

**A PRIEST'S FEARS,
AND WHAT
CAME OF THEM**

A PRIEST'S FEARS, AND WHAT CAME OF THEM

THERE are at least two classes in the world to-day who would be glad to take the Bible out of our hands.

Those who belong to the first of these boldly ignore the authority of Scripture by denying its divine authorship. In other words, they refuse to believe that it is "THE WORD OF GOD." Then, in order to make good their contention, they try to point out what they blindly call "defects" and "contradictions," and get a ready hearing from those who would, if they could, stifle conscience and get rid of their responsibility as sinners. They make a short cut to the end they would fain reach by excluding the uncomfortable thought of coming judgment. If they could only persuade

themselves that “there is NO GOD to judge,” the disquieting question of judgment would soon be disposed of—at least so *they* think. Death they *cannot* escape. But as it is not convenient to admit that it is the “*wages of sin,*” lest even ordinary common sense should whisper the inquiry, *Who* inflicted this penalty, and *why* was it inflicted? they style it “the debt of Nature,” and, with as much show of bravado as they can muster, they pass it over.

They remind one of an old “gaol-bird” who has the impudence to tell his friends, as he steps into the prison van, that he is only going for a ride into the country!

But there is yet another class. These do not deny that the Scripture is the Word of God, and must therefore of necessity admit that there is divine

authority behind it. But knowing, by long experience, the result of its truths being received into the heart by simple faith in a divine communication, they find it convenient to maintain, that *ordinary* people cannot understand it, that only the *clergy* can properly interpret it to the laity! Like the “lawyers” when the Lord was upon earth, these men use all the influence they possess to “take away the Key of Knowledge.” And not only would they keep this key in their own hands, but *men’s consciences* also, if they could only induce their hearers to trust them.

But, thank God, spite of every attack, the Holy Scriptures are still here, and He who makes the truth effectual in men’s souls—the Holy Ghost—is here also. Men can get rid of neither. Infidelity may do its best to tear the book to pieces, and Romanism and

Anglican Ritualism may do their utmost to snatch it out of your hand, or bury it out of your sight ; but these two witnesses of Christ are in the world still, and God's gracious work goes on (see John 5 : 39 and chap. 15 : 26).

Let the writer relate to you an instance of how, notwithstanding all the opposition of man, God can and does bring about His own gracious ends and bless precious souls.

A young lady of our acquaintance was leaving her home in Germany to fill the post of French governess in a school in England. She was at this time a devout Roman Catholic. Before her departure the priest, her " father confessor," expressed grave fears as to the influence of certain things upon her when she landed in Protestant England (so called). Two things he tried to make her solemnly

promise him. First, that she would *never read a Bible*; second, that as it was a common custom in England for persons to put little religious leaflets into your hands, she would absolutely refuse them. While declining to bind herself by any definite promise, she assured him that she would certainly do her utmost to follow his advice. We shall see, presently, that the fears of this German priest as to the effect of *tract* and *Bible* were not altogether without foundation. Man proposes, and God disposes, no matter how much Satan opposes.

When the young governess reached her destination, one of her first duties was to take a junior reading-class in French. In this school, it appears, they made use of the French Bible as their ordinary reading-book for those studying that language. This religious governess

had never handled a Bible before, and when they told her that the portion for that day's reading was the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, she did not even know in which part of the book to look for it; a girl in the class had to find the place for her!

When she discovered what the book was, she determined not to pay any regard to what was in it. However, for the proper carrying out of this devout resolution it was unfortunate that the young ladies in her class stammered and blundered so considerably over their reading of the chapter in question, that they had to spell it out, over and over again. Spite of her fixed purpose, therefore, she could not help noticing what was in it.

Her next class was the elder scholars, and this time the chapter was the fifty-

third of Isaiah. The girls of this class could, of course, read much better ; but instead of being the better able to pay no attention to what was read, she became intensely interested ; indeed, so much was she interested in the chapter, that she found herself secretly determining to get a Bible, take it upstairs and read it for herself.

While reading Acts 1, one day, she found that at a prayer-meeting in that upper room at Jerusalem the *mother of Jesus* was included in the praying company, and that *they were not praying to her!* “ These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and *Mary the mother of Jesus*, and with *his brethren* ” (v. 14).

Then, for her, came a very serious question, but not less serious for the priest we have already spoken of had he

known it. It was this. If Mary herself needed to make supplication and prayer, in company with the other women and the rest of the disciples, why should she be prayed *to* ?

Again. The priests had always said that Jesus was the *only* son of Mary, and now she found that this was false also (Matt. 13 : 55).

These discoveries staggered her greatly, for she had often heard the very opposite from the priests. She was now forced to this conclusion, " They must have told me a lie about it! And if one lie, why not more ? " Her confidence in them became more and more shaken, as the light of Scripture, with its divine authority, entered her mind. So much, then, for the priest's *first* warning!

When the holidays came a few of the

pupils had to remain under the care of their teachers ; and our young friend, unable to go home herself, was selected, with another, to take these girls to the Isle of Wight for a change. One day they all went together for a walk in the public park. Near the entrance they found a lady sitting on one of the seats, who gave them each a little book. The one given to the governess we have been speaking of was different from any of the others. Its title was "*Almost a Christian.*"

On receiving it she made up her mind to read it when she got a good opportunity, though it was in English, and, as yet, she had but a very elementary knowledge of this language.

By the help of a dictionary and grammar she managed to get through it ; but what it contained so touched her

that, in a temper, she crumpled it up in her hands and angrily threw it into the corner of the room!

This, however, needless to say, neither removed nor lessened her soul exercises. Early next morning she was compelled to get out of bed, come downstairs, and search for that crumpled and once despised bit of paper. Carefully smoothing it out she read it once more, but this time in a very different state of mind. So much for the priest's *second* warning!

Thank God, she now began to read her Bible more diligently, and in reading one day the fifth chapter of Romans, she found what she longed for—PEACE WITH GOD.

Many years have rolled by since then, but the grace that once followed her for blessing still keeps her in the enjoyment of the love of the exalted Blessor, the Lord Jesus Christ.

She has long known that the one sacrifice of Christ not only answered for her sins before God once for all, but that God now sees her associated unchangeably with all the excellence of Him whose sacrifice it was, and who is now risen out of death. In Him, under God's holy eye, she stands complete, and knows it. By that one offering (offered *once for all*) He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10 : 10-17).

No merit of ours appears in all this.

He has died *for what we are*.

We are accepted *in what He is*, and all "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1 : 6).

"*In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*"

“*In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*”

“And ye are complete IN HIM, who is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2 : 9, 10).

May the light that shone from the face of a glorified Saviour into our young friend's heart shine into yours, my reader. Beware of men! God's written Word is your only safeguard amid the conflicting jargon of human opinions. “Jesus alone can save.”

“*There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time*” (1 Tim. 2 : 5, 6).

TRUST HIM, AND NO OTHER.

GEO. CUTTING.