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Peniel Quarterly - March2011/May 2011

A Word from the Pastor

May I take the opportunity with another church magazine to ask you the question, how is it with your soul? I would say that most men and women never pause to consider for a moment that they have a soul and that their souls must either, at the end of this mortal life, spend eternity in heaven or hell. The saying goes “heaven or hell, think well”. What a spur to seriousness and self examination. Everything in this world seems to militate against such a thought. Jesus said, “what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul”. Dear reader, on death your soul will not cease to be but will live on in the eternal world. What a solemn thought! How we need to prepare for eternity.

I pray that the contents of this magazine will bless your soul. Horatius Bonar commends thorough acquaintance with God; we think of the hymn, “Take time to be holy”. C. H. Spurgeon in his comments about Pliable in Pilgrim’s Progress calls attention to the need of true soul commitment in following Christ and J. C. Ryle shows how we may have assurance through faith in Him.

I am ever willing to listen and help anyone who has a concern for their soul.

Yours in Christ
Neil Pfeiffer

Diary

Lord's Days:

March

6th	–	Rev. S. Holland, West Houghton	Communion - p.m
13th	–	Pastor	
20th	–	Pastor	– Communion - a.m
27th	–	Pastor	<i>After Church Fellowship</i>

April

3rd	–	Pastor	– Communion - p.m
10th	–	Pastor	
17th	–	Pastor	– Communion - a.m
24th	–	Pastor	<i>After Church Fellowship</i>

May

1st	–	Rev. Graham Harrison, Newport	
8th	–	Pastor	
15th	–	Pastor	– Communion - a.m
22nd	–	Pastore	
29th	–	Pastor	<i>After Church Fellowship</i>

Pastor's Engagements.

1. Preaching on Monday 18th April at Walsam- le- Willows-Suffolk
2. Preaching- Anniversary weekend -Sat 30th April –May 1st at Exeter Reformed Baptist Church
3. Preaching at Providence Chapel Cheltenham 7.p.m.

Forward notice- Good Friday Service- April 22nd -Preacher -Poo-Yan Mehrasahi.

Church Fellowship Outing- Friday August 26th

David Jones Llangan.-details from Mr.Edward Williams.

News of the Fellowship

November began with an evangelistic leaflet distribution to some streets in the Llansamlet area. It is hoped to develop this work further. The next visitation will take place, God willing ,early Spring. If anyone wishes to be involved in this work please see the Pastor.

We had another happy time at our fellowship Christmas meal in early December. This year we welcomed the Rev. Teifi Ebenezer and his wife from Brynmawr. We are thankful for this opportunity to bring the Gospel to a number. Our thanks to Edward and Susan for organizing this time.

A children's Christmas party took place on Saturday the 11th of December. We are thankful that we have a number of children attending the church. We pray that the Lord will save them in their young years.

A small party from the church took a carol service in the nursing home. We have a good relationship now with the Staff and residents there. The Pastor was able to comment on the hymns sung. We are aware of the needs of the souls there.

The severe wintry weather conditions made it very difficult for people to attend the services and meetings of the church. Some of our activities were disrupted as a result. One evening service and a prayer meeting were held in the manse and our after church fellowship scheduled for the 19th of December was cancelled. We are thankful that no serious injuries were caused by the ice and snow - the Lord being gracious to us.

It was good to be able to distribute about 1,000 calendars this year. It is apparent that a lot of people look forward to them. A number of folk phoned up and asked for them. We hope to distribute a large number next December.

The funeral service of Neville Davies took place on January 6th at Moriah chapel, Loughor. Mr. Milton spoke of Neville's christian experience and testimony in the area. He mentioned how he had been delivered from "the

globe” (i.e. pub.) and how therefore a stanza of a hymn “ When I survey the wondrous cross” spoke to him.

‘ His dying sorrow, like a robe,
Spreads o’er His body on the tree:
Then am I dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.’

Mr. Pfeiffer then preached from Neville’s favourite psalm, Psalm 1 describing the difference between the believer and the unbeliever in life and in death.

A good number attended our monthly after church fellowship in January (30) with hymn singing, Pastor’s quiz and a word of testimony from Howell Green. It is good to hear how the Lord deals with men and women.

On Thursday February 3rd our Mums and Tots project began at Trallwn Community Centre. We were encouraged by the beginning made with a good number of children, parents and grandparents attending. We pray the Lord will give many opportunities to share the Gospel.

