

## ARE YOU READY.

What a fulness of meaning is included in that one word "ready," and what different consequences does it suggest! How many good things are lost by our not being "ready," to receive them. How many evils which might have been avoided are entailed, by our not being "ready" to meet them. Our great poet somewhere says,

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

The difference between a successful and an unsuccessful man, a happy and a miserable one, one who does much and one who does little for the world's advantage, frequently consists chiefly in this, that the one is, and the other is not, "ready." There are several particulars in reference to which we wish to ask our readers the question, "are you ready?" May we hope that they will answer them to their own consciences as solemnly and as faithfully as their importance demands.

*Are you ready for action?* Ready with the principles and rules to guide your actions? You are necessarily and unceasingly an active creature. If *unreflectingly* all your activity is too surely but worthless or evil. To act for good we must honestly and deeply ponder the claims of our Creator, and the claims of his creatures too. And, having gained a clear view of *what* we ought to do, are we ready to do it? The end of duty is action.—God sent each of us into the world with the intention that we should do something for his glory. Though we may forget it, our position is surely a responsible one. "Do something—something worth doing!" is the voice which falls upon us from every quarter.—There is not a man in the world who may not do something to make things better than he found them; and the extent to which he may do this is just the extent to which he ought. God and the universe "expect every man to do his duty." Reader, *are you ready* to do yours?

*Are you ready for affliction?* Amidst all the activities of life, afflictions will come.—Losses of property, or losses of friends, personal, domestic, or relative afflictions, shade more or less, sooner or later, the destiny of every human being. "Man," says the Psalmist, "is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward;" and though we cannot tell what peculiar form our "trouble" may assume,—whether, like Job, we shall be called to suffer bodily pain, and to say, "Wearisome nights are appointed to me," or, like David, under severe domestic sorrow, we shall have to cry in the bitterness of our spirit, "Would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son,"—still we may be assured that sorrow and suffering shall, in some form or other, be our lot. Yes, though prosperity may be smiling around us, and comfort and happiness may be poured into our lap, yet the thunder cloud may be gathering which will soon turn our sunshine into gloom, and the lightning collecting which is to blast our hopes. Reader, whenever and however it comes, say, *are you prepared* for it?

*Are you ready for death?* The most solemn fact of our life is, that we must die.—All men must die. The young and the old, the strong and the feeble, the thoughtful and the gay, must die. My friend, whoever you are, *you must die*. Every day you live brings you nearer to death. Every pulse you beat reduces the number that comes between now and then. To some who read this magazine, the last hour may be fast approaching. Yes, before this year shall end,—yes, before this day shall close,—yes, while these pages are in your hand, the messenger of death may come to you. Oh, should it come this day, this hour, this moment, *are you ready* for it?

*Are you ready for eternity?* If death were absolutely the end of our existence, to many it would be robbed of most of its terrors. But reason and revelation concur in reminding us, that "after death" is "the judgment." True, your body shall be laid in the ground. It shall soon be undistinguishable from the surrounding soil. But you shall still exist; and at the appointed day, "they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,—some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Reader, *are you prepared*, not only for death, but for eternity?

Do you ask *how* you may obtain a preparedness for action, for affliction, for death, and for eternity? The Bible shall give the answer: "Acquaint thyself now with God, and and be at peace." You have sinned against

the Most High. Go to Christ for pardon.—You have wandered far from the path of rectitude. "Return unto the Lord that he may have mercy upon you." Surrender your whole souls, your whole selves, to the Saviour. Believe on him, love him, consecrate your powers to his service. Thus shall you be prepared for the duties and activities which wait upon you in life; you shall be comforted amidst the afflictions you may be called to encounter; you shall be sustained by almighty power in your struggles with the last enemy; and, throughout eternity, you shall enjoy the blessedness which God hath prepared for them that love him.—*Appeal*.

## A Present Blessing.

Is it not possible, then, in the first place, that there may be, on the part of Christ's ambassadors, a want of believing expectation of a present blessing, whenever they stand up to proclaim the message of salvation?

