

Queen Victoria's Conversion Leads a French Widow to Christ.

(The 'Christian Herald'.)

Mr. W. J. Lockie, the Secretary of the Paris City Mission, relates the following: Whilst resident in Paris, attending Divine service held in the Eglise Evangélique, 48 Rue de Lille, I remarked one of the worshippers, a French lady, who came every Sunday to the services. As the result of a few conversations, she expressed a wish to obtain a Bible, which was procured for her. A few Sundays afterwards she came dressed in deep mourning. I saw her weeping during Divine service. At the close I went up to her and asked her what had happened to cause her such grief. She replied, 'Oh, monsieur, I have lost my dear husband; he is burning in the flames of purgatory.' I consoled her by the assurance that there was no such place as purgatory mentioned in the Holy Scripture, but only two places—heaven and hell. She said, 'But the priests have taught me that I must have masses said for the release of souls out of purgatory: how do you know that there is no such place?' I replied, 'By the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his apostles; also by the sacred Scriptures.' I then showed her I. John i., 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' 'Remark that little word "all." Now, if all sin is forgiven, there remains none to be purged away by the fires of purgatory, as your priests tell you.' 'That is in the New Testament; but can you give me the same assurance from the Old Testament?' 'Certainly, madam; here it is—Psalm ciii., 3, 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities'; and verse 12, 'As far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' Now, madam, the east and west can never be brought together.' 'I never heard of this before; it is all new to me. But how do you disprove the existence of purgatory?' I then read the parable of Dives and Lazarus—Luke xvi., 19 to 31 verses—showing us that there are but heaven and hell, between which two places (verse 26) there is 'a great gulf fixed, so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.' 'Now, madam, you see that souls cannot rise from hell to heaven, because of the great impassable gulf fixed by the Almighty. It also shows that prayers to a saint are of no avail when the soul is in hell.' 'I never knew this before,' said the lady; 'but what other proofs have you to give me?' 'Many, madam,' said I—'here is one: Luke xxiii., 42, 43: one of the thieves who was crucified by the side of our blessed Lord at first joined in reviling and taunting him (Matt. xxvii., 44; Mark xv., 32), but later on became penitent, and prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Remark, madam, the "immediate" promise of our Lord, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Now, this converted thief had been a very wicked man, "a malefactor," justly condemned to death for his crimes by his own confession—he had no good works to plead; therefore, had there been a purgatory, the Lord would have said, "My poor man, I will save you, but you must first go into purgatory to purify your sins, and when you have suf-

fered for your crimes I will release you and take you to heaven." Instead of this, "instant" salvation. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." 'Well, that is indeed a striking proof, but are there any other instances of great sinners being saved without going to purgatory?' 'Yes, madam, many. The Apostle Paul, who called himself the chief of sinners, ought, when he died, to have gone to purgatory: but remark what he says, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord" (II. Cor. v., 8). Now, madam, if there were a purgatory, the apostle would have said thus: "Absent from the body, I shall go to purgatory, and when my sins are purged away I shall be present with the Lord"; but notice, there is "no interval"; instantaneously—no sooner "absent" than he is "with the Lord." Now let us look at Phil. i., 21, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Would you consider it "gain" to go to purgatory?' 'Oh, no, monsieur; for all the French ladies have a horror of death, because of the purgatory that follows. Oh, I am so glad! I am convinced there is no place of torment called purgatory mentioned in God's Holy Word.' On leaving, she accepted an illustrated paper called 'Ami de la Maison,' dated July, 1887, which contained an account of our late Queen's conversations with her husband on his deathbed, of which we give some extracts:

'The Princess Alice played on the piano for her father, during his illness, some of his favorite hymns, especially "Rock of Ages." Turning round to look at Prince Albert, she saw his eyes were closed and his hands joined as in prayer. "Dear papa, are you asleep?" "Oh, no," was the reply; "I have such sweet thoughts." To his doctor, Prince Albert said, "I shall not recover, but I have no fear; I am ready to die."'

'The Queen and the Prince had frequent conversations on the future life, immortality, heaven, our true Fatherland. He said, "What we shall be when we meet in heaven, we do not exactly know; but we shall recognize each other, and shall spend eternity together. Of this I am quite certain."'

'Feeling the approach of death, the Prince said to the Queen, "Gutes frauchen" (My good little wife), embracing her, and leaning his head on her shoulder. The Queen bent over him, saying, "Es ist kleines frauchen" (It is your little wife). The Prince gave her a look of inexpressible tenderness, inclined his head, and, without any suffering, slept in death.'

The Queen wrote these following beautiful sentiments as to her deepest sorrow: 'One day I shall be in paradise with thee—why, then, should I weep? We shall live together in the vast mansions of our heavenly Father. Thy absence is now painful, it is true, but I would not, if I could, desire that thou shouldst still wander on the earth with me—even if it were possible for me to bring thee from above, from thy heavenly abode of celestial delights to this poor earth, I would not do it; for thou hast fought the battle of life, thou hast gained the victory. I shall go to thee, but thou wilt not come back to me. I know the way which will lead me to thee infallibly. It is the way which leads to God himself. Sin is the only thing which can separate me from God and from thee. My sorrow at thy death was

great, but great is now the joy of my soul. Blessed, happy spirit! thou art always my well-beloved, and thou drawest me to a better world—for the love of souls binds heaven and earth together. Many dear to my heart are with God. What heavenly joy is this thought!

'O my Father, who art in heaven, my Father, and also the Father of all the elect souls which belong to me—as I lifted my hands to thee in the cruel hour of separation, as I implored thee in the agony of my sorrow, crying unto thee with a supplicating voice, "Oh, spare to me my well-beloved"; so now to-day I lift my hands to thee, crying out in a transport of joy, "Thanks, praise to thee, O God, for having taken to thyself the one who was so dear to me." It is true his death has deeply affected my entire being, but I feel it has brought me nearer to thee. I am now more weaned from earth and all its pleasures—never shall I seek worldly good with immoderate desires—between myself and eternity there has been formed a new tie which will never be broken—hereafter I do not live on the earth only; I live in heaven—with thee, O God, and with the well-beloved whom thou gavest to me, and whom thou hast taken away.

'There was a time when the thought of death and of the cold tomb horrified me, and made me shudder. Then this world was heaven to me, and thy heaven, O God, was but a holy desert, in which I should wander as a stranger, whom no one knew and no one loved. I feared death, and I dreaded the future.

'But now it is the object of all my desire and of all my aspirations—it is my harbor of salvation, my Fatherland, my refuge, the abode where rests all I hold most precious. There are the friends of my heart and of my life, and in the happiest moments of my life I am surrounded by the loved ones who remain on the earth. I take pleasure in the thought that I shall be far happier in heaven. When darkness descends on the world, I say to myself, "Beyond this earth all will shine with an everlasting light that no cloud shall ever darken."

'With thy aid, O my Father, I will seek to keep thy commands—to live a life of love and devotion to my fellow-creatures, so as to enjoy thy love in the future life. Help me, O Lord Jesus, thou light of my soul.—Amen.'

'The effect of reading the experience of our Queen was such that under the Divine blessing this French widow was savingly converted to God, gave her heart to Jesus, applied for church-membership at the Rue de Lille, was admitted, and I had the joy of seeing her baptized, and sitting down at the Lord's table.

'The week after she had received the "Ami de la Maison," I remember how happy she appeared to be; and when the service was ended she ran to my seat, took both my hands in hers, and said, "Oh, monsieur, I am so happy! I have done like your Queen; I have believed in the Lord Jesus, and he has pardoned all my sins. I have no fear of purgatory now."'

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