Pastor Teifi Ebenezer spoke about the work amongst the gypsies in North Gwent at our re-formed men’s fellowship group on Thursday 17th Feb It was good to hear how lives have been changed by the grace of God.

On the Lord’s Day 27th Pastor preached in Whiddan Valley Evangelical church, Barnstable and the Pastor of that church Mr.David Kay preached here. It is encouraging to meet men from different parts of the country who stand with us in the cause of the Gospel.

We wish to convey our greetings to Mrs. Eileen Gwyn who a few years ago moved back to England. Her daughter has been seriously ill and has had major surgery. We remember them both at this time.

“Mums and Tots”

“Come and let us go over...it may be that the Lord will work for us” 1 Samuel 14:6

This was the verse that Mr. Pfeiffer chose for his new year cards to the church. After a decline in the Sunday School and its temporary cessation, how could we now not fail to look further into the community to work with young children. Thus in January, the Lord kindled the idea of a “Mums and Tots” work in Trallwn Community Centre as an outreach work from Peniel Green Congregational Church.

From the very beginning, the Lord made a smooth pathway for us, giving us a beautifully carpeted hall available every Thursday morning with our very own built-in toy cupboard. The surroundings make it so welcoming for the adults and children. Also we have the services of a very cooperative christian chairlady at the centre.

Five willing, dedicated volunteers help on a regular basis every Thursday during term time from 9:30 - 12:00 noon (actual class, 10:00 - 11:30am). We are 3 weeks into the new venture and we see God’s hand upon us in every way.

We started on February 3rd, not knowing who, if any, would turn up, but we now have 10 children on the register: George, Chloe, Sophie, Toby, Joel, Oscar, Rueben, Faith, Leo and Meedash.

Along they come with their mum or dad, nana or grandpa who all sit around and listen to a Bible story, sing choruses and songs, participate in a little craft work and, after a play with big and small toys, the session ends with a prayer. The adults are as eager as the children to join in and participate. It is such a joy to see this happening at such an early stage.

We are thankful for the prayerful support and encouragement of the church and for the practical gifts of toys and equipment, refreshments and monetary gifts.

Please pray that more parents will see the posters in various places and that they will come along with their children to hear about our great God and to sing His praises.

“Through God we shall do valiantly”. Psalm 60:12

Marge Protheroe

PLIABLE SETS OUT WITH CHRISTIAN

C. H. Spurgeon

NEXT to the Bible, the book I value most is John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." I believe I have read it through at least a hundred times. It is a volume of which I never seem to tire; and the secret of its freshness is that it is so largely compiled from the Scriptures. It is really Biblical teaching put into the form of a simple yet very striking allegory.

It has been upon my mind to give a series of addresses upon "The Pilgrim's Progress," for the characters described by John Bunyan have their living representatives to-day, and his words have a message for many who are found in our congregations at the present time.

You remember that, when Christian, with "a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back," cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" he "saw a man named Evangelist coming to him," who pointed him to the wicketgate and the shining light. Then Bunyan says: "So, I saw, in my dream, that the man began to run. Now, he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children perceiving it, began to cry after him to return; but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, 'Life! life! eternal life!' (Luke 14:26) So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain (Genesis 19:17). "The neighbors also came out to see him run (Jeremiah 20:10); and as he ran, some mocked, others threatened, and some cried after him to return.

Now, among those that did so, there were two that were resolved to fetch him back by force; the name of the one was Obstinate, and the name of the other Pliable."

Instead of yielding to them, Christian began at once to plead with them to go along with him. Obstinate met all his pleas with mockery and abuse, but Pliable was easily persuaded to go. He is a type of those who, apparently, set out for Heaven; but who have not the root of the matter in them, and, therefore, soon turn back. The likeness that Bunyan has drawn of him is worthy of our attentive consideration, for it is true in every line.

It is significant that, in the first instance, Pliable went with Obstinate upon the evil errand of endeavoring to bring Christian back to the City of Destruction. In like manner, some of those who have been in the habit of keeping the worst of company may, sometimes, even without the operation upon them of the grace

of God, be induced to forsake their evil companions, and to cast in their lot, for a season, with the followers of Christ.