In regard to the general duty of supplication for the Holy Spirit's influences, it may be safely assumed that, by every man truly called to the ministry of the Word, such intercessions will be felt to be his obligation and his privilege. But it will probably be acknowledged by all before me, that even where there is a faithful and habitual resort to the mercy-seat, as to the only fountain of ministerial success, there may be nevertheless, when the pulpit is ascended, an absence of that waiting frame of soul to which I have just referred; and in the exercise of which the minister of reconciliation, even while he is speaking, looks with faith for an accompanying witness of the grace of heaven to the word now delivered by the authority of heaven. There is something very striking in an expression used by our risen Redeemer, when speaking to his apostles on the eve of his ascension to glory. "Being assembled together with them," it is recorded, "he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me." And if there be one scene more interesting than any other in the life of these primitive heralds of the cross, it is that interval of time which was passed by them between their Master's final disappearance, and the descent of the predicted Comforter. The Lord had vanished amidst the clouds of heaven. But they had been assured of an almighty Substitute whom he was to send as the purchase of his sufferings; and who, in perpetual signs and wonders, was to follow their publication of redeeming love with "demonstrations of the Spirit, and of power." To the visitation, therefore, of this celestial Palaclete, they turned an eye of confidence and hope. In that upper room they all with one accord anticipated his coming. They looked for the presence of the Holy Ghost, not as some distant, vague, and possible accomplishment of a prophecy which they only half believed, but as a blessing just at the doors. It was contemplated by them as immediate certainty. They rested upon it with the simplicity of faith; and faltered not, until at length, with a voice like the sweeping blast, and in symbols of lambent flame, He revealed himself as come.

This, then, is the spirit, my reverend brethren which I would hold up as a blessed exemplar for us all. Have we not reason to fear, that while we are casting in the seed, we do not really expect any harvest; and that on this account it is that the harvest does not come? It is very true, indeed, that the ministry being of God's own appointment, every incumbent of this glorious office finds himself met at the first entrance upon his work, with the encouragement of a rich treasury of promises of grace and blessing. But surely, while the Lord thus stands ready to bestow, we must preach believing that He will bestow, or, through the failure of our own fixed and confiding faith, the rain of spiritual water will not probably descend. Why, then, when we stand before immortal souls at the recurring periods of our ministration, can we not let go this doubting and heavy heart, which by impeaching, as it were, the veracity of God, shuts up in judicial retribution the windows of heaven? The truth is, that the insensibility of those to whom we come with the news of salvation; the serried phalanx of worldliness which meets us on our embassy of love; the fewness of those who respond, as compared with the mighty number of those who reject; pile up from year to year such mountains of difficulty before us, that at length, our elasticity of spirit all gone, we begin to give over looking for effects. Our persuasion, on the contrary,

seems to be, whenever we enter the sacred place, that nothing will be achieved; that there will be no manifested presence of the Spirit on the souls of our hearers; that as it was yesterday, so it will be to-day; that as it is to-day, so will it be on the morrow; and that such will be the continuance of our unblest career, until these voices which have so long called in vain shall be tuneless in the grave. But what is insensibility, and what is worldliness, and what is the paucity of returns, when placed in the scale with the unchangeable promises of God? Let us carry these promises with us, whenever we pass through the door of the sanctuary to minister to dying men. Let us believe that they will be fulfilled *then*. Let us count upon a present accomplishment of that assurance from the lips of Eternal Truth, which says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—*Bishop Eastburn's Charge*.

## Self-Given.

Who knows what depths of Divine truth and Divine love are opened in the common expression, *Christ gave himself* for us? "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." "The man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity."

Nor did the Saviour give himself in some vague and general sense, like one who confers some great benefit on the public, which is granted to every body at large, but to no one in particular. There is that in this "unspeakable gift" which comes home personally to each individual believer; who, as well as Paul, can say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Our blessed Lord himself declared the freeness of this gift, and its perfect voluntariness on his part. His language is, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."

It comes, then, to this,—that the eternal Son of God has made a full and free donation of himself—of his body, of his blood, of his life, of his soul, of his divinity—to the whole Church of the redeemed, and to each and every believing member thereof. Truly a stupendous gift! but certain and irrevocable. When God thus gives himself, he has no more that he can bestow. He has frankly made over to his people, and to each of them, the full benefit of all his infinite perfections, and of all that they can effect in saving and blessing them. What a boundless gratuity is this! What infinite bounty to miserable and polluted sinners! Behold what manner of love is this!

The rich may give of their wealth, the poor may give of their poverty; yea, all that a man hath, even to the uttermost farthing, he may expend in testimony of his affection for a distressed friend,—aye, he may, when all else is gone, pour out his life-blood for that dear friend,—yes, and more than this; he might, from a sense of duty, make this sacrifice of life and property for those who felt no special strength of love towards him, inviting and constraining him to lavish the costly gift.—But in Christ's giving of himself for us, there is not only an infinitely richer bestowment, but it is poured out in all its divine profusion and inconceivable vastness on us, rebel worms, "while we were yet sinners," unreconciled, warring with desperate malignity against his goodness, and utterly hateful by reason of sin, and loathsome with pollution.

