

The Coloured Gentleman and the Book.

IT was a hot, dreary place, that desert ; and the coloured gentleman seated in his carriage with no one to talk to but servants, was glad enough that he had brought a book with him to give him something else to do than look over the lonesome wastes. So he brought out his book—not the latest novel, with thrilling love story or startling adventures, not even a poem ; but the wonderful book of the Jewish prophet Isaiah ! What a strange kind of book, you say, with which to beguile the hours of a desert journey ! Well, there it was, anyway, and he was just puzzling over the 53rd chapter of that book, when possibly a sudden exclamation from one of his servants made him look up. Coming as if to meet them, a solitary figure on foot was making its way over the sand, and presently it was near enough to be recognised as a man of earnest appearance who looked as though he wished to speak to the coloured gentleman. Well, he was a gentleman ; not only possessing influence, position, education and wealth, even if he were what you would probably call a “nigger,” but he had what a good many white and coloured men have not, though they may possess the other things—he had true courtesy and was teachable.

So, when the pedestrian drew near enough, and saluted him, he was not above ordering the carriage to stop, and, replying to his enquiry—"Do you understand what you are reading?" "No, I can't really say that I do. This book seems beyond me, somehow. What did the prophet mean when he said, 'He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted.' Did the prophet write of himself, or of some other man?"

Then making room in the carriage for the lone traveller, he ordered the procession to move on, while the preacher—for so he was—explained the book. And what clear explanation he gave! He told the story of Jesus Christ Who came from Heaven to earth and became a man, on purpose to uplift mankind, white or black, red or yellow. He told how **He chose** to be very poor, that He might feel for the very poorest, for sometimes He was hungry and had no home. He told how Jesus worked with working men, and how His followers were working men, so the workers of the world might feel their work was ennobled. And then he spoke of Christ's teaching, and of how men had hated Him without a cause; how He was despised and rejected, and finally crucified as a malefactor. And thus he showed how it was all foretold by the prophets, for it was God's plan

that His Son as a man should live a perfect life and so undo what man's sin had done. And that He should die to save man from sin and that thereby He might conquer death and be able to finally destroy it, and bring man forth from the grave. Then he told how Jesus had risen from the dead, and given orders to His followers to preach glad tidings to every creature in all the world, that whosoever would repent, and believe in Him as the Saviour, and be immersed in His Name, should be saved from his sins and all the results of them for evermore. And after that, He had gone back to Heaven, from whence He would one day return to claim the kingdoms of earth for His own, and reign with all His redeemed people.

The gentleman was touched to the heart by the glorious story, and when presently they drew near to a pool or deep stream of water, he said to the preacher, "Look! Here is water; why should I not be baptized now?" "You may," said the preacher, "If you believe the Gospel with all your heart." "I do," exclaimed the other. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And then they stopped the carriage, and both the preacher and the gentleman went down into the water and the coloured traveller was immersed beneath it. But when they came forth from the water, the preacher was seen no more, but the gentleman went on his journey with a joy in his soul he

had never had before, for his sins were forgiven, and he was now a child of God through Jesus Christ.

Now this is a true story, and you will find it set forth in the New Testament in Acts viii. 26-40. But, reader, do you believe that Jesus Christ's life and death atoned for **your sins**? As sure as you live, they did! Don't you wish you were free from them and all their miseries? But to obtain the benefit from Christ's atonement for sin, you must believe it as a little child would—without reservation, simply, truly, and tell Him you are sorry and want His forgiveness and peace. Have you done this? Then there is still something for you to do. The Ethiopian Eunuch went on his way rejoicing because his faith was deep enough and sincere enough to lead him to obey the Gospel. He was immersed in the water when he believed on Jesus. Have you been? If not, why not? See to it without delay, for it is the only Christ-given way. Jesus Himself said to His servants:—

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing (immersing) them into the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”
“He that **believeth and is baptized** shall be saved.” (Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Mark xvi. 16).

—T. H. S.