These Pliable people, who are still a very numerous family, are very dependent upon those by whom they are surrounded. If they happen to have been born in a godly household, it is probable that they will make a profession of religion. It is even possible that they will be highly esteemed, and perhaps for years will bear a most reputable Christian character. If, on the other hand, they happen to be thrown among bad companions, they will be very easily allured by them, and be made to drink, to swear, and to fall into all the vices of the stronger persons by whom they are influenced.

They scarcely seem to be men. They are mere jellyfish, swept along by every turn of the tide. They lack the true element of manhood, which is firmness. This, by the way, Obsolete had in excess. If you could put an Obsolete and a Pliable together, and make them one, you might, speaking of the natural man, have something more nearly approaching true manliness than either of them would be separately. Obsolete had all the firmness, while Pliable had none of it.

I think Pliable was a moldable sort of creature; and, hence, Obsolete did with him as he liked until the poor feeble fellow came into the grasp of a stronger man than Obsolete, namely, Christian. After all, there is no man who is a match for a Christian in the matter of influence. There is a force about the truth, which is committed to our charge, when it is brought into fair play, that is not equaled by any form of lies. If a man's mind is really pliable, there is no doubt that an earnest Christian, who has been led by Divine grace to walk in the right road, will have wonderful control over such a person. So strong was Christian's influence that, even while Obsolete was reviling, Pliable rebuked him, and said: "My heart inclines to go with my neighbor." Christian had not said very much; he had not appeared to exercise much influence; but something had already told on Pliable. In the very presence and look of a Christian, there is a power over the heart of man. Moreover, influence grows; so it came to pass that Pliable presently went even further, and boldly declared: "I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him."

You perceive, however, that Pliable had no burden on his back, as Christian had. This was one of the proofs that he was not a true pilgrim.

That which brings men to Christ is a sense of their need of Him. Albeit the sense of sin is not a qualification for salvation, yet it is the only motive that ever leads

men to trust in Jesus; it is the impetus which Divine grace uses when it is drawing or driving men to the Savior. Pliable did not, at first, appear to be greatly troubled when he heard that the City of Destruction was doomed; but when Christian talked so prettily about Heaven, he thought there might be something in it; indeed, he felt that there must be, when a man like Christian could leave his family and his business to go on a long pilgrimage; so he judged that, probably, he might do better himself if he went with Christian. But, all the while, there was no burden on his back; he had no sense of his need of a Savior, and this was a very serious defect, to begin with, in one who was professing to go on pilgrimage to the Celestial City.

You will observe, too, that the only thing which tempted Pliable to go was Christian's talk about the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." There are some preachers who can descant so prettily upon Heaven — the blessed associations of that happy country where they "Meet to part no more," — that half their hearers are constrained to say, "We also will set out." These divines talk of the wall of jasper, the gates of pearl, the street of gold, the sea of glass, and the emerald rainbow round about the throne, in such a way that persons of a poetical temperament, and especially those of pliable disposition, have their emotions excited by the descriptions which give only a material view of what was intended to be understood in a spiritual sense.

They really think that Heaven is, literally, what the Book of the Revelation says it is figuratively. They never get at the kernel of the inward sense; it is the husk of the outward meaning that attracts them. They are satisfied, charmed, bewitched, fascinated by that, so they resolve to set out on the journey.

To tell the whole truth about Mr. Pliable, I must say that he began exceedingly well. I have already reminded you that he defended Christian when Obstinate reviled him; and when Obstinate turned his abuse upon Pliable, and said, "What! more fools still?" he did not seem to wince under it. Some of these pliable people will even bear a great deal of persecution, and be content to be ridiculed, and laughed at; they will even suffer loss rather than turn back. If they do this really "for Christ's sake," it is well; but, often, it is only borne with a view to self-aggrandizement, and in order to obtain something better by way of recompense, so that it is selfishness still that rules them. They give up a little of the good that there is in the world — and it is not very much, after all, that they sacrifice — for the sake of the better world that is yet to be revealed. They will not give up all that they have — "house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands" — for Christ's sake, and the Gospel's,

and therefore they are not Christ's true disciples. They are prepared to make some small sacrifice, but only for the sake of winning heaven or of escaping hell.

