

A Student Story ; OR, Bread Cast upon the Waters.

THE shades of winter evening were rapidly deepening, and flinging obscurity over the subjects which lay upon the tables of a well-known London dissecting-room, a quarter of a century ago, as a group of medical students might have been seen standing round one of these tables, evidently, for the moment, deeply engaged. The fading light, shut books, closed dissecting cases, and somewhat grave faces of the dozen listeners, showed that anatomy was not the topic in hand, as a seated student, who had till then been busy with his part, replied to the queries that came from every quarter of the group.

The conversation had been begun by S——, a typically thoughtless and careless young would-be medico, who, in passing the

seated dissector—known to be a Christian—had railingly said, “Well, Spurgeon, how many have you baptized lately?” Medical students are notorious for their love of bestowing a *sobriquet* on all and sundry, from professors downwards ; so the student thus addressed had, soon after he joined the college, and it leaked out that he occasionally preached the gospel, been dubbed with the name of the well-known and popular preacher.

“I do not baptize ; I only preach the gospel, when, and as best I can,” was the rejoinder.

“Oh ! you don’t baptize, you only preach. Come, tell us what you say ;” and the loud tone of banter in which this was said quickly gathered, as it was intended it should, a little coterie of kindred spirits, expecting some fun from the roasting of the young Christian. At that moment, however, the senior demonstrator of anatomy, a grave demure man of whom the students stood rather in awe, joined the group, and took part in the conversation later on.

“You want to know what I preach, do you ? I preach glad tidings ; the love of God to ruined man ; the death and resurrection of His Son the Lord Jesus, and that faith in Him alone secures salvation ; that man is guilty, undone, lost ; and that the

'Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Human efforts are all in vain. Man's so-called good works are all valueless to win salvation. 'Salvation is of the Lord,' and 'the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles;' whosoever will may have it, without money or price. 'The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The last time I preached I spoke on the 10th of Acts, where it says about the Saviour, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*'"

"And do you mean to say that your sins are all forgiven, and that you are saved, Spurgeon?" continued his first interrogator.

"Through God's grace I can most certainly say so. I have had that joy for more than a year now."

"Well, that is presumption, and no mistake," "Did you ever hear the like?" "That's rather good to believe," put in a chorus of voices at once.

Nothing daunted, the assailed one replied "How can it be presumption to believe God? If my salvation depended on my good works, I might well be filled with doubt and uncertainty; but if it depend, as it does, on the perfectly finished and

accepted work of the Lord Jesus for me, it would be presumption to doubt that salvation, when God says so plainly in His Word to every believing soul, 'Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace' (Luke vii.). When an awakened sinner once asked, 'What must *I do* to be saved?' God's Spirit replied, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*' And further, He has said in Ephesians ii., 'By grace *are ye saved* through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : *not of works*, lest any man should boast.' It surely cannot be presumption to believe the God of truth, when He says He sent His Son to save me, and that when I trust in Him I am saved."

"But you do not give sufficient place to our works," put in the senior demonstrator, who had been listening quietly till now.

"If God gives them no place, sir, had we not better leave them out of consideration? It says in Romans iv., 'If Abraham were justified *by works*, he hath whereof to glory, but *not before God*. But what saith the scripture? Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him

that *worketh not*, but *believeth* in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' Our works are either 'wicked' (Col. i. 21) or 'dead' (Heb. ix. 14), and certainly they cannot save us. Christ's work is finished, by it God has been glorified; and it is due to Christ that the one who forswears his own works, and trusts alone in Him, should partake of the benefits and fruits of that atoning work of His, by which alone can sin be put away."

"Ah! that makes it far too easy," said one; "Depend upon it, Spurgeon, you are all wrong," said another; and with varying other such comments the gathering broke up, and the dissector was left alone to pack up his tools in quietness, wondering the while what God would bring out of the incident. The bread of life had been simply presented; whether any were hungry enough to eat thereof, was a question. At any rate, the young believer found comfort to his heart in the words, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccles. xi. 1), and "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 11).

Two days later this young student was again busy with his scalpel and forceps, sitting alone at a table, when one of his seniors, named J——, brought his part, instruments, and book, and seated himself opposite to him, and began to dissect. Work went on quietly for a little, and then J—— said, "That was strange stuff you were telling the fellows the other afternoon. I said nothing at the time, but I don't believe what you were saying. I don't at all pretend to be a religious chap myself, but I am sure a man would need to work hard to get to heaven. Your way of it would not be mine at all, if I cared for that sort of thing, which I don't."

"It is not my way, J——, it is God's, and that makes an immense difference. When the Lord was upon earth, and the Jews came and asked Him, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' do you know what He answered them?"

"No. What?"

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent' (John vi. 29). To believe in the Son of God is all that you or I have to do to get saved."

"But, man, it stands to reason that we ought to do something ourselves. Why, by .

your way everybody may get saved. Do you believe they will?"

