

THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

BY REV. E. S. TAYLOR.

That all men have souls, few will deny. We feel that this is our superiority over the brute creation. We are just as conscious of something within us which thinks and reasons, as we are of the body itself. All nations have believed in the existence of the soul, and have in the darkest regions of paganism, some faint, imperfect ideas of its immortality. Indeed no other truth is plainer than that man has a soul. If we do not know this, we know nothing as we ought.

But while all believe they have souls, how few act as though they realized their infinite value. How differently the mass of men feel on this subject from the requirements of revaltion, nay, from the dictates of reason!

The value which God attaches to the soul appears from the fact that He gave His only begotten Son to save it. Would he bear so patiently with our ingratitude, our hardness of heart, and our rejection of Jesus, if He did not see the excellency of our souls and earnestly desire to snatch them from eternal burnings? Would he not leave us to sink into perdition? Would He so pathetically cry, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zebonim?" How earnestly God pleads with us to be saved. Has he not warned us by the horrors of hell, and allured us by the happiness of heaven? Has He not said He takes *no* pleasure in our death? Has He not brought every motive from the universe, from Himself, to bear upon our minds, in urging the value of the soul?

And how does Jesus regard this matter? Look at Gethsemane and Calvary for the answer. For what did he bleed and die, but to save our souls? Was it, not the great burden of all his appeals to men while on earth, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Behold Him weeping over Jerusalem. What caused those tears but an overwhelming sense of the soul's value and of its danger? So full was Jesus of this subject, that He could think of no other. It absorbed all his time, energy and effort. So valuable was the soul in his esteem, so capable of the highest happiness in heaven or the deepest misery in hell, that He considered no sacrifice, no labor, no suffering, no ignominy, too great to endure for its salvation. The soul! the soul! that was before his mind when he signed the covenant of redemption, when he threw aside the regal glory of the skies, when He first entered upon His public ministry, in every sermon and miracle, and forgetful of all else in his dying agonies, he only thought of this, crying with joy, "It is finished!" "I have achieved the work of the soul's salvation!" It was to save the soul that he rose from the grave and gave this commission to his disciples through every age, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," for, tremendous, overwhelming truth—"he that believeth not shall be damned!" It is the soul which imparts such earnestness to His intercessions for us before His Father's throne.

It is the soul which brings the Spirit from heaven to earth. To sanctify that soul from all its pollution, to enable it to repent, believe, love and pray, to inspire it with devotion to the Father of lights, and to make it fit for the "rest which remaineth for the people of God," He enters our depraved hearts, and there takes up his abode. How earnestly the Spirit woos us to embrace the offers of salvation. How He reproves us of sin, by afflictions, by expostulations from the pulpit, by a sense of God's goodness, by a dread of His wrath, by the charms of Calvary, by the bliss of heaven, by the prayers of a pious mother, father, sister, wife, by the dying appeals of christian friends, by sickness, and by the stings

of conscience while in solitude away from the giddy mirth of gay companions. How often the Spirit has convicted us of "sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come." Though we have so often grieved Him and grossly insulted this heavenly Friend, yet he still continues to plead with us, earnestly beseeching us not to destroy our soul and body in hell. Why all this patience and the earnest entreaties so often addressed to us, if the Spirit felt not the value of our souls, and desired not our salvation?

Why should the angels rejoice when but one sinner repents, if they did not feel the great interests at stake when they see the soul about to choose between heaven and hell, God and Satan? They are not said to rejoice over anything else. The fall and rise of empires, the inauguration and dethronement of princes, the discoveries of science, the inventions of art, the march of refinement and learning, all produce no effect on their minds. From the position they occupy, gazing at one-time into heaven and then into hell, they see nothing comparable in interest to the salvation of but one soul from the bondage of sin.

No doubt the "spirits of just men made perfect" in glory partake of the same feeling. We know that Moses and Elijah did descend from their shining seats, and lay aside for a moment their celestial employments, to converse with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, in reference to the death He should accomplish at Jerusalem; thus evincing the deep concern in the work of redemption above all other subjects; for they knew that the salvation of the soul depended on the atonement which Jesus should offer.

And could our pious mothers, fathers, pastors, sisters, brothers, now in heaven, be permitted to hold converse with us, would not their whole engrossing theme be the salvation of the soul? What little interest they would feel in what so much engrosses our time and talents. How ardent their desires, how earnest their entreaties to have us saved. What lessons they would teach of the value of the soul, as seen in the happiness of heaven and the misery of hell!

Even if we were permitted to converse with the lost in per-

dition, they would be all alive to the value of the soul. How they would deplore the folly of our lives. - How they would warn us not to follow in their footsteps. - Did not Dives wish some one sent from the dead to warn his five brethren not to come "to that place of torment?" Surely if we could hear their awful description of the final misery of the wicked, we would at once repent of those sins which are rapidly leading us to ruin. They would so alarm our fears as to make us cry, "Oh! deliver me from the curse of sin, from the power of Satan."

But the devil knows the value of the soul and blinds the mind to these solemn realities. For six thousand years he has bent all the energy of himself and his angels, to effect the ruin of the soul. Would he engage in such fierce contests with Christ in reference to the soul; would he at every defeat try some new method of attack; would he prolong the warfare through such a protracted period; if he did not know something of the infinite value of the soul. Oh! sirs; the devil is so earnest, he pursues us so eagerly, he is so determined in his efforts to ruin our souls, because he knows what hell means, and what it will be for us to suffer without hope of relief the horrors of everlasting fire.