Observe the way in which Christian treated Pliable after Obstinate left them. I daresay he had known him before and understood quite well what a soft, easy-going fellow he was, and how very readily he might be twisted either one way or another; yet he did not disdain his company, but said to him: "Come, neighbor Pliable, I am glad you are persuaded to go along with me." You and I, dear friends, are bound to invite men to come to Christ no matter who or what they may be; and we should try to encourage them all we can, even though we may have in our own heart a wellgrounded fear that some of them will not hold out to the end. I do not think it is for us to say to young persons, who seem to be in earnest about spiritual matters, that we are afraid they will not persevere, and so discourage them. Our business is rather to say to each one of them: "Come, neighbor, come with me, and you shall fare as I do." It is the work of the Spirit to fill the Gospel net; it is our duty to throw it, and drag it along the bottom; and whether we catch good fish or bad, is not so much our concern as our Master's. Christian, though not yet at peace himself, had a commendable love for others. It is a beautiful trait, which I like to see in those who feel the secondary work of grace in their souls, that they want others to feel as they feel. This conduct on the part of Christian ought to be a lesson to some of you who have long had joy and peace in believing, but who do not say to others: "Come, neighbor Pliable." Seek to have in yourselves something of the zeal and compassion of this poor pilgrim with a troubled conscience, yet with a sympathetic heart.

So Pliable, without counting the cost, or reckoning for a moment upon all the difficulties of the way, set out, in a thoughtless, light-hearted manner, upon that journey which will always prove too long for those who start on it in their own strength alone. As they went over the plain, Christian began to talk to Pliable of what he himself had felt — "the powers and terrors of what is unseen"; — but, directly he did so, Pliable changed the subject. He did not want to know anything about such matters; he had, in fact, taken the whole thing in a carnal sense; and, as for the powers and terrors of the unseen world, he knew nothing at all about them; and, apparently, he did not want to know about them, for he harked back to that which had attracted him at the first, and said to Christian: "Tell me now further, what the things are, and how to be enjoyed, whither we are going."

These two men, as they went along walking and talking, fell into the error of speaking a good deal about things which neither of them properly understood. It is true that Christian said: "Since you are desirous to know, I will read of them in my Book." There was that good element in their conversation, which we can cordially commend; still, even that may not be the wisest thing for young beginners to do. It is, indeed, a wise thing to read the Bible, and to talk of what it contains; but this must be done with much prayer if it is to be of real spiritual benefit. I look in vain for any word about Pliable praying, but I do read concerning Christian, even before he started on his pilgrimage — "He would also walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading, sometimes praying; and thus for some days he spent his time. Now, I saw upon a time when he was walking in the fields, that he was, as he was wont, reading in his Book, and greatly distressed in his mind; and as he read, he burst out as he had done before, crying, 'What shall I do to be saved?' (Acts 16:30,31.)" It was not so with Pliable. What he heard Christian read from the Book did not make him sorrowful, but enchanted and delighted him. He only thought of the Celestial Country, not of the plague of his own heart, nor of the damnable nature of his sin. These things had never come home with power to him as they had to Christian, and therefore he did not say: "Come, let us kneel together, and plead for mercy;" but he said, "Well, my good companion, glad am I to hear of these things; come on, let us mend our pace." Yes, at first, there are none who are so enthusiastic as these empty, hollow ones. "Let us mend our pace," said Pliable. Surely, brethren, the advice is good, but I do not like it from such lips. It is a very proper exhortation in its place, but not when it comes from one who has never been burdened on account of sin, nor broken under the hammer of God's law, nor made to feel his own nothingness and worthlessness. You who are empty may well travel quickly; you who never felt the load of sin upon your hearts may well run swiftly. Pliable is all for pushing on, making a stir, and creating a noise. He attends revival services, and likes to have them protracted; when the fit is on him, he would be willing to be up all night, to turn his house out of the windows, and to do all manner of extraordinary things, all to show how full of zeal he is. But, in a little time, it will be all over. It is like the crackling of thorns under a pot, which burn so fiercely that they make the pot boil over, and put the fire out. "Come," said Pliable, "let us mend our pace." Christian said, "I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden that is on my back." Then, just as they ended their talk, Bunyan tells us that "they drew near to a very miry slough that was in the midst of the plain; and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond."