"No, I believe nothing of the sort; for alas, all will not take the place of being lost sinners, and hence do not feel their need of a Saviour, and so do not trust Him. His words are true: 'They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' The whole, the righteous—or those who think they are such—need Him not, but sinners are welcome to Him. As one of the latter, I have received Him, and He has saved me out and out, blessed be His name!"

"Oh, that's easily said, but I don't believe in your way of salvation at all, and you will never convince me that that is the way to be saved;" and so saying J—— relapsed into silence, shortly after left the table, and for the rest of their student life took uncommon good care not to give an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* with the man who knew Christ had saved him.

Some years rolled by; student days ceased, the ardently longed-for diplomas and degrees were possessed; and while J—— went into practice in the far West, the other went north of the Tweed, to extend his knowledge, while filling the post of house

physician in a large hospital. To that same city, in course of time, who should come but J——, attracted, as he supposed, by certain medical advantages of which he would avail himself ; but led doubtless by the gracious hand of God, who had not taken His eye off him since the day an arrow, shot at a venture, had pierced the worldly coat-of-mail he wore in the London dissecting-room. Great was J——'s surprise to find his former acquaintance chief in those wards where he wanted to gather clinical information. Flung thus across his path again, J——'s friend felt greatly interested in him, and one Lord's Day said, "Do you ever go to hear the Word of God preached now?"

"Sometimes ; but I have not been since I came north. Where do you go?"

"I? Oh! I go to —— Street."

"Who preaches there?"

"The preachers are various."

"Do they preach well?"

"That would be an open question. I believe they preach the truth, and that is what you and I want. You might do worse than come ;" and so saying, a little notice of the meeting was handed to him, which he took, with the remark, "Perhaps I will turn in some night."

That evening the preacher was reading

the 7th of Luke, when the door gently opened, and the unbelieving, but evidently interested, young doctor entered. His surprise was not small to find in the preacher the one who had invited him; but the Lord's sermon of twelve words: "THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN. THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE; GO IN PEACE," soon riveted him; and though he did not go "in peace," he left impressed, and aroused to a sense of his need and danger, such as he had never experienced before.

The next Lord's Day found the doctor again present, as an aged and grey-haired servant of God sweetly unfolded the touching parable of Luke xv., and showed how, when man was *lost*, Jesus came after him; when he was *dead*, how the Spirit quickened him; and, when he returned *repentant*, how the Father welcomed and rejoiced over him. Conviction of sin was now evident in the young physician, and two Lord's Days later, when he again heard his medical friend preach from the words, "Wilt thou go with this man?" he felt he must decide for Christ that night. He stayed to the second meeting for anxious inquirers; and then in converse with his friend, as they walked towards the hospital together, admitted that he had never been easy since the conversa-

tion in the dissecting-room. Persuaded in his mind that what he had heard was not true, he had gone home, searched the Bible for support, only to find that he was wrong himself, and that what he had heard was the truth. Convinced that he was wrong, and that God's salvation was free to all, by simple faith in Jesus, he had balanced the blessings of the gospel against "the pleasures of sin for a season;" the devil had kicked the beam the wrong way, so he shut up the Bible, and turned again to the world with its sin and folly, but had never had an hour's peace. Now he saw he was lost, and was asked, "Do you believe that Jesus came to save the lost?"

"I do; I believe He came to save me, and I believe in Him."

"Then are you not saved?"

"That is just the difficulty. I don't feel sure."

"Well," said his friend, "if God is worth believing on two counts, why not on the third? When God says in His Word you are a lost sinner, what say you?"

"I believe Him," he replied.

"Good. And when He says He sent His Son to die for you, and that if you trust in Him you shall be saved, what do you say?"

"I believe Him, with all my heart."

“Quite right. Now then, when He says, ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life’ (John iii. 36), are you going to doubt Him?”

“That won’t do. If He speaks truly on the two counts, He must speak as truly on the third. Yes, I see it. I believe in His Son, and I have everlasting life. He says it, and it must be true. Thank God, I am saved, forgiven,—without any works of my own,—by simple faith in Jesus.”

“One question more: ‘Wilt thou go with this man?’” “I will go!” was the emphatic reply; and the doctor started for glory, and is yet on his road, sure of the end through grace.

Reader, have you started yet? If not, just start at once.

“ We know there’s a bright and a glorious home,
Away in the heavens high,
Where all the redeem’d shall with Jesus dwell;
But will you be there, and I?
Will you be there, and I?
Will you be there, and I?
Where all the redeem’d shall with Jesus dwell;
But will you be there, and I?

In robes of white, o’er the streets of gold,
Beneath a cloudless sky,
They walk in the light of their Father’s smile;
But will you be there, and I?

From every kingdom of earth they come
To join the triumphal cry,
Singing, 'Worthy the Lamb that once was slain;
But will you be there, and I?

If you take the loving Saviour now,
Who for sinners once did die,
When He gathers His own in that bright home
Then you'll be there, and I.

If we are shelter'd by the cross,
And through the blood brought nigh,
Our utmost gain we'll count but loss,
Since you'll be there, and I.



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