



"The Great Big Coal."

SOME years ago a well-known infidel lecturer, after an address to pitmen and others in a colliery district, invited discussion, should any of his audience have anything to object to in the arguments he had brought forward, and the inferences he had drawn.

He waited some time, and probably was congratulating himself that he had carried his hearers to his own unholy conclusions, while Satan was chuckling that they had scored another victory, when one of the colliers rising to his feet among his dusty-looking butties, quietly addressed himself to the lecturer somewhat as follows:—
"Mr. —, a while ago there were a man workin' in yon pit along wi' me, and he were a very bad man as all on us knowed; and arter a while he 'come converted, Mr. —, and were a very good man. But he got along wi' a set of you infidel chaps, and they did him a sight o' harm, they did, Mr. —; and he went on very bad again sum'ut like what he'd bin afore, when one day a great big coal fell atop on his head as he were a workin' i' the pit, and what'n it do but knock him reet down on his knees, Mr. —; and Mr. —, he begun again

crying to the Lord wi' all the strength he'd got, to ha' mercy on him! Well, we got him out soon as no time, and Mr. —, do you know that great big coal did his head a power o' good, for it just knock'n clean out o' it them there infidel notions o' yourn for good an' all? And I just a bit think as how a great big coal, likes o' that, might do you a sight o' good, too, Mr. —; it's all I've got to say o' your lectur."

We have no information as to what effect this striking address, so full of plain, homely truth, produced upon the lecturer or upon his audience; but we are thoroughly convinced that an incident like this, calculated to arouse the conscience by indicating the state of a soul when brought face to face with God, is worth more than a thousand arguments addressed to human reason, however ably presented or logically concluded.

Oh, dear reader, ever upon the verge of eternity as you unquestionably are, ask yourself honestly, were you in circumstances of like danger to that poor pitman, how would it be with you? Can you say it is well, eternally well, with your soul? Were your life trembling in the balance this moment (and who knows better than you that your breath is in your nostrils, and God could recall it at any instant, or smite you with fatal sickness, or visit you with what men call an "accident" this very day?) do you really think, with death staring you in the face, that the sophistries of the sceptic, or the flimsy arguments of the infidel, would afford a solid foundation for the rest and confidence of your soul?

Away with such idle fancies, which lure men on to eternal perdition! Flee for your life, listening no longer

to the lie of Satan! Long enough have you tried the forbearance of God, and tempted His longsuffering goodness. He beseeches you to be reconciled, that you may be delivered through His grace from the impending wrath. If God be not a myth, a fiction, a mere phantom of the mind—and even Satan, with all his baneful influence over you, and much as you might like it to be so, cannot satisfy or convince you of that—if there be indeed a God in heaven, who is true to His own holy character, He *must* bring judgment by-and-by upon the despisers of the riches of His grace in the Son of His love. And then woe, unutterable, unmitigated woe to those who have refused His proffered mercy. May He stamp these things in power upon your soul, dear reader. God is a reality; death is a reality; the coming of Christ a reality; eternity a reality; the lake of fire a reality—the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched!

Do you not indeed *know* that these are REALITIES—*divine* realities, and realities for *eternity*? May God Himself grant unto you, dear reader, repentance unto salvation. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the WRATH OF GOD *abideth* on him.”
(John iii. 36.) W. R.

Lost! Lost! Lost!

IT is much more easy to convince people that they are in danger of perishing in their sins than it is to awaken them to the consciousness that they are already lost. But Scripture is very clear that every

man who has not got salvation is even now *lost*, and can only pass out of that condition by being *saved*. (See Matt. xviii. 11 ; Luke xix. 10, xv. 4, 6, 24 ; 2 Cor. iv. 3.)

A few years ago, a boy was sent one winter's evening upon some errand, and was overtaken by a dreadful storm. The snow fell so thick and drifted so heavily that he missed his way, and continuing to wander up and down for several hours was *ready to perish*. About midnight, however, a gentleman in the neighbourhood, hearing as he thought a sound of distress, opened his window, when he distinguished a human voice at a long distance, crying in a piteous tone, "Lost! lost! lost!" Humanity led him instantly to send in search, when the poor boy was found, rescued, and restored.

But how great a multitude of poor sinners have either never made the discovery that they *are lost* and *ready to perish*, or else wander on in fatal indifference, having never once lifted up their voice to God, either in confession of their real state or as seeking deliverance from it. Thus from being already lost they pass on UNTIL THEY PERISH.

One who is lost may be recovered and saved ; but dear reader, if you perish you will be beyond rescue, for all who perish must spend eternity in the lake of fire prepared not for men, but for the devil and his angels !
'Matt. xxv. 41.)

W.R.