

## THE WOUND AND ITS CURE.

IN the eye of the dying Israelite turned to the serpent which Moses had raised, and feeling the poison departing from his veins, we behold a representation of the manner in which the Son of Man should be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should never die. This most singular miracle which God was pleased to work by the hand of his servant Moses deserves our marked attention. It is this point of resemblance to which our Lord refers so plainly and pointedly as a type of himself,—John iii. 14, 15, declaring that “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—The discontented Israelites had again murmured against God, and to punish them fiery serpents were sent amongst them,—Num. xxi. 6, who bit the people, and a great number died; but no sooner did the people confess their sin to the Almighty, than mercy prevailed over judgment, and a remedy was immediately provided. This was a brazen serpent erected at the command of God by Moses, and offering a certain cure to every wounded Israelite who looked upon it. The peculiarities of this remedy were very extraordinary. It did not remove at once and for ever, the fiery serpent who stung the people, but it healed the suffering people themselves.

Again, it did not heal the whole congregation of those who were bitten, since it is expressly stated v. 9. “that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived.” It was therefore, *not sufficient*, that the brazen serpent was lifted up; it was *not sufficient* that it had the power to heal; it was *not even sufficient* that the man who had been bitten was desirous of healing. It *was necessary* to the cure that the wounded man should behold the serpent of brass, and looking upon it he lived. We need not wonder then at our blessed Lord selecting this as *one chief point* of resemblance between Him and his servant

Moses. The type itself, and the cure effected by it, presented as it were a perfect likeness of the whole plan of salvation. Here is the plain and simple gospel. It is the "*looking to Jesus.*" It is the fixing the eye of a trusting faith upon Him, *upon all* that he has done, *upon all* that he has suffered—like the gaze of the wounded Israelite—which alone effects the cure. If we are really in earnest in the salvation of our souls, we shall never be satisfied without seeking *the way* of eternal life from the lips of the Divine Founder of our religion himself. He has proclaimed that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness *even so* must the Son of Man be lifted up, *that whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He *here plainly teaches this great, this blessed, and saving truth*, that, as the wounded Israelites found health and life *only* by looking on the brazen serpent, so in all ages, and under all circumstances, the sinner, who, directed by the prevailing influences of the Holy Spirit, fixes the eye of a true and living faith upon a crucified Redeemer; *that sinner* shall find a remedy for all his wounds, and all his misery; he shall find pardon, and life, and peace.

The difficulty, is, *to feel* that sense of danger which shall cause us *to seek* deliverance. This must be done by ourselves. As there has been a *lifting up* on God's part, there must be a *looking up* on ours. And here it is not with us, as with the Israelites. The Israelites could not but perceive the malignity of their bodily malady. But the disease of the soul is hidden and concealed from our notice. The sinner, too often is insensible to his real state, he knows not the plague of his own heart, the love of earthly things shuts out the love of God, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," retain all their power, and then Satan, the great enemy of souls, blinds the eye of them that believe not, lest they should behold the things which belong unto their peace, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

Now the brazen serpent, and the miraculous cure of every Israelite who beheld it, draw the attention of all alike *to one glorious object* of our life and salvation.

This typical representation, in the infancy of the church, may serve to admonish us "upon whom the ends of the world are come." The case of the Israelites in the wilderness, like other portions of their childrens history is set before us, "*for our learning.*"—1. Cor. x. 11. For them there was *one remedy*; to look upon the brazen serpent which Moses was directed to raise. If any had refused to look up, denying that the image could convey a cure, their plague must remain upon them. *Some test of obedience* has always been enjoined by God in his method of dealing with his people. It was so with Noah, when the deluge was impending, there was *one mode* of preservation: being warned of God, he prepared an ark for the saving of his house.—Gen. vi. Heb. xi. 7. But if, like the rest of his generation, he had mocked at the threatened danger, and refused to betake himself to the refuge, he, too, must have perished in the waters. These are the examples of the way in which God has revealed "*one name* under heaven, and no other, whereby we may be saved," Acts. iv. 12.; they who believe are justified, and they who believe not are condemned. God has provided an ark, and they refuse to enter it. God has pointed out a rock on which they may fix their house, and be secure for eternity,—Matt. vii. 24; but they build on another foundation, and when the waters rise, their house must be overthrown. It is then all-important for us to know what, building on this *one rock*—entering the *only* ark—looking unto him through whom *alone* we can be saved—really means. The meaning is, that Christ has redeemed from the wrath to come "as many as receive him, and believe in his name:" but that he must be *trusted* by those whom he redeems; that his death must be *relied* on, in order that it may avail for our salvation.

The cures which our Lord himself performed further illustrate this. We are told, for instance, of a woman who pressed through the crowd which surrounded him, till at last she came near, and touched the hem of his garment,—Luke viii. 43; and immediately the plague under which she had been long labouring, was removed, and she felt within herself that she was whole. He

called her to him, and when he had made all the bystanders acquainted with the circumstance, "he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace."

What, then, had her faith done for her? nothing more, than that it induced her to overcome all hindrances and discouragements, until she reached Him whom she believed could restore her. If you were seriously ill and suffering severely, would you not look to the skilful physician who could remove your complaint? If, to-morrow, some fearful pestilence should commence its ravages throughout our native land,—sparing neither age or sex, young or old, rich or poor, defying all common remedies; and it became generally known that one physician, and *one only*, possessed the means of *certain* cure, how earnestly would the attention of all, of every rank and station, be directed to this one point of safety; what expense would be spared by the rich in their endeavours to seek his aid? what hindrances would prevent the poor from struggling to reach his dwelling?

This brings the subject home to ourselves,—Does not *the good Physician*, the great healer of souls, who was sent to remove the deep-rooted and deadly disease of sin, to free us from the sentence of the "*second death*," from the *eternal curse* to which our guilt and multiplied transgressions have made us liable; does not He hold forth a still more precious remedy? Yes, His eternal word, which changeth not, *still prophecies*, "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me;"—John xii. 32. His gracious word *still invites*, "Whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37. And if you have *felt* the wound of sin, and sought the *only remedy*, then is the Son of man to you what the brazen serpent was to the Israelites.

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