

No. 344.

THE EXPLOSION OF THE STEAM ENGINE.

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"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death." "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

IN a beautiful part of the country, where there are mineral springs of water, remarkable for their efficacy in removing some diseases to which the human frame is liable; and where the bowels of the earth are rich in several of the valuable metals, stood a steam engine, the object for erecting which was to raise the water which would otherwise prevent the working of a lead mine. The writer of these lines, residing for a season in that neighbourhood, was passing near the spot at the moment when the boiler of the engine burst. He heard the thundering noise; he saw the smoke and steam and ashes rise and spread around, scorching and withering the branches and leaves of some trees which grew near; he beheld the boiler itself, great as was its weight, thrown to a considerable distance from its place by the force of the explosion; the building demolished, and the materials of which it was composed scattered in all directions. Several persons were on the premises, but none of them received any injury, except two who were very near the boiler. One of these was young man who attended the engine, the other was just then transacting business. Both these were entangled and fastened in by the falling of the masonry, and experienced all the horrors which the scalding water, covering them, inflicted. Some time elapsed before they could be extricated from their perilous situation. Both presented a spectacle which it was truly shocking to behold: the young man, however, was in the most mangled condition. Both lived in extremest agony a day or two; the young man first expired. The person who met with so unexpected and tragical an end while attending on business, bore his great sufferings with much calmness and submission, sustained,

it is believed, by the consolations of the gospel, and a blessed hope of a glorious immortality; he having lived in the habit of regarding the concerns of his soul. The young man, thoughtless and profane, had lived in the total neglect of all religious duties, and in rebellion against the commands of God: a place of worship near his dwelling he never entered; his leisure time was spent in the company of transgressors, who encouraged each other in the road to destruction. Just before the dreadful accident, he uttered an oath while addressing a man who was attempting to make some improvement in the working of the engine, which was out of order through his own mismanagement. He was carried to his house uttering the most dismal moanings, and continued his groans and cries till he expired. But let it be observed, that excruciating as were his bodily torments, his chief distress arose from the smitings of his conscience now awakened, and now preaching to him in language of awful accusation. Now he saw what a just God he had offended; what a holy law he had broken; what a load of guilt he had brought upon himself; what a dreaded account was immediately before him. To the kind and pious persons who spent the whole time in his chamber till his death, he declared that he thought little comparatively of the intense suffering he endured from head to foot; that this was far exceeded by the distress of his mind, arising from the review of his wicked course, and from the prospect of his speedy appearance in so unprepared a condition before the presence of his Judge: thus he continued in the greatest mental agony to his latest breath.

Scenes such as this are in general lightly passed off. With most persons who witness them or hear them described, a little natural feeling is excited, which soon subsides; they straitway resume their business or their pleasures without any salutary practical impression remaining on their mind. Let not this brief narrative be lost upon thee, O reader. Remember there is no insurance-office *against* death; nor any possibility of coming to an agreement *when* death shall execute its office. Death may be near to you when you least suspect its approach: wherever

you are, however engaged, whatever is the state of your soul, you have no security against the dart of death. The young man whose unhappy case is related, left his home a few hours before the terrible event, full of life; and the other person parted from his family with the expectation of returning in safety after a short absence: but, behold, the one carried to his wonted dwelling a mangled and loathsome mass; and the other to an adjacent inn writhing with pain, both soon to enter the invisible and eternal world. So, reader, you cannot promise yourself or your friends on going out, that you shall return in safety; nor on lying down to rest, can you be certain that you shall awake in this world.

What folly, what infatuation, what madness is it to live in the indulgence of sinful habits, to treasure up guilt, to prepare for keenest anguish whenever reflection is forced upon us! Then to look back upon time, health, reason abused; to look up to a God insulted by daring disobedience; to look forward to the final reckoning of the deeds done in the body; how inexpressibly dismaying! And, how unseasonable and how unsuitable is the last extremity, when nature is exhausted, when the body is enfeebled by disease or racked with pain, when the mind is bewildered and weak, to begin to think, to begin to be concerned about the precious soul, to begin to cry for mercy! Yet how common a thing is it to leave the most important of all affairs to so unfavourable a time for attending to it! Be admonished, O reader, to avoid a mistake so tremendously hazardous, so fatal. Surely the care of the immortal spirit, and the securing of its everlasting welfare deserves and demands far more than so hasty and precarious a regard.

There is a way, and there is but *one* way of attaining an undying and happy life in the world to come. This way it is the exclusive province of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, to reveal and to explain. Reader, search the scriptures; make that holy book which sheds a flood of light on the future thy counsellor: go to God on his mercy seat, in sincere and humble and earnest worship; seeking his favour, which is the life of the soul that enjoys it: look by

faith unto Jesus, the all-sufficient Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin: ask for the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit: this course thou wilt take if thou art wise; utterly rejecting all the notions of infidelity, and the schemes of superstition.

It is often seen that God, the wise and holy Sovereign, in the mystery of his present dealings with mankind, grants the enjoyment of the same temporal good things indiscriminately to persons of widely different characters. On the other hand we perceive the same calamities befalling him who serveth God, and him who serveth him not. Plainly does it appear from these occurrences, that the present life is not the final state of man; and that the rewards of grace, and the just punishment of sin are reserved for another state of existence.

With the true believer in Christ; with him who walks with God in the way of holy obedience; with him who diligently waits on God in the study of his word, and the ordinances of his house and worship; with him who seeks fellowship with God as the very life of life, and conformity to his holy likeness as the highest honour and ornament of the rational soul; with him whose grand concern it is ever to be ready for his great change, and in a state safe for death, judgment, and eternity; with him who makes it his object to spend every day and hour as if he were conscious it would be his last;—with such an one *all is well*, let the summons for his departure come whenever it may, in whatever form; let his dissolution be either by a sudden stroke or a lingering illness; *still all is well, well for ever*: to him “to live is Christ, to die is gain;” to bid farewell to earth is to enter heaven.



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