

A Sure and Certain Hope of Everlasting Life

Many years ago the Empress Anna, one of the monarchs of Russia, caused a palace to be built of ice, on the banks of the river Neva, in mid-winter. The roof, the walls, the floors, the furniture, were all made of solid ice, and finished with architectural symmetry and beauty. Everything that might be expected in a royal palace was found there. The water, before it was frozen, had been coloured according to the respective uses to which, when in the form of ice, it was to be applied; so that the several parts all seemed of the proper materials. But when the spring returned, this magnificent toy melted away. The sun spared not its beauty; it wasted before the same heat which dissolved the wasted masses (of snow and ice) which lay scattered around it.

No contrivance could exhibit a fitter illustration of the vanity of the hopes and dreams of happiness which too many are prone to cherish. They are showy and flattering; but they are cold, they are comfortless and unenduring. The ice palace of the Russian Empress dissolved gradually, though when it began to decay,

all the art of man was unable to prop it up; but often death comes hastily, and destroys to the very foundations, without prior notice.

We are not only to build, but are to see to it with what, and upon what we build. For the day is coming which shall try every man's work of what sort it is. They build too low, who lay their foundations here; the flood will sweep around and above them – the swelling tide will undermine them, and scatter their works. They build too low who build not upon that Rock which is higher than they – the top of which is in heaven – “the Rock of Ages.” Alas! How many are trifling their precious time away, grasping at evanescent flowers, sporting on the precipice's brink! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Christ crucified is the only object of justifying faith. There is no other name given under heaven and among men whereby we can be saved. There is no mercy of God out of Christ. The Word of God calls faith a receiving of Christ – a looking unto Him – a coming to Him – and a building upon Him. The

believing sinner is brought to see that the atonement of Christ is the only ground, and that this is all-sufficient, - that guilty as he is, he can take refuge here, and that God,, for His Son's sake, will freely pardon all his transgressions; and therefore he trusts in Christ for the salvation of his soul. This is the faith that savingly unites to Christ; for the want of this, every hope of heaven must expire. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

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