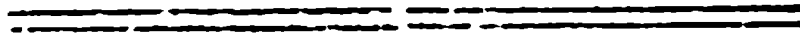


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**" A Leap in the
Dark."**



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“A Leap in the Dark.”

“**T**HEN to you death will be a leap in the dark?”

“Well, yes, just so; I suppose it will be.”

The one who made this terrible confession was a shoemaker of middle age, slowly nearing the grave under the fell power of consumption. Worse than this, he was an infidel,—a determined, avowed sceptic. I had been asked to visit him in his attic quarters by an old friend, who was himself a shoemaker, but, through grace, a Christian, and naturally most anxious about his unbelieving acquaintance. His friend obtained permission for me to call by saying that, as a physician, perhaps I could

give him some prescription which would relieve his sufferings; and, when he begged me go, told me briefly of the sadly darkened state of the shoemaker's mind, urging me to put Christ before him if I could.

Having carefully examined him, and thus got his confidence by the interest which I displayed in his case, he asked me, at length, if I thought his condition amenable to cure. To this I replied that I was sorry to have to tell him I did not think he could recover.

“Then, how long do you think I have got to live, Doctor?” he said.

“A few months, perhaps a year,” I replied.

He made no reply and the stolid look of indifference on his gloomy face was in no way changed by my remark. As he said no more, I continued,—

“And are you ready to die, Mr. F—?”

"Of course I am, as ready as you, or any one else."

"And what has made you ready? Are your sins forgiven, and all washed away in the precious blood of Christ?"

"Oh, that's all stuff. I don't believe in any of that nonsense. I'm a free-thinker."

"So I regret to perceive; but your being a freethinker will not fit you for God's presence?"

"I tell you I don't believe in a God at all, so I shan't have to meet Him!"

"Your not believing in Him will not help you to evade the solemn certainty of having to meet Him. The Scripture says, 'So then, every one of us shall give account of Himself to God.'"

"But I don't believe in the Bible. It's only fit for old women who can't reason. No reasonable man believes it in these days."

"Well, I am not an old woman, but, I trust, a reasonable man, and yet I am free to confess that I believe the Bible to be the Word of God. I believe it heartily from cover to cover."

"And what good has it done you?"

"Untold good, thank God. It has given me the knowledge of Himself in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I know from its blessed pages that my sins are all forgiven, that I have eternal life, and, though I am sure of nothing for a moment in this life, I am quite clear and happy as to the future were I to die, or the Lord to come."

"Oh, that's all a delusion. Nobody knows anything about the future. How can they? No one has come back from the dead to tell us what comes after death."

"That is a great mistake. Why, the One who died for me is the very One

who has come back from the dead, to assure me as to my future blessedness, as the fruit and consequence of His death for me."

"I don't believe a word of it. No one can know what will be after death."

"Then to you death will be a leap in the dark?"

"Well, yes, just so; I suppose it will be," was his rather hesitating reply.

"Ah, my friend!" I exclaimed, "I am far better off than you, through God's infinite grace. If I should die, death will be a leap in the light."

"How do you make that out?"

"Because I have got the light now. Christ is my Light. He said, 'I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John viii. 12). And He said also, 'Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come

upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness' (John xii. 35, 36, 46). Both you and I are alike sinners before God, but the difference between us is this:—You do not believe in the Lord Jesus, are walking in darkness, and know not whither you are going, viz., to judgment, and the lake of fire; I do believe in Him, have got out of darkness by letting in the light, and know clearly where I am going, viz., 'to be with Christ, which is far better.' Don't you think now that I have the best of it? All I can say is, that a man who takes *a leap in the dark*, when he may take *a leap in the light*, must be a downright fool. What say you to that?"

He paused a moment or two, and then replied, "Well, sir, I never looked at it quite in that way before. I won't say there's not some reason in your argument."

With this our interview closed. I left him with my heart lifted to God that His Word might do its own work in his heart and conscience. I never saw him again. Upwards of twelve years have rolled away. Last June his friend, who had asked me to visit him, called to see me, and said, "Do you recollect, many years ago, visiting an infidel shoemaker in L—— Street?"

Perfectly ; and what took place between us too. What became of him?"

He died in the Royal Infirmary just a year after you saw him."

"Died an infidel?"

"Oh no, thank God, he died a happy Christian, confessing his faith in the Lord, and giving a bright testimony. He dated the beginning of the change in his heart from that morning you saw him. Something you said to him about 'a leap in the dark' stuck to him, and he was never happy till he found the Lord."

"The Lord be praised," was my rejoinder, as I heard, with deep joy, of the Lord's grace to one who seemed so fortified in unbelief. It is, however, but another illustration of His goodness and of the truth of His Word. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither,

but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 8-11).

And now, my dear reader, let me, in penning a few concluding lines, ask you, Are you still in "darkness"; or, have you received Christ as your "light"? When you pass into eternity, will it be for you "a leap in the dark," or "a leap in the light"?

I beseech you, most affectionately, not to put these queries from you. Answer them honestly before God. If you cannot reply, "To me death would be a leap in the light," turn to Jesus now. Trust Him as you read these lines, and your eternal salvation is sure.

“I am come a light into the world, that *whosoever believeth* on me should not abide in darkness,” may well win the confidence of your heart towards the blessed One who speaks, and who

“Suffered in the shadow
That we might see the light.”

Yes, He tasted death, that we might live; endured the darkness, that we might enjoy the light; and sustained the judgment of God, that we might be freely justified. “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” Again, “But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time,

without sin, unto salvation" (1 Pet. iii. 18; Heb. ix. 26-28).

Trust Him then, simply, my reader; and then when called hence, whether by falling asleep in Jesus, or, better, His coming in the air for His own (1 Thess. iv. 13-18), to you and to me, through infinite grace, it will be

A LEAP IN THE LIGHT.

