

ONE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT.



MR. JONES had the newspaper in his hand. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of surprise: "Why, who do you think is dead?" he said to his wife: "James Smith! he was here not three weeks ago; he sat where you're sitting now, and was as cheerful and well as ever I saw him, and we were talking for half an hour, I daresay, for we had not seen one another for a good while. And now he's gone! he died the day before yesterday, and he was not quite so old as I am either."

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He put down the paper; he had no heart to read about anything else; he was quite shocked and startled. "Ah, well," he went on, "so it is; one taken, and the other left; it might just as well have been I. Nobody could have said that day which of us it was to be. In fact, I always thought he was the better man of the two. Well, well, so it is; one taken, and the other left."

Yes, so it is indeed, and that continually. Whenever death comes to any one, this is just what happens; one is taken, and others are left. Only it is more striking when it happens, as in this case, that two people have lately been together in full health, and one of them is taken away with little warning, while the other is left still living. No wonder Mr. Jones laid down his paper; no wonder that any one is struck by such a thing happening to him.

"One taken, and the other left;" but do these words mean nothing more than merely one dying and the other left still living? If death made the *same* change to all, if it put an end to them altogether, or took them all alike to the same place beyond the grave, then indeed this would be the whole meaning of the words. But this is not the case. Death does *not* put an end to men, body and soul; and that eternal world to which men go after death is *not* all one and the same. There is much more in these words than appears at first sight: "one taken, and the other left."

Do you know where the words come from, and who spoke them? They are Bible words, and it was the Lord Jesus Christ who spoke them. What He said was as follows:—"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two

women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other left." What He was speaking of was "the coming of the Son of man ;" that coming of the Lord Jesus Christ which is yet to be, when He will come to judge the world. He compared what will happen then to what took place at the Flood. His coming, He taught us, will be *sudden*, and will take people unawares, as the Flood came upon people in the days of Noah. Some will be found ready, and some not ready. A great separation will then be made. Many who have lived together will thenceforth be together no more. Some even who shall be found working in one field, or grinding at the same mill, will then be parted for ever. All will depend on the state of the heart before God. The true believer will be *taken*, rescued, saved ; as Noah and his family were safe in the ark, so will he be safe, for Christ is his ark ; but the wicked, the impenitent, the careless, the unprepared, will be *left*, left out, left to themselves, left to face the Judge, left to perish ; for they would not go into the ark, they would not take refuge in Christ Jesus when they might, and now He is come, and they are not ready.

"One taken, and the other left ! It might just as well have been I !" And if it had been, what then ? Should you have been ready ? Should you have been taken to God, taken to happiness ?

You look sad, you shake your head, you fear not. But remember it *will* be you who will be taken some day ; you taken, and others left. And who can tell how soon ? Did that man who sat talking in the room think that in three weeks' time his friend would be reading of his death in the paper ? None can tell when the call may come, none but He who

sends it. But come when it may, it must be obeyed. You cannot refuse to hear. You cannot say, "Wait; I am not ready." That moment, ready or not, you must go.

"Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." This is what the Lord Himself says, and says to *you*. Stay no longer outside the ark, live no longer without Christ; you are not safe so for one moment. For suddenly, with no further warning, while you are in the field, while you are at the mill, while you are at your usual daily work, the call may come. Wait for nothing. Flee to Jesus at once. Take refuge in Him. Give Him your heart. Cast yourself upon Him for salvation. Give up all, to win Him and be found in Him.

He calls you to Him; obey the call, rise, go to Him; He will accept you, forgive you, wash away all your sins, and be your Saviour, your Friend, your Lord, your All. He will bless you all your life long. And when He comes, His coming will not take you unawares, or make you sorry: "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing," that is, watching. If even sudden death should come to you, if friends who were talking with you lately should be startled to see your name set down among the Deaths, still all will be well; for, though taken while others are left, you will have been taken to God, to be with Him for ever, through Jesus Christ.