Nowhere else in the universe is such love as this to be found. It has no parallel, no resemblance, no imitation. It stands alone—this unequalled gift, simple for its wholeness, and mysterious from its illimitable vastness. Christ has so given himself for and to the sinner who trusts in him, that if that ransomed sinner could have in his own person all the powers, privileges, and creative resources of Christ himself, he could not make his own salvation and eternal happiness more sure than Jesus has made it now. The boundless beatitude of Christ himself in all his heavenly glory is not more sure, than the blessedness pledged to all that believe in his name. He who gave himself for them on Calvary, made that amazing gift once for all, and Christ is theirs for ever.—*Puritan Recorder*.

## Dr. Beilby and his Consumptive Patient.

The following anecdote, which we copy from the London Baptist Magazine, illustrates the success, oftentimes, of fidelity, even when to reach its object it must overcome great opposition. Let all who are engaged in 'saving souls from death,' never faint in their work, though met, as they must be, by peculiar discouragements. Their 'labor of love' will, as in the case here described, be crowned with a blessing. The greater the difficulty surmounted the richer the reward.

The late Dr. Beilby, who was a zealous member and active officer of the church meeting in Elder Street, Edinburgh, was remarkable for the earnestness with which he endeavored to combine his duties as a physician with those of a Christian friend. In a biographical sketch prefixed to a selection from his papers recently published under the supervision of his friend and pastor, Dr. Innes, it is remarked that the facility which he possessed of introducing religious conversation in his intercourse with his patients was greatly blessed. "On one occasion, having been called to attend a young lady in consumption, he embraced an early opportunity of informing her of her danger, and of the probability of her illness, ere long, terminating fatally. He begged her solemnly to inquire of herself if she was prepared to die; and spoke seriously to her on the importance of being ready for the summons of death. During his conversation, she exhibited signs of displeasure and disrelish for the subject, and he was obliged to leave her without any good impression being apparent. On his next visit he was received with great coldness by his patient, who could hardly be induced to answer even the ordinary questions he addressed to her concerning her ailments. Not knowing the cause of this, he inquired of her friends in an adjoining room, 'What makes Miss — so reserved and shy to-day? she will scarcely even speak to me;'—when he was told, 'O, Dr. Beilby, she was much hurt by your speaking to her as you did yesterday; she considered it quite uncalled for, and begs that in future you will confine your conversation in her room to professional and commonplace topics, and avoid that of religion.' On hearing this, he endeavored to recollect in what terms he had spoken to her, and put the questions to his conscience—'Did I do right or wrong? If I were again placed in similar circumstances, should I act differently or repeat the same conduct?' Having answered these questions to himself, as his high sense of responsibility dictated, he returned to the invalid's chamber, and after giving her some general directions with regard to her medicine and treatment, he prepared to leave the room; but on reaching the door, he once more looked back, and ventured, in spite of his late rebuff, to say—'Is not that a blessed truth which God reveals to us in his own word, that "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses from all sin?"—Then, without adding another word, he closed the door, leaving the young lady alone. The following day, to his joyful surprise, on entering his patient's room, he received a most cordial welcome. She stretched out her hand, and said, 'Come in, Dr. Beilby, I am very glad to see you. I shall always be happy to see you now.' He was pleased, but astonished, and asked her, 'What had produced so marvellous a change in the mode of receiving him?' when she replied, 'Ah, Doctor, when you spoke to me of death, I could not bear it, for I felt I had lived all my life for pleasure, and in prospect of death I had no comfort; but when you told me of a Saviour, who is able and willing to cleanse me from all sin, then my heart rejoiced and I could look forward without fear.' On every subsequent occasion of their meeting, till her death, seven weeks after, she expressed her peace in believing, and the absence of all terror in view of death."

## True Estimate of Preaching.

Preaching is good or otherwise, not as estimated by mere classical, rhetorical or logical standards, but according to its adaptedness to a desirable impression, and to the ultimate end of preaching. In preaching, he is the most truly eloquent, who speaks most effectively to the purpose, which the preacher should have in view. And one of the highest attainments of pulpit eloquence consists in bringing the lofty grandeur and power of Gospel themes, down to the reach of the humblest minds. Bellamy appears to have been one of the most eloquent preachers in this country. And the highest compliment ever paid to him, may be found in the following