KEEP COMPANY WITH GOD, AND WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Horatius Bonar

Intimacy with God is the very essence of religion, and the foundation of discipleship. It is in intercourse with Father, Son, and Spirit that the most real parts of our lives are lived; and all parts that are not lived in fellowship with Him, 'in whom we live, and move, and have our being,' are unreal, untrue, unsuccessful, and unsatisfying. The understanding of doctrine is one thing, and intimacy with God is another. They ought always to go together; but they are often seen asunder; and, when there is the former without the latter, there is a hard, proud, hollow religion. Get your teaching from God (Job 36:22; Jer 23:30); take your doctrine from His lips; learn truth upon your knees. Beware of opinions and speculations: they become idols, and nourish pride of intellect; they furnish no food to the soul; they make you sapless and heartless; they are like winter frostwork on your windowpane, shutting out the warm sun.

Let God be your companion, your bosom-friend, your instructor, your counselor. Take Him into the closet with you, into the study, into the shop, into the marketplace, into the railway carriage, into the boat. When you make a feast and call guests, invite Him as one of them. He is always willing to come; and there is no company like His. When you are in perplexity, and are taking advice from friends, let Him be one of your 'friends in counsel.' When you feel lonely, make Him the 'companion of your solitude.' And if you are known to be one given to the divine companionship, you will be saved from much idle and wasteful society and conversation. You will not feel at home with worldly men, nor they with you. You will not choose the half-and-half Christian, or the formalist, or the servant of two masters, for your friend; nor will any of these seek your fellowship. When thrown into worldly society, from your business or your relationships, as you may sometimes be, do not cease to be the Christian; nor try to make excuses for the worldliness of those with whom you are obliged to associate; for that is just making excuses for yourself in associating with them. Do not try to make yourself or them believe that they are religious when they are not; but show them whose disciples you are; not necessarily in words, but by a line of conduct more expressive and efficacious than words. Do not conform to the world in

order to please men or to save yourself from their taunt or jest. Be not afraid to ask a blessing at meals, or to have family worship, or to enter into religious conversation, because a worldly man is present. Keep constant company with the great God of heaven and earth; and let every other companionship be regulated by His. Go where you please, if you can take Him with you; go nowhere if He cannot be admitted, or if you are obliged for the time to conceal or disguise your divine discipleship. When Joseph went down to Egypt, he took the young child with him (Matt 2:21); so, wherever you go, take the young child with you.

Beware of declension in prayer. --Whenever you feel the closet becoming a dull place, you may be sure something is wrong. Backsliding has begun. Go straight to God that He may 'heal it' (Hosea 14:4). Do not trifle with it; nor resort to other expedients to relieve the dullness, such as shortening the time, or getting some lively religious books to take off the weariness; go at once to the Great Quickener with the cry, 'Quicken us, and we will call on Thy name' (Psa 80:18). Beware of going through prayer in a careless or perfunctory way, like a hireling doing his work in order to get done with it. 'Pray in the Holy Ghost' (Jude 20). 'Pray without ceasing.' Pray with honest fervour and simple faith, as men who really want what they ask for, and expect to get it all. Few things tend more to deaden the soul, to harden the heart, to drive out spirituality, than cold, formal prayer. It will eat as doth a canker. Dread it and shun it. Do not mock God by asking what you don't want, or by pretending to desire what you don't care for. 'The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer' (1 Peter 4:7).

Be much alone with God. Do not put Him off with a quarter of an hour morning and evening. Take time to get thoroughly acquainted. Converse over everything with Him. Unbosom yourself wholly--every thought, feeling, wish, plan, doubt--to Him. He wants converse with His creatures; shall His creatures not want converse with Him? He wants, not merely to be on 'good terms' with you, if one may use man's phrase, but to be intimate; shall you decline the intimacy, and be satisfied with mere acquaintance? What! intimate with the world, with friends, with neighbours, with politicians, with philosophers, with naturalists, or with poets; but not with God! That would look ill indeed. Folly, to prefer the

clay to the potter, the marble to the sculptor, this little earth and its lesser creatures to the mighty Maker of the universe, the great 'All and in all!'

