



Six Twenty-Pound Notes.

THE sun shone gaily, and the farmer sat on a low wall overlooking the quarry where a man was working. He was no doubt thinking over his last sale of farm produce, for he had not been there long before he drew out a roll of notes and examined them. They were six in number, and for £20 each.

How far in thought the farmer travelled we know not, or whether he was meditating how best to lay out his funds in seeds or stock; but he shortly turned his steps homeward. Not long had he been at his farm before he thought again of his notes, and to his chagrin discovered they were not in his possession.

Trying to recollect himself, he speedily concluded he must have forgotten to take them from the wall, where they would still be found. But he was mistaken. Not a sign of any one of them rewarded his resolute, anxious search. The notes were gone. Who could have found them? Reflecting again, he remembered whom he had seen in the quarry; and, suspecting the man, he accused him of having them. But the quarryman, instead of confessing the truth, *denied the charge with indignation!*

All the while the £120 was in his possession, for he had found and appropriated the notes. And, dear

reader, though the poor farmer was nonplussed, and could do nothing but stop payment of the notes, which he did, yet *did not God know?* Oh, how terrible it is that men—many at least—are practically *infidel* as to the very existence of God, or surely they would remember that He knoweth, and that no denial of the truth blinds His eyes to their sin!

And now what did God do with this grievous transgressor, this liar, this thief? Man could do nothing, for no human eye had beheld the evil act. Satan was doubtless busy enough with the man, persuading him to stick to the lie, to face it out, and hold fast the money; hadn't he found it, and didn't he want it far more than the farmer, who had ten times the comforts he had, and perhaps, after all, would never miss it? But *what did God do with this man?* Well, first of all He gave him ample space for repentance. For two long years He gave him this and constant mercies withal. Week after week He gave him strength to earn his bread and health to enjoy it. And this while the man kept up his character among men, and went to chapel or church, it may be, and heard the word of God preached, and the way of salvation presented. We say it may have been so; but one thing is clear, that all the while, yea for a hundred weeks, he *hugged his sin* and his *ill-gotten treasure!*

And then God's hand was uplifted! The quarryman rose from his bed and went to his work as usual that day, but it was *for the last time*. The finger of God, as it were, just touched the ground under the shadow of which he was working, and in an instant two hundred tons of rock and earth engulfed him, and the poor fellow was BURIED ALIVE! A number of work-

men set on to recover his body, working late and early for two whole days before he could be reached. At length the mangled corpse was disinterred, and reverent hands conveyed him to his cottage. But, alas, when friends examined his pockets, there was produced in the light of day the fearful disclosure of his guilt !

Carefully folded up and enwrapped with a piece of rag, within a steel tobacco-box, were the missing notes, the whole £120, just as they had left the farmer's hands when he sat on the wall two years before ! Sad, sad revelation of unconfessed guilt ! And what had he gained by it ? Had he not sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind ? What, oh, " what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world " (righteously even, and surely worse if unrighteously) " and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? "

And do you tell me, my reader, that you are guiltless of such a transgression as that of the wretched quarryman, and would not condescend to so base an act ? I freely accept your assertion. I will allow you to be amongst men both an upright and a downright man ; but doth not God look for more ? Doth not He look down somewhat deeper than even the tobacco-box ; ah ! deeper than human eyes ever penetrated ? Two hundred tons of earth did not suffice to prevent the damning evidence that box contained from being exposed to human eyes ; nor can aught else than the blood of Christ prevent your sins being, as it were, proclaimed on the housetops before an assembled universe. This very moment doth not *conscience* whisper to you of many and many a sin in which you stand uncleared before those eyes which are as a flame of fire, the piercing gaze of a thrice-holy God ? " BE SURE

YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT" — not perhaps in this world, but how surely by-and-by! It is only now and again that God acts in the striking way our little narrative illustrates; but ere long how swift and terrible a judgment will fall upon *all* who were afforded space for repentance, but only hardened themselves in their sins until the day of grace closed, and judgment, like a mighty avalanche, descended to their eternal destruction!

Dear reader, escape for thy life. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." Has He not said, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my council, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you"! (Prov. i. 24-27.) Not yet, however, are fulfilled those terrible words which have gone forth from His lips because of His righteous character; but THE GOODNESS OF GOD IS LEADING THEE TO REPENTANCE to learn the efficacy of the blood of Christ for thy sins. And if thy heart be drawn by faith to that precious Saviour as thy Saviour, His own blessed Word to thee for thy present peace, and for thy eternal joy, is, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

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