This, in some measure, Christians feel, and hence they plead so earnestly with us to save our souls by flying to Christ. It is not that our conversion would make them happier in heaven, for Christ will overflow their souls with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." But it is because they know the evil of sin, the shame, the woe, the despair, the eternal agony which only the conversion of the soul can avert. We often think hardly of the people of God for annoying us so much in a course of sinful pleasure by their entreaties and warnings. We may even regard them as our enemies. But is it not because they see our danger and wish to prevent our ruin. And who so much our friend as he who seeks to save us from the fires of hell?

If *you*, reader, were but enlightened by the Spirit to see your danger, how earnestly you would cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Why did Paul fall to the earth,

and imploringly ask, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" Why did the hardened jailor and unfeeling thief so earnestly implore mercy? God threw but a ray of light from eternity into their minds, and just one glimpse of the soul happy in heaven or writhing in hell, produced that change. So it would be with you if you could feel, as they felt, the value of your soul.

Now, why is it that in heaven, earth and hell this deep concern should be felt for your salvation, and you alone, the one personally interested, be indifferent and careless? Is not the testimony of three worlds,—of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,—of angels and glorified spirits—of devils and the lost—of Christians and the awakened sinner—enough to show you the value of the soul? Was ever truth established by such testimony? And oh! will you still neglect this great concern?

Your soul was made in the image of God. No where else is that image impressed, but upon the soul. This allies you to angels and to God himself. When the body moulders in the grave, the soul is the precious jewel which can never decay, which was made immortal, to shine in the diadem of Christ forever. Why then feel so much interested in the body and neglect the soul? Why feed the one, and let the other famish for the bread of life? Why clothe the one, and suffer the other to stand in naked deformity before the assembled universe at the bar of God, when the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is so freely offered to cover all its shame? Why beautify the one, and deform the other? If the one must fall into the grave, the other must fall into hell unless you fly to the refuge of the cross. The pains endured by the body in the throes of death are not comparable to the agonies of the soul in the fierceness of eternal fire. Oh, for which *should* you feel, for which *will* you feel, most profoundly?

And now, dear reader, what will you do with this priceless jewel? Will you continue to abuse its powers and debase its grandeur? Will you fill it with pollution? Shall its wonderful faculties be devoted to sinful purposes until in the world

of despair, they shall all combine to torment you forever; the memory recalling the bitter returnless past, as in the case of Dives; the conscience filling the soul with remorse; the imagination looking back to hopes once within your reach, but now withdrawn forever; and the heart having nothing to love and hating itself for its foolish, guilty rejection of God? What will it then profit you that you have ran the whole round of pleasure? You have pursued pleasures and they fled before you. When you reached forth your hand to seize them they vanished into air. Even the pleasures you gained yielded bitter disappointment. They were altogether unsatisfactory. God has determined that nothing shall satisfy the cravings of the soul but communion with its Maker. In mercy he has so created your soul that nothing but His smiles can fill its "aching void." You have tried learning, riches, ambition, friendship, love, morality, a course of sinful pleasure; but in all these you found nothing but "vanity and vexation of spirit." Afflictions disturb your sweetest enjoyments.—The hand of death snatches away your fondest friends. Riches make to themselves wings and fly away. Life itself draws to a close, and dreadful eternity is opening to receive you.—While you are saying "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry," suddenly you are alarmed by a voice from your neglected God, "this night thy soul is required of thee;" and then, what shuddering to think of going all unprepared to the judgment!—What will now avail your worldly honors, pleasures, riches? How foolishly you have acted to sell your soul for naught. You now know that your doom is sealed to all eternity. You would gladly give property, friendship, learning, reputation, aye, life itself, to save your soul, but alas! alas! it is forever too late.

My dear friend, you are in momentary danger of losing this soul of such priceless value. You are pursuing eagerly the path which led others to hell, and how are you to escape their fate while following their footsteps? You have not yet been saved by God's method of salvation, and He will use no other. Your disease has not been removed by the

remedy of the Gospel, and God will apply none but this. Nothing but God's sovereign mercy, which may any moment change to wrath, keeps you from sliding into hell. No promise in the Bible affords you any ground of hope, as long as you remain as you are. Your heart is becoming harder; and yet you must feel in order to be saved. Your evil habits are daily becoming stronger; and yet they must be subdued before you can reach heaven. The devil is sowing new errors in your mind every day; and they all assist to keep out the light of the Spirit which is indispensable to your conversion. Great is your danger. We are commanded to warn you if we see the sword approaching. We solemnly tell you that we see its steady, swift approach, and urge you to fly to the cross for safety. Oh! save your soul before it is too late, and you are lost!

S. M.

O, cease my wandering soul,
 On restless wing to roam;
 All this wide world, to either pole,
 Has not for thee a home.

Behold the ark of God;
 Behold the open door;
 O, haste to gain that dear abode,
 And rove, my soul, no more.

There safe shalt thou abide,
 There sweet shall be thy rest,
 And every longing satisfied,
 With full salvation blessed.

THE SOUL.

C. M.

- 1 What is the thing of greatest price,
The whole creation round ?
That which was lost in Paradise,
That which in Christ is found :
- 2 The soul of man—Jehovah's breath—
That keeps two worlds in strife ;
Hell moves beneath to work its death,
Heaven stoops to give it life.
- 3 God, to redeem it, did not spare
His well-beloved Son ;
Jesus, to save it, deign'd to bear
The sins of all—in one.
- 4 And is this treasure borne below,
In earthen vessels frail ?
Can none its utmost value know,
Till flesh and spirit fail ?
- 5 Then let us gather round the cross,
That knowledge to obtain ;
Not by the soul's eternal loss,
But everlasting gain.