Do not shrink from being alone. Much of a true man's true life must be so spent. David Brainerd thus writes:--'My state of solitude does not make the hours hang heavy upon my hands. Oh, what reason of thankfulness have I on account of this retirement! I find that I do not, and it seems I cannot, lead a Christian life when I am abroad, and cannot spend time in devotion, in conversation, and serious meditation, as I should do. These weeks that I am obliged now to be from home, in order to learn the Indian tongue, are mostly spent in perplexity and barrenness, without much relish of divine things; and I feel myself a stranger at the throne of grace for want of a more frequent and continued retirement.' Do not suppose that such retirement for divine converse will hinder work. It will greatly help it. Much private fellowship with God will give you sevenfold success. Pray much if you would work much; and if you want to work more, pray more. Luther used to say, when an unusual press of business came upon him, 'I must pray more today.' Be like him in the day of work or trial. Do not think that mere working will keep you right or set you right. The watch won't go till the spring is mended. Work will do nothing for you till you have gone to God for a working heart. Trying to work yourself into a better frame of feeling is not only hopeless, but injurious. You say, I want to feel more and to love more. It is well. But you can't work yourself into these. I do not say to any one who feels his coldness, 'Go and work.' Work, if done heartlessly, will only make you colder. You must go straight to Jesus with that cold heart, and warm it at His cross; then work will be at once a necessity, a delight, and a success.

FAITH AND ASSURANCE.

by

Bishop J. C. Ryle D.D.

READER,

If you are a thoughtless, careless man about your soul, you will take no interest in the subject of this tract. Faith and assurance are mere names and words to you: they are neither land, nor money, nor horses, nor dress, nor meat, nor drink: like Gallio, you care not for them. Alas, poor soul! I mourn over you. The day will come when you will think differently.

Reader, if you really desire to go to heaven, and to go there in the Bible way, you will find the subject of this tract of the deepest importance. Believe me, your own comfort in religion, and your peace of conscience, depend exceedingly on understanding the matter about which I am going to speak.

I say then, that faith in Christ, and a full assurance of being saved by Christ, are two distinct things.

A man may have saving faith in Christ, and yet never enjoy an assured hope, like the Apostle Paul. To believe, and have a glimmering hope of acceptance, is one thing; to have joy and peace in our believing, and abound in hope, is quite another. All God's children have faith: not all have assurance. I think this ought never to be forgotten.

I know some great and good men have held a different opinion: I believe that many excellent ministers do not allow the distinction I have stated; but I desire to call no man master. I dread as much as anyone the idea of healing the wounds of conscience slightly; but I should think any other view than that I have given a most uncomfortable gospel to preach, and one very likely to keep souls back a long time from the gate of life.

I would not desire to make one contrite heart sad that God has not made sad, or to discourage one fainting child of God, or to give a soul the impression that you have no part or lot in Christ, except you feel assurance.

I do not shrink from saying, that by grace a man may have sufficient faith to flee to Christ, - really to lay hold on Him, - really to trust in Him, - really to be a child of God, - really to be saved; and yet to his last day be never free from much anxiety, doubt, and fear.

“A letter,” says an old writer, “may be written which is not sealed; so grace may be written in the heart, yet the Spirit may not set the seal of assurance to it.”

A child may be born heir to a great fortune, and yet never be aware of his riches, - live childish, die childish, and never know the greatness of his possessions.

And so also a man may be a babe in Christ's family; think as a babe, speak as a babe, and, though saved, never enjoy a lively hope, or know the full privileges of his inheritance.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ a man must have, beyond all question, if he is to be saved. I know no other way of access to the Father: I see no intimation of mercy excepting through Christ. A man must feel his sins and lost estate, - must come to Jesus for pardon and salvation, - must rest his hope on Him and on Him alone. But if he only have faith to do this, however weak and feeble that faith may be, I will engage, from Scripture warrants, he shall not miss heaven.

Never, never let us curtail the freeness of the glorious gospel, or clip its fair proportions. Never let us make the gate more strait, and the way more narrow, than pride or love of sin have made it already. The Lord Jesus is very pitiful and of tender mercy. He does not regard the quantity of faith, but the quality - He does not measure its degree, but its truth. He will not break any bruised reed, nor quench any smoking flax. He will never let it be said that any perished at the foot of the cross. “Him that cometh unto Me,” He says, “I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37).¹

Yes, reader! though a man's faith be no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, if it only brings him to Christ, and enables him to touch the hem of

His garment, he shall be saved: saved as surely as the oldest saint in paradise; saved as completely and eternally as Peter, or John, or Paul. There are degrees in our sanctification: in our justification there are none. What is written is written, and shall never fail: "Whosoever believeth on Him," - not whosoever has a strong and mighty faith,^{3/4} "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. x. 11).

But all this time, I would have you take notice, the poor soul may have no full assurance of his pardon and acceptance with God. He may be troubled with fear upon fear, and doubt upon doubt. He may have many a question and many an anxiety, - many a struggle, and many a misgiving, - clouds and darkness, - storm and tempest to the very end.

