

THE BRITISH WORKWOMAN.





Thoughts on the Life of St. Peter.

St. Peter's First Trouble for Christ's Sake.—Acts iv. 1-22.

THE subject of our last paper was St. Peter's first miracle. The day when the lame man was healed must have been a great day for Peter. It is a great joy to those others, it is a happy thing to give than to get. Our blessed Lord Himself taught us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts x. 35). But the chiefest part of Peter's joy, in what he had been allowed to give the poor cripple, must have been the manifestation of the presence and power of Christ. The Master whose love was indeed out of sight, yet however much Christ have been to Peter in this miracle

and that must have been joy to him. A great joy sometimes comes to us before trouble. God is so pitiful and gracious to us that He would often cheer us by some special mercy before we are called to bear a cross. Trouble came quickly to Peter after his joy and thanksgiving of his first miracle. That very night, Peter and John were in prison (Acts iv. 18). We are not told that they did what Paul and Silas did afterwards, who, suffering and bound, filled up their rooms in the prison. To "sing praises to God" (Acts vi. 12). Perhaps Peter and John did not get quite so far so singing in their hours in the prison, yet those who have suffered for Christ have generally been very happy. When a man suffers because of us it is a very different matter—what is misery! But when the suffering is for Christ's sake there often has been a wonderful joy given at the same time. Christ prepared His disciples to suffer for His name's sake—even unto death (St. John xv. 18-20, and also xvi. 32). The life of the Lord Jesus down here was not smooth and bright and easy. Why should His followers expect theirs to be so? In those days it is not often that men and women get into prison because they are following Christ. But doubtless every Christian will have something to bear for his Lord's sake, and the more faithful he is to his Master the more likely he will be to have a cross to bear. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John iii. 13). After a night in prison, Peter and John were brought up for trial before the high priest. The question was put to them: "By what power or by what name have ye done this?" Peter, as usual, was the spokesman, but he does not speak his own words, he is filled with the Holy Ghost" (v. 8). He repeats what of what had been said in his trial. Thus he had pointed to Christ's Name as the power, that had healed the cripple—so here; and Peter goes on to proclaim Christ as the one foundation—the "rock" set at naught of you builders, "without" whom there is no

salvation (v. 10-12). This was a blessed testimony from the lips of St. Peter, reminding us of his own words, "Loud to whom shall we go? For there hath the words of eternal life."

"None but Jesus
Can do hapless sinners good."

This was St. Peter's gospel. Such bold speaking astonished the high priest and assembled rulers. Peter and John were prisoners; they were not great men, but ignorant and unlearned. They did not talk like princes, but they spoke out their plain words with wonderful power. A great fact concerning these men was now clearly seen—"They had been with Jesus" (v. 13). There was a stamp upon these men that could not be mistaken—it was the mark of Christ. It is a beautiful thing to have the mark of Christ. Sometimes, when two friends are much together, they grow like one another. Peter and John had lived in friendship and close fellowship with Christ, and from the time the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, a likeness to Christ was to be seen in them. Was a likeness to Christ to be seen only in the Apostles? Surely it was meant to be true of all Christians that others should take "knowledge of them" that they have "been with Jesus." St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 3). Every Christian is to be an "epistle of Christ"—a letter about Christ to others. Of one whose life shows brightly for her Master, her husband wrote, "I never think of her but my heart rises to Christ: what a testimony! That 'epistle of Christ' was clearly read. There is much more of Christ to be seen in some Christians than in others. Some are by God's grace as a full "epistle"—a long letter; but the lives of other Christians seem to be set as an "epistle" that has very few words in it, and those words, perhaps, also not clearly to be read. The work of Christ is not easily noted there. There are smooth here, and there in the "epistle"—there are inconsistencies in the life. Does such an "epistle" do honour to Christ? I have such a life written: His O! If we are Christ's, let them be no mistake about it. Let men "take knowledge" of what we have been with Jesus." We can only now just into the charge given by the council of Peter and John, "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (v. 18). How was this charge removed? Peter and John, with noble courage, refused to obey. They declared that they would speak for it was Christ's command, and if they died for it they would keep His word. This was the martyr spirit in which hundreds have died for their Lord. We have no such test to stand, and yet how often we are ashamed of Christ! Peter and John in this first trouble for their Master's sake, which they shared together, were unshaken. Their Lord shielded them and delivered them from the hand of the enemy; They were "let go" (v. 22), the "square was broken," and they "were delivered." M. K.

