

The Double Honeycomb.



A FARMER in South Africa, whose bees had produced a honeycomb of enormous size, wished to find out, if possible, whether any of still larger dimensions had ever been known.

After making various inquiries, he wrote to the editor of a well-known American weekly paper asking if he could give any information on the subject.

The editor replied as follows:—

“Among the odd questions which reached us this week is one from a correspondent in South Africa, who wants to know the size of the largest honeycomb that has ever been found in America.

“The largest of which we can find any authentic record is one which measured thirty feet in length. It was taken from a hollow tree in the southern part of Georgia.

“Two swarms of bees had a hand at making it. One worked from the top of the hollow and the other from the bottom, until they met in the middle.”

Many people have a notion that *salvation* is to be arrived at in much the same way as that honeycomb was produced, by some of the work being done from the top and the rest from the bottom.

"Christ has done His part," they say, "and we have to do ours."

This sounds right and plausible enough. Thousands who would denounce the doctrine of "salvation by works" will nevertheless endorse the idea as stated above.

"Yes," they say, "we must do our part, and where we fail we must trust to Christ's merits to make up for our shortcomings."

Now this is as different from the true gospel way of salvation as a dose of arsenic is from a draught of milk.

A cup of poison is no less deadly because it may look like clear water, and a false statement is no less dangerous and deceptive because it may bear the semblance of truth.

The object of this little book is to show you that salvation cannot be obtained in the way that the double honeycomb was produced, but that *all the work must be done from the top*.

The fact is that as sinners we are powerless to do

anything towards our salvation. If Christ had done 999 parts, and left us just one out of a thousand to perform it would be all up with us, for we should not be able to do even that. "*Without strength*" are the inspired words that describe our condition. (Rom. v. 6.) Sin has such a paralysing effect upon us that it leaves us "as water spilt on the ground which cannot be gathered up again." (2 Sam. xiv. 14.)

Now while the Bible teaches us that it is *impossible* for us to contribute anything in the shape of "doing" in the matter of our salvation it also shows us that it is *unnecessary*.

The work upon which our eternal blessing depends is a *finished* work. Everything that had to be done has been completely done already.

It was for this that Jesus suffered on the cross. He saw our helpless and ruined condition. The claims of justice forbid all hope of salvation except through the doing of a work which no mortal could ever accomplish. This work, the work of atonement, Jesus undertook. Before He yielded up His breath, He cried: "It is finished."

Reader, if the work is finished, what is there left for *you* to do but to enjoy the blessed result of it?

The result of it is this: God will freely pardon and

eternally save every sinner who abandons all pretence of "doing" and stakes his confidence upon the work that has been done.

What keeps so many from salvation is their persistence in trying to "do their part" as they term it.

During a recent visit to Durban a young friend of mine in that town was telling me of a narrow escape that he had had from drowning.

"For a long time," he said, "I struggled against the current. I put forth all my strength and did my best to reach the shore. But I made no headway, and I was becoming exhausted. I had to give it up. I lay helpless in the water. Then I found myself drifting towards the beach. The waves rolled me on. Finally I got safely to the shore."

If *you* are to reach the shore of salvation you will have to do what my young Durban friend did. You will have to cease your "doing" and "lie helpless." In other words—

"Cast your deadly 'doing' down,
Down at Jesus' feet,
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete."

Perhaps someone exclaims, "Surely you are forgetting that we are bidden to *work out* our own salvation!"

No, I am not forgetting it. But tell me, if you found a letter addressed to somebody else, would you feel justified in opening it, and appropriating its contents? Would you consider that it lay with *you* to fulfil any demands which the letter made? Of course you would not.

Now, at Philippi there lived certain people who had believed the gospel. The once hard-hearted prison warder was one. Lydia, a saleswoman from Asia Minor, was another. These, and many more, had been converted during the brief visit of Paul and Silas to their city.

Driven from their midst by persecution, the apostle wrote an affectionate letter to the sorrowing company of believers that he had left behind. In it he exhorts them to work out *their own salvation*, and reminds them that God was working in them with this end in view.

By what claim or title do *you*, an unsaved sinner, appropriate to yourself an exhortation to a company of people who were saved, and who were rejoicing in the knowledge of it? How dare an unconverted person say, "*We* are told to work out our salvation," when the words are addressed to *saints*? How can we work out *our own* salvation until salvation is indeed our

own? How can anybody *work out* unless God *works in*? Read the whole passage in Phil. ii., and you will see that it has nothing to do with the way a sinner obtains salvation.

The only work necessary for our salvation is a work that is infinitely too great for us to have any part in the doing of it.

On a certain line of railway a long freight train was found to be too heavy for the engine to draw up a steep gradient. A wire was sent to the nearest station for an additional engine. After a brief delay it arrived, and was attached to the train in the rear.

Puff! puff! went the engine in front; puff! puff! went the engine behind; but the long line of heavily-laden cars refused to move up the slope.

A little boy among the knot of people that were looking on from the window of a house near by looked up at his father.

"Papa," said he, "don't you think I should lend them my toy horse?"

You smile at the lad's childish folly. But not one whit less foolish are they who bring their vows and their resolutions, their prayers and their efforts, their sacrament-taking and their alms-giving as contributions to the work of their salvation. Such things can

no more help in the matter than the boy's wooden horse could assist the engines in moving the train.

The sweet honeycomb of salvation is the result of the work of Christ alone. At Calvary the bees, as it were, swarmed upon Him. Our sins were there. Death was there. God's holy judgment was there. Christ endured all. The sting was His that the honey might be ours. We had no part in enduring the sting, and no part in producing the honey ; no part in bearing the bitter pangs of judgment, and no part in purchasing the sweet joys of salvation. The work was Christ's from beginning to end.

" Then am I just to fold my arms and wait till God saves me? "

By no means. Though God does ~~not~~ demand from you a stroke of work, He expects that there should be, on your part, a certain attitude. He commands all men, everywhere, to *repent*. (Acts xvii. 30.)

" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved " are words of gospel truth ; but they were addressed to one who was already repentant.

Reader, have you repented ? In other words, have you got down low before God, realising and owning your exceeding sinfulness ? Have you looked at yourself

with loathing? Have you exclaimed, with Job, "I am vile"?

If not, it is of little use to speak to you of the finished work of Christ. But if you have discovered your desperate need, if you feel full of sin within, and helpless to rid yourself of your burden, no news will be so sweet to you as tidings of *the finished work of Christ*.

The honeycomb of salvation is the result of that finished work; and it is for you to taste and enjoy its sweetness.

"*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*" (Rom. iv. 5.)

