

THE BOW WITHOUT AN ARROW.

BOWS and arrows : how many in history have been SLAIN thereby. The arrow has sped on its way, and met its mark. A little thing, but it has pierced with the piercing of death. The BENT bow speaks of judgment, and not only man's, but God's BOW is displayed (Hab. 3. 9).

Yet pause, and wonder. We have found A BOW WITHOUT AN ARROW. Is it USELESS, or has it been USED ? What is the meaning of THIS bow ? It fills the sky, and shines in its glory. The RAINBOW is beautiful, but it is more than beautiful. It IS GOD'S MESSENGER. It is a reminder of His truthfulness. There is the REMOVAL of the storm, and the brightness of mercy is seen. But the rainbow would not be there WITHOUT THE STORM. The judgment is removed, but not denied. Grace shines on the background of wrath SATISFIED. Every claim of God's law must be met, but how ?

"I do set MY bow in the cloud" (Gen. 9. 13). There is music in the words, "MY bow." O the marvel of grace:—"And I will LOOK upon it." Surely the rainbow-token (Gen. 9. 13. 17), is as the passover-token, and that also is before God's eyes, "I will SEE the blood" (Ex. 12. 13).

How precious it is to call to mind another verse of Scripture. "Mine EYES and Mine heart shall be there continually" (2 Chron. 7. 16). Where ? The place where the blood was. The only token God owns is pictured before us. The blood speaks of the SWORD, and the rainbow OF THE ARROW, but the sword of Genesis 3. 24 has gone from between the cherubim, and the blood is there INSTEAD. And the arrow is gone, and the token is there INSTEAD. Grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. 5. 21). God has never EXCUSED one forgiven sin. The word "forgive" in Psalm 32 signifies "bear." THE SIN MUST BE BORNE. That is righteousness, and SO there is THE TOKEN.

God speaks in nature, and He has not sent another flood, nor will He. But He will deal with the earth by fire. His promise stands. - Yet the type surely tells of a greater Antitype. The billows of wrath broke on the Saviour of sinners, and for all who trust in Him there is NO MORE FLOOD. The token shines brightly, for God delights to give assurance to His people (Luke 1. 77), and they joy in the knowledge of eternal salvation. Do you ?

In nature we have the unveiling, and "analysis" of light (as it were) in the rainbow, but He Who arranged nature thereby tells of a far greater unveiling—"THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST" (2 Cor. 4. 4). Calvary

reveals the amazing and harmonious attributes of God. The variegated glory of Him Who is Light, and in Whom is NO DARKNESS at all (1 John 1. 5). We need the storm to show His holy character, but 'tis not the storm alone. "God is Love," poor, troubled sinner, and you will find Him to be so. Never was an earthly shepherd tenderer than He is to THE LOST SHEEP, foolish though it has been.

The arrow has gone:—it was TURNED AWAY from the sinner (Isa. 12. 1, Hos. 14. 4). And in what direction was it turned ? The bow HAS been used. The wrath has been unveiled. Look at the rainbow. The arrow has been shot HEAVENWARD. It has met the Holy One, the Lord Jesus from heaven. Thus is there peace, peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5. 1). Is it yours ?

Behold the rainbow once again. There is NO arrow THERE now, and it cannot shoot earthward. It is a token. It is at rest, and therefore, I am at rest. "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift" (2 Cor. 9. 15). Ah, dear reader, do you know HIM, or is God's arrow STILL WAITING FOR YOU ? When the Lord Jesus comes again, He, Who met the sword, has the sword of His mouth (Rev. 19. 15): when He appears, He, Who met the arrow, will Himself be manifested as the Battle Bow (Zech. 10. 4). Is it wise to ignore God's Way of Salvation ? Is it not a vain thing (Ps. 2. 1) ? And, O, THE SIN OF DESPISING the Son of God's love !

The rainbow touches earth, as it were, at TWO points, for salvation is unto Jew and Gentile. No nation, or age, or condition is excluded. The arch is in HEAVEN, and, as with Jacob's ladder, God thereby shows the uniting of heaven and earth in Christ. But now we see the parts of His ways (Job 26. 14): soon redeemed ones will behold a complete circle of glory—"round about the throne" is the testimony of Revelation 4. 3. Ah, dear reader, will you see this ? Will you see the Lord Jesus, and be changed into HIS glory (Ps. 17. 15) ? Or will you, as Balaam, behold Him AFAR OFF (Num. 24. 17) ? He truly met the arrow, once, only once,—it meant death to Him. He will not come again to die. He suffered once. He did not shrink. He loved unto the end. Was there ever love like this, to worthless enemies ? Do not turn aside to other subjects, and ignore YOUR SOUL'S NEED. Behold God's rainbow. He still looks upon it. He is satisfied with the work of Christ. Are you ? Or do you desire something else ? A wondrous salvation is free, and there is an arrowless bow as an evident abiding monument of a finished work, a settled debt, a satisfied claim ! Satisfied ! Yes, God is satisfied. And so am I, a guilty sinner by nature, but now in Christ. And tell me,—What is Christ to YOU ?