:—Christianity is a religion of sunshine and happiness. Joy is the happiness of love; it is love exulting; it is love aware of its own felicity and rioting in riches it has no fear of exhausting. There are no joys to be compared with those which the gospel brings, none so solid, none so heart-refining, none so enduring.

The joys of the world are superficial and brief, the crackling of thorns under a pot. Let our lives be filled with the Joy of Christ so that we may become a blessing to those around us.

ADDED POINTS.

1. Disappoint the devil and sing.
2. God works suddenly to redeem his people.
3. In a world where death comes suddenly, why should not eternal life come suddenly.
4. Don't kill yourself, but put the sword up to the hilt into your sins.
5. We are saved not by works but through faith.
6. How much joy does your religion bring you.