

GOING
WHERE

?



Going Where ?



IT is related of a dying infidel watchmaker in the Midlands that, during his last twenty-four hours, he repeated over and over again these words, "I'm going, I don't know where !"

The language of his life-time had been, "I'm going, I don't care where." But, now that the weight of death's icy hand was upon him, all his hardened carelessness and bravery forsook him ; and had you investigated what was wrapped up in that dying cry, "I'm going, I don't know where," there is little doubt you would have found that

it meant this, "I'm going, utterly overwhelmed with the question, Where ?"

Who has not heard the excited cry of some angry foot-passenger as he has but narrowly escaped the wheels of a passing vehicle, "Why don't you look where you are going ?" or the sharp retort of the ruffled driver, "Why don't you look where *you* are going ?" One meaning, "Why be so careless as to do me an injury ?" and the other, "Why be so reckless as to run the risk ?"

One ship, we will suppose, is passing another on the high seas. They are sufficiently near to exchange greetings.

"Whither bound ?" inquires the officer in charge of one of the vessels.

“ Don't know,” is signalled back from the captain of the other ship.

“ He doesn't understand the question. Ask again, ‘ Whither bound ? ’ ”

“ Don't know,” is again the answer returned.

“ But is she not an English vessel of such and such a line ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Then inquire once more, ‘ Whither bound ? ’ ”

And then, as before, is signalled the same unaccountable answer, “ Don't know,” only this time he adds, “ Nobody can know ! ”

Who would not judge such a man to be more fit for a madhouse than for the command of a first-class British trader ? or else that one so

utterly reckless deserved to have his certificate cancelled the next port he called at ?

But stay, my unconverted reader. What are all the fine ships in the world, with their costly cargoes into the bargain, in comparison with the value of your one soul ? Yet if we cry, “ Whither bound ? ” would your answer be more satisfactory than this captain’s ? Consider.

We are reminded, as one year follows upon the heels of another, how rapidly we are approaching the end of life’s little voyage. The end ? Yes, think of it, the end !

No one on earth can assure you of even one more New Year’s Day in this world ; and, with this in view, we cannot forbear raising the passenger’s cry in your ears, and

ask, "Why don't you look where you are going?" We do not raise the cry angrily, but we cannot help raising it anxiously. The issues are so tremendous, the consequences of neglect so serious, that with all the earnestness we possess we would not only ask, "Why don't you look where you are going?" but, "Why don't you know? for you may know."

"I do not feel disposed to face such questions," you may possibly answer. Permit the writer, then, to face them for you, and in the light of God's Word to make bare the root of the matter. The secret of the mischief is simply summed up in two words—fear and unbelief. To explain. Are you not conscious of the fact that to look where you are going would effectually spoil

all your present enjoyment—the pleasures of sin? You shut your eyes, therefore, to what lies before you, and, willingly ignorant, go blindly on sinning. You are afraid to look. Again, if you believed the truth of Scripture about your God-forgetting, worldly course, you would know well enough where you are going. In proof of this carefully note the following statements :—

“When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin : and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1 : 15. “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,” Prov. 16 : 25. “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways

of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment," Eccles. 11 : 9.

What a ring of reality there is about these statements ! What certain evidence that death and judgment are the inevitable results of a course of sin ! But, alas ! you close your eyes for fear of being made uncomfortable ; you harden your heart in unbelief, and persistently sin on. Be honest with your own soul : is this not the truth ? Are you not both fearful and unbelieving ? And are not these the two great reasons why you are not a Christian to-day ?

Some there are, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who know that their names are written in heaven—written in the book of life. Yours

is written also—written in the book of truth. Nor is this any secret, for if you had the courage to look for yourself you could easily find it. It is in Revelation 21 : 8, in the verse which begins with “ The fearful, and unbelieving,” and ends with “ the second death.”

Is it not high time to awake, think you ? Oh ! that God would bring you to repentance ere you lay this message aside. That “ going, I don’t care where ” kind of spirit won’t do for a dying hour, depend upon it, and remember

“ There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is Mercy’s day.”

But we have now a word to say to those who, though they have been taught to consider the assurance of salvation an impossibility, yet

really long to know the certainty of their blessing. Their language is, "How can I be sure?"

Our answer is simply this: If God has plainly expressed His mind about the matter (and God has spoken, as we shall seek to show), how can you be otherwise than sure, unless, indeed, you do not give Him credit for speaking the truth?

If you turn to the 13th chapter of the Acts you will there see that it is God's desire that believers should have the certainty of their justification; not a certain class of believers, but all that believe. Examine the passage carefully for yourself, especially verses 38 and 39. See how, by the Holy Ghost, the apostle of the Gentiles addresses the God-fearing ones at Antioch, for God has been pleased to record

it for the comfort of our hearts to-day :—

“ Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

Does this leave the question of the believer's present blessing in the least degree doubtful ? Nay, the very opposite.

A dying believer in the town of ——— was once asked about his prospect for eternity. Taking a bit of ice from his mouth, and holding it up to the light, he calmly and joyfully replied, “ My title is as clear as that ! ” And no wonder, with such evidence as this in Acts 13 to rest upon.

But this is not all that the believer is assured of, for we read in Romans 8 : 30, “ whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

So that, if the God of grace has justified us through Christ, He has pledged Himself to glorify us also with Christ. He has “ called us ” and “ justified ” us for that very purpose. Thus we read in 1 Peter 5 : 10, “ The God of all grace . . . hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus.”

“ Grace begun shall end in glory.”

But look at the believer's assurance from another standpoint. Turn to 1 John 5 : 13, and you will read these words : “ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal

life.” If this teaches that the believer may have this conscious knowledge now, what becomes of the teaching of those who will tell you that you cannot know it ?

But more. There is another great fact to consider ; and remember, He who is Himself the very Source and Spring of eternal life is responsible for this statement. Speaking of His own, John 10 : 28, He says, “ I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”

Now don't think that we intend to convey that there is no more in the thought of “ eternal life ” than that the one who has it will “ never perish,” for we are fully persuaded that it includes far, far more ; but it certainly includes this. We could not have eternal life and not be

saved from the wrath to come. But there is more in it than salvation from coming judgment. It involves for us a state of untold blessedness before God; it introduces us to the most unclouded intimacy with God the Father, and the Son—the fulness of heavenly joy. The King of England might save a rebel from the gibbet without introducing him to the princely society of the palace. And God might have made us sure of not perishing without introducing us to the innermost circle of his own delights. But how could we be thus introduced without being made sure of not perishing? Our title for glory assumes our escape from the pit, and leaves no question about it. Therefore we read, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.”

When God says, "Be it known," be sure therefore that "ye may know," and everyone who denies it raises a serious controversy both with the Word of God and its holy Author. Better be Paul the prisoner on a foundering ship, saying, "I believe God," than the most popular theologian casting a doubt upon what God has said. "Let God be true, but every man a liar," Rom. 3 : 4.

If you continue in sin and unbelief, be sure of what the end will be : "Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Make no mistake, God will keep His word.

If you repent and believe the gospel, be it known unto you that instead of being judged hereafter and missing the glory, you shall be

justified now and fitted for the glory.

“ Hath He said, and shall He not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ? ” Num. 23 : 19.

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