

Something to Rest upon.

"**B**IDE with me, and give me some comfort if you can. I am dying, and I'm afraid to go away into darkness alone, and they have given me nothing to rest upon,—nothing—nothing;" and the head of the speaker moved to and fro on the pillow, while her bright and clear, though sunken and restless, eyes seemed to pierce me through. "Penance, good works," she murmured, "it's too late for those, too late—purgatory—eh, but it's awfu', it's awfu', and how could I ever get out? Who would say masses for the soul of the likes of me? My gudeman couldna get them said, though he would try his best. Oh, I have nothing to rest on,—nothing, nothing; and I'm dying, and who kens what's before me?"

The words were spoken with a mixture of Scotch and Irish accent. The speaker was Irish by birth, but had lived nearly all her life in Scotland.

Her bed was in the side room of a large

hospital ward. The nurses had had to move her from the general ward, for she started and moaned all the night through, so that the other patients could not sleep. Her constant cry was, "I canna' dee. I canna' dee. It's all dark, and I am afeard. Oh, they've given me nothing to rest upon."

It was the first time, after some months of absence, that I had been to that hospital, and I had already outstayed my time in the large ward, and had only gone into the side ward for a moment to leave some fresh roses, but this piteous wail of a soul in agony arrested me by her bed.

"Have you never heard of One who said, 'Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest,' even Jesus, the blessed Son of God, who came down here and suffered, and shed His blood and died, that He might be able to give rest to every weary heart that comes to Him?"

The restless turning of the head ceased, an eager gaze, pitiful in its intensity, was still fixed on me. "Sit down," she said, "don't go yet, it's all dark with me. I want rest, I am dying, and I don't know what's to come after, and they've given me nothing to rest upon."

"Are you so ill?" I asked, "is the pain great?"

“Aye, the pain is bad enough, but I’m no thinking of that, it’s my soul I’m troubled about. I’m a sinner, and I’m dying, and I canna’ meet the Almighty, and I’ve no time to do anything now.”

Opening my little Bible, I read, “‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners.*’ Will that do to rest upon?”

“You do not know what a sinner I have been. I’ve lived a long life, and forgotten God all through, though I aye meant to do better, and now I’m afeard to meet Him. Those words canna’ be for sinners like me. Who says them?”

“God says them in His own Word, by the pen of the apostle Paul; and hear what else He says by the apostle John, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,’ and when God told the apostle to write that word ‘*all,*’ He meant all. Not one sin of any sinner was unknown to Him, or forgotten by Him.”

“Eh, if I could but be sure, if I could but trust to it, but there must be works to be done, to get the pardon and penance I can do nothing; I’ve no time, and no strength.”

“Then you are just the very one that

Christ came for, for the Lord Jesus must do all the work Himself. He will not do part, and let you make up the rest. Listen again to what God says in Romans v. 6: 'For when we were yet *without strength*, Christ died for the *ungodly*;' and again (v. 8), 'But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Is not that your case exactly, without strength, ungodly, a sinner?"

"Aye, that's me exactly, for sure. Eh, if I could but feel certain; but God hates sin, I know that."

"Yes, He hates sin, but He loves the sinner; and what He proposes to do is to put his or her sins all away, so that He can have the sinner in His presence, and show His love to him or her. Hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when He was on earth:—'For God so *loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now you are in the world that He so loved, and 'whosoever' means everybody, so that must take in you. Then the question is, Do you believe Him? Can you trust His work alone, without any of yours? I must leave you now, but I will turn down the leaves of this Testament, that you may

find the places easily, and read the words for yourself."

"I am no scholar, I canna' read a word. Eh, must you go? If I could but get rest."

"I will read the verses once more for you," I said; and turning to the patient who occupied the only other bed in the ward, and who was pretty well, and up, I asked if she would read them to her afterwards.

"I'll do anything that I can if it will give her a morsel of comfort, poor body," she answered in a kindly way, "for she's sore putten about."

I read once more slowly and distinctly the precious words, "Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*," and added, "He did what He came to do, for the apostle John says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Then we learn that He wants no doing of ours, 'For when we were yet *w^hout strength*,' that is, could do nothing, 'Christ died for the ungodly;' and though God does hate sin, yet He loves the sinner, 'For God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;' and 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"It's all new to me," she said; "oh, if I

could but take it all in, and find rest. Can you stay to read the words once again?"

The deepening twilight made it impossible to see to read any more, but I repeated the well-known words this time from memory, with the earnest hope that the Lord Himself would print them on her heart; and then I said good-bye, promising to return on the day but one following.

Next time I went I found her eagerly watching for me. "You are late," she said; "I was afraid you had forgotten."

"Only five minutes late; I was stopped on the stairs by a patient going out. Have you any good news for me?"

"No. I canna' see light through it. I have aye heard that we must have works, and I hae none; and how can I rest, and my time I know is so short?"

A terribly distressing cough almost choked her at each word or two, but she wanted no sympathy for her bodily illness. I never saw any one so entirely indifferent to bodily suffering, because so absorbed by concern about her soul.

"Do you believe this Bible is *God's* Word?" I asked.

"I do that," she said.

"Then hear what God says in the Epistle to the Romans (iv. 5), 'To him that *worketh*

not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

"That is awfu' strange. What can it mean? I never heard tell o' the likes o' that before."