I will engage, I repeat, that bare simple faith in Christ shall save a man, though he may never attain to assurance; but I will not engage it shall bring him to heaven, with strong and abounding consolations. I will engage it shall land him safe in harbour, but I will not engage he shall enter that harbour under full sail, confident and rejoicing. I shall not be surprised if he reaches his desired haven weather-beaten and tempest-tossed, scarcely realising his own safety till he opens his eyes in glory.

Reader, I believe it is of great importance to keep in view this distinction between faith and assurance. It explains things which an inquirer in religion some times finds it hard to understand.

Faith, let us remember, is the root, and assurance is the flower. Doubtless you can never have the flower without the root; - but it is no less certain you may have the root and not the flower.

Faith is that poor trembling woman who came behind Jesus in the press and touched the hem of His garment (Mark v. 25). - Assurance is Stephen standing calmly in the midst of his murderers, and saying, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts vii. 56).

Faith is the penitent thief crying, "Lord, remember me" (Luke xxiii. 42). - Assurance is Job sitting in the dust, covered with sores, and saying, "I

know that my Redeemer liveth” (Job xix. 25). “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job xiii. 13).

Faith is Peter’s drowning cry as he began to sink: “Lord, save me!” (Matt. xiv. 30). - Assurance is the same Peter declaring before the Council, in after times, “This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 11, 12).

Faith is the anxious, trembling voice: “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief” (Mark ix. 24). - Assurance is the confident challenge: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? Who is he that condemneth?” (Rom. viii. 33, 34).

Faith is Saul praying in the house of Judas at Damascus, sorrowful, blind, and alone (Acts ix. 11). - Assurance is Paul, the aged prisoner, looking calmly into the grave, and saying, “I know Whom I have believed,” “There is laid up for me a crown” (2 Tim. i. 12; iv. 8).

Faith is life. How great the blessing! Who can tell the gulf between life and death? And yet life may be weak, sickly, unhealthy, painful, trying, anxious, worn, burdensome, joyless, and smileless to the very end.

Assurance is more than life. It is health, strength, power, vigour, activity, energy, manliness, and beauty.

Reader, it is not a question of saved or not saved that lies before us, but of privilege or no privilege, - it is not a question of peace or no peace, but of great peace or little peace, - it is not a question between the wanderers of this world and the school of Christ, it is one that belongs only to the school, - it is between the first form and the last.

He that has faith does well. Happy should I be if I thought all readers of this tract had it. Blessed, thrice blessed are they that believe: they are safe; they are washed; they are justified. They are beyond the power of

hell. Satan, with all his malice, shall never pluck them out of Christ's hands.

But he that has assurance does far better, - sees more, feels more, knows more, enjoys more, has more days like those spoken of in Deuteronomy, even "the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. xi. 21).²

Reader, whoever you may be, I exhort you never to be satisfied with anything short of a full assurance of your own salvation. With faith, no doubt, you must begin, - with simple, child-like faith: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But from faith go on to assurance. Rest not till you can say, "I know Whom I have believed."

Believe me, believe me, assurance is worth the seeking. You forsake your own mercies when you rest content without it. The things I speak are for your peace. It is good to be sure in earthly things; how much better is it to be sure in heavenly things!

Make it then your daily prayer that you may have an increase of faith. According to your faith will be your peace. Cultivate that blessed root more, and sooner or later, by God's blessing, you may hope to have the flower. You may not perhaps attain to full assurance at once: it is good sometimes to be kept waiting; we do not value things that we get without trouble. But though it tarry, wait for it. Seek on, and expect to find.

FOOTNOTES

1 "He that believeth on Jesus shall never be confounded. Never was any; neither shall you, if you believe. It was a great word of faith spoken by a dying man, who had been converted in a singular way, betwixt his condemnation and execution: his last words were these, spoken with a mighty shout - 'Never man perished with his face towards Jesus Christ.'" - Traill.

2 "The greatest thing that we can desire, next to the glory of God, is our own salvation; and the sweetest thing we can desire is the assurance of our salvation. In this life we cannot get higher than to be assured of that which in the next life is to be enjoyed. All saints shall enjoy a heaven when they leave this earth: some saints enjoy a heaven while they are here on earth." - Joseph Carlyle. 1658.