

**"A CASTAWAY"--IN WHAT SENSE?****F.B. Meyer:**

Is it to be supposed for a moment that the Apostle thought that when once the believer has fled to Christ he can be cast out into the outer darkness where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth? Is it possible for a limb to be torn from the mystical body of Christ, for a jewel to be snatched from out of His crown, for a sheep to be devoured from His flock? Are there any unfinished pictures in God's gallery, any incomplete statues in His workshop? Does God begin a work in the soul and leave it incomplete and unperfected? We cannot believe it.

It is said of Rowland Hill, my great predecessor at Christ Church, London, that when an old man of eighty four and just before he died, one Sunday night when the lights had been put out in Surrey Chapel, the verger in attendance heard him go to and fro in the aisle, singing to himself: "When I am to die, ' Receive me '--I'll cry, For Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why; But this I do find, we two are so joined, He'll not be in heaven and leave me behind."

If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, if it is directed toward Christ, a union has been formed between Him and you which neither heaven nor earth nor hell nor time nor eternity can ever break. And yet the Apostle feared he would be a castaway. What did he mean? One day I was calling on a brother clergyman. He took me out into his garden to an out, house, against the side of which was resting one of the old fashioned bicycles with a very tall wheel. I said to him: "Do you ever ride this?"

Said he: "No; see how rusty it is. I have not been on it for many months. I have got something better, something that suits my purpose better," pointing to another and a newer bicycle on the other side of the house.

I said to myself: "Then this is a castaway."

When stylographic pens first came out, I purchased one in the hope that it would serve me perfectly. But I was sadly disappointed. Sometimes when I attempted to use it, it was unwilling to serve me. At other times it was profuse in inking the finger. Finally I discarded it in hopelessness and purchased another pen. The one I now hold serves me perfectly, and I have no difficulty whatever in performing by its means any writing upon which I have set my heart. But I keep the other one. It lies in the drawer of my bureau, and often when I am putting my things together to go upon some journey, I think I hear it saying to itself as it lies there:

"Ah, he is going away without me again! There was a time when he never left home without taking me with him; he never wrote a letter without me; he never composed an article but that I first knew its contents; but for these many days and months I have been lying here unused."

That disused stylographic pen is my conception of what Paul meant when he said he feared being a castaway. You must know that this man loved to save men. It was the passion of his life. Send him to Philippi, and he will not be there a day before he has turned the devil out of the poor demoniac girl. Let him be put in jail, and before midnight he will have baptized his jailor. Send him to Athens, and though he is all alone, he will gather a congregation upon Mars' Hill within a week or two. Put him alongside of Aquila and Priscilla at the bench, and he will make tents and talk to them in such good wise that they will become Christians. Stand him before his judge, and the latter will cry: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!" Let him go to Rome, tied to a Roman sentry, and he will speak to these men, one after another, in such fashion that the whole Prefer-tan camp will be infused with the love of God. His passion was to save men. I do not believe that if he were alive to-day, he would be in a street car, or a railway car, or on board a steamer without buttonholing some man and speaking to him about his soul and his Savior. The whole passion of the man was to save some; but he feared that unless he took good care, the hour might come in his life when Christ would say:

"Thou hast served me well, but thou shalt serve me no more. Of late thou hast become indolent, and choked with pride, and I have not secured thy whole obedience. I am now compelled to call upon some soul more alert, more obedient than thee; and that man I will use to do the work that thou mightest have done, but which thou didst fail to accomplish."

This comes home upon us, brother ministers. I am speaking to some who in their earlier life were wondrously used of God in soul winning, as they went from the seminary or the college, and took their first church. Sunday after Sunday the inquiry room was crowded. The simple villagers, from their lips, heard the Word of God, and were converted, and the communicant's roll was weekly increased. The boys of the neighborhood were attracted, and won like jewels for Christ. Am I not speaking to women who in their first burst of love to Christ wore the signs of holy earnestness in their circles of society, so that all who came in contact with them were made to feel the power of a genuine love to God? May we not all look back to days upon days, long passed, when we were the channels through which Jesus spoke and wrought, and the Holy Ghost was poured upon men? But what has happened? We preach the same old sermons, but Christ is apparently indifferent to them. We go through the same mechanical routine, but there is no stir of life. These many days have passed, and there have been no additions to our church roll. We have won men to ourselves, but not to Christ. And so it seems as though whilst men flattered us, and whilst we had a certain complacency in their applause, heaven passed on unheeding, the souls of men were unreached, and our churches were just dying of inanition; the old passing on to God, but the young untouched, unsaved.

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**"May not the question therefore come to us now: "Perhaps, after all, Christ has ceased to use me! Christ has no further purpose for me! I am too clumsy, too obtuse, too disobedient, too full of myself, too much out of touch with Him! And so I am to be put on the shelf!" Like those great stones in the quarry at Baalbec, almost completely quarried, but yet the temple was finished without them! May not this question go through the audience: "Am I a castaway? I belong to Christ, and when I die I believe I will go home to Him. I know that He has saved me by His precious blood; but has He ceased to use me?"**

**Look for a moment upon the pages of Scripture, and see how they are**