"It means that we could not save ourselves by our works, for our works, done by sinful men and women, must be like ourselves, sinful too,—'filthy rags,' God calls them. But when we could not save ourselves, the Lord Jesus came and did a work that could save us. He took our place, bore our punishment, hung on the cross, and was there forsaken of God because He had our sins upon Him. He offered Himself to God, the sinless One instead of the sinful; and God accepted the offering, and you and I can be accepted because of the perfection of that offering. God can be just now, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. He can not only pardon, but justify us,—that is, make us as clean as though we had never sinned. A righteous God must punish sin, but the Lord Jesus became our Substitute,—that is, He took the sin on Himself, and He took the punishment due to it, so it is His work that must save you, not your works. As I read to you on Monday, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his (God's) Son

cleanseth us from all sin.' Will not the love of God and the work of Christ give you something, both solid and restful, to pillow your weary troubled soul upon?"

A wistful look rested on me as I spoke a little longer to her. She was terribly weak and exhausted by the incessant cough, and I feared to stay too long with her; but ere I left I read once more to her the verses I had read on my last visit, with this added one, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." As I rose to go, she said, "You'll no be long in coming back; my time here is very short, I know."

Three days after, as I entered her room, I did not need to ask the question, "Have you any good news for me?" Instead, I said, "You have good news to-day for me, I see it by your face."

"Oh, such good news," she said; "it was Thursday night, in the night. Bit by bit my neighbour had learned me the words, till I knew each one of those verses, and the light came in all sudden like. It was between night and morning, and I was saying to myself, for well nigh on to the fiftieth time, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' and a light seemed

to shine right into my heart, and I said out loud, 'I believe You, Lord, then I am clean; Lord, I do thank You so much.' I never slept, and I never felt any pain all the rest of the night. I know you'll be so glad, I wanted you to come that I might tell you the load is all gone. My sins I mean, not one of my many many sins forgotten, but *all* washed away by the blood of Jesus. This is rest. If only my gudeman knew it too. But I've gotten my neighbour to write and tell him all about it. He'll understand it quicker than I did, for he is a scholar, and he was brought up different too. I'll no see him again on earth, for he isna like to come so far to me. But I am glad I ever came here. I only thought of my body when I came, but God thought of my soul; and when He turned my thoughts to my soul, I didna mind about the body, if I could only get rest for my mind."

The words were spoken a few at a time, she stopping for breath in between each little sentence, but with such a glad ring in her feeble voice.

I never heard anything more of her history than that her husband lived more than a hundred miles away, and was old, that he had been a good husband to her, and was a "scholar;" and she seemed to feel quite con-

fidant that if only he heard what the Lord had done for her, he would trust Him too.

Before she rested her troubled soul on Christ and His finished work, she was too anxious to care for any other subject to be spoken about; and after she found out that Jesus had loved her and died for her long before she ever thought about Him, this subject was so sweet to her that she grudged my occupying a moment of the short times we had together, even by asking about her poor suffering body, therefore I never knew as little of the earthly history of any one I ever visited as of hers.

“Dinna mind the poor body,” she would say, “I shall soon have done with that, and I like to hear about my Saviour, and have bits to feed upon, ye ken, in the nights. Though, indeed, it’s good nights I’m getting the now,—quiet bits of sleep on and off,—but when I waken I aye likes to have something put by to think upon.”

Her need had brought her to the Saviour, and He fully met that need; and then during the short time she remained on earth she learned something of the One who had met and blessed her, of how He had done far more than put away her sins and save her from hell. He had glorified God, had manifested Him perfectly, both as Light and

Love, had swept away the foul stain of sin from before Him, and left Him free to follow the dictates of His own heart of love and in perfect righteousness to be able to give the Father's kiss, and the best robe, and the ring and the shoes, to the returning prodigal.

"Eh, but it's grand. Eh, but it's just wonderfu', and I'll be with Him soon,—very soon. But it's grand to learn a bit about Him before I go," were some of her favourite comments on what was read to her.

Several of the Lord's people saw her, and were struck with the simplicity of her faith in the all-sufficient work of the Lord Jesus, and her childlike attachment to Him.

The peace which now she enjoyed seemed to act on her body too. There were no more restless turnings and moanings at night, and frightened awakenings. The patient in the next bed told me that when she slept now, it was like the untroubled sleep of a child, and it was spoken of freely in the big ward that some great change had come over her.

And thus quietly and peacefully the last and greatest change came, and He whom, not having seen, she had loved, though only for a few short weeks, Himself, one early autumn morning, put her to sleep for the last time on earth, to awaken in His own

blessed presence, and with Him to await the moment for which the whole Church waits, when "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Reader, have you something to rest on,— something that will satisfy God as well as satisfy you? As one beautifully expresses it, "The eyes of God and of the sinner meet on Jesus, and both are satisfied."

" Jesus ! I rest in Thee,
 In Thee myself I hide ;
 Laden with guilt and misery,
 Where can I rest beside ?
 'Tis on Thy meek and lowly breast
 My weary soul alone can rest.

Thou Holy One of God,
 The Father rests in Thee ;
 And in the savour of that blood
 Which speaks to Him for me,
 The curse is gone—through Thee I'm blest ;
 God rests in Thee—in Thee I rest."

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