Five Well To-day.

Live well to-day; to-day is thine alone;
Tomorrow is not, and may never be
And yesterday no longer is thy own,
But none belongs to thee.

Then take the task that's nearest to thy hand
And do it faithfully with all thy might;
Though men may call it dull and unobtrusive,
Hood not their blame or slight.

What though the sunbeam die of toil be thine;
Thy task, the honest drudgery under heaven,
Thou may'st transform and make it all divine
If faith thy labour loves.

Work is the daily worship of thy hands;
The service thou dost render to mankind,
Mark by the measure of thy worth, it stands
The index of thy mind.

Then do the work which thou dost find to do,
Ask for no honour, look for no reward;
The world needs workers all unselfish, true,
Men who live like their Lord.

Live well to-day, to-morrow then I say
No shade upon thy upward path will show,
And as each day leads to a nobler day,
Thou with more Christ-like grow.

DAVID LAWTON.

Enough for Both.

CHAPTER I.

BETH DECIDES.

HURRY or forty years ago people in some of the remotest villages of England still thought of the matter of making a journey of eight miles in any direction, excepting that of the market town, as their children or grandchildren do now of "travelling across" to America.

Old Luther Moore lived in the seavert village of Redding, and his youngest daughter lived in the village of Steppington, eight miles inland. Beth Moss had married Will Sandens two years ago sorely against her parents' wishes. They had nothing to say against Will, nothing to say against the engagement of the two young people. But they were aged now, and were growing helpless. All their other children were scattered far from the parent nest, and they did long to keep their youngest and best-beloved with them till they died.

"We shall be sure gone to it, if we have not yet to do a hand's turn to help us," murmured the mother with an anxiety. But Beth answered half-heartedly:

"Say your mother, you know as Will offered to give something a week out of his wages for help for you, and you'll be able to get more out of a paid girl than I'm afraid you've ever got of help from home."

The mother shook her head. That was quite possible; but she well knew, and her daughter might have known too, that no girl so old could any way manage to travel so long a kind, fully would ever be allowed to "make a woman on pretence of cleaning" in her trim, tidy little house. However, she tried another plan.

"Ye might hire a wee will, so, Ruthie. Ye might not trouble ye for that weery work. We're not much longer, I'm main sure, for this weery work. Ye might bid with us till we die."

But that plan was no more successful than the other had been.

"Oh, come now, mother," said Beth, half-heartedly, half-anxiously, "come now, mother, you're not so old as all that." "Ye and father are some an' old, but I hope we'll have ye to visit the next ten Christmas's to come-ay, and ten again to that. An' meantime, you may ye like to have Will and me wearyin' our lives out to have ye for a wee will, if ye don't say so we should, but it'll bring us happiness that much, through the eyes of sorrow."

There was enough truth in Beth's words to induce



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her parents to withhold all further outspoken expectation to the early wedding, but what years and hard work and many other trials had failed to do she has out of the home of her last child did for the poor old fisherman and his wife.

The evening on which Ruth—that morning seems Ruth Sanders—went away from Heddington with her husband, bound for her new home in Sheppington, the heart-worn mother sank down in the old armchair in the lonely kitchen, and felt that her spirit was broken, that her hold on life had been snapped.

When the young wife paid her Christmas visit, a few months after, even she saw that it was vain to hope to revive her mother's loving, tender welcome in the old home another year.

Before the first anniversary of Ruth Sanders' wedding-day the aged mother had also taken flight from the little cottage. She had gone to that sunny home, where there are no more partings, and where sorrow and tears cannot ooze.

Poor young Ruth wept many, many bitter tears over her mother's loss; for, as a fact, she had loved her very dearly, although she loved Will Sanders better.

"I do wish—oh! I do wish," she sobbed, "that I had waited a bit longer."

Perhaps if she had been a little more patient her mother might have got more accustomed to the thought of losing her, more reconciled, who knows, and even in time have brought the marriage forward herself? But these speculations were in good now. Her mother was dead, her aged father left lonely in his desolate hours, his only pleasure to wander over the sea-shill with some shipmate, as folks used to "putt work" as kindly, and talk of the old times; and poor Ruth Sanders.

