

GOSPEL LIGHT.

LOST OR SAVED.

READ ACTS xxvi.

THE peculiarity of the gospel is its activity towards man; dealing with individuals to whom it is addressed, and not merely propagating opinions.

The gospel deals with man individually, and goes out actively towards man; neither Judaism nor heathenism ever did this. The character of the gospel is, as when Paul preached it, that it “turned the world upside down.”

Nothing was to stand before it; nothing could be allowed with it; Judaism, heathenism, philosophy: it overturned all. It brought in the claims of God upon individuals. It not only brought truth about God and man, but it showed those addressed to be in a certain position towards God. The gospel comes and says, “You are lost”; and this does turn the world upside down.

It is a new thing for them to be told, “You are all wrong.” Paul did this. He stated soberly what it was, gave proofs of it, but could not convince man’s mind. He treated every living soul as a sinner, a child of disobedience, a child of wrath. That must be from God, not man, and it turns the world upside down. Paul was sent out to all the

world, and so were others also (1 Cor. xv. 10). His mission was peculiar; and he brought the claims of God before men, calling every one to repent, warning them that they were all away from God, and telling them to submit to the gospel.

It is a solemn thing for a man to stand up and say, "You are all lost." And that is what Christianity tells us is the state of all by nature; and yet it comes in grace. It is not law; the law never did that. What is the good, you may say, of telling men they are lost? Why not leave it to the day of judgment?

This would not be grace; it would do for law, but not for grace. There was most important truth conveyed in the law concerning the one true God; but He was hidden behind the veil. He sent out to tell man what He was, but He hid Himself in thick darkness. He never revealed Himself under the law. He gave a law telling men what they should be, but did not reveal Himself. He would not have put man to the test if He had, for "God is love," and love could not deal in law. If God had revealed Himself, He would have said, "You are perfect sin; but I am perfect love, and can put away your sins." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20).

The gospel tells you not only that you have done wrong, but that you are a sinner in the

presence of a God who reveals Himself. It comes revealing God in such a way that the contrast between Himself and you is brought to light; sin is shown to be contrary to light. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19). Christ never turned away any; but He did not cover over man's sin; He brought it to light. There is truth as well as grace. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). He came presenting God to the conscience of man, and laid it open and bare before Him. Why should God trouble Himself about my sins, and not leave it all till the day of judgment? It is all grace that makes you conscious of what you are in His presence now. There is quickening or life-giving power from Him, which, however terrible the conviction arising from it, brings a longing for holiness when I have not got it. There is a new nature that cannot get peace for itself; it has the desire after holiness, but knows it has not got it. It is there, heavy laden, though delighting in God and desiring Him.

There is a consciousness of a burden, but no power to get from under it. There must be something else. The gospel brings salvation to the person for whom it is wrought. There must be righteousness, but the new nature is not righteousness. I have to find out, not only what is in my heart, but what

is in God's heart about me. Confessing my faults will not make me happy. Can I be happy, if I have offended my Father, because I feel sorry about it, without knowing what His thought about me is? The gospel brings knowledge of divine love in salvation. The gospel is the perfect, full answer from God to the desires He has produced. In a word, it is salvation.

When the gospel came to Paul he was full of himself, 'self-righteousness and self-complacency. He had been spending his life in doing things to make himself righteous in God's sight, and then found out that it was all in vain, and that "the carnal mind [or, the mind of the flesh] is enmity against God" (Rom. viii.). Self had been the object of all his life. He had been spending all his activities to drive God out of the world, and hinder the gospel of His grace; if he could have done it, he would. That is the character of every one by nature: though not so energetic as Paul, men are the enemies of God.

At enmity with God, man is also righteous in his own sight, and how will he like to hear his own righteousness called "filthy rags"? "He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners" was the complaint against God. Will He go to the sinners, and slight their righteousness? Will they have such a God as that? Paul was an enemy of God, when in

his own sight he was righteous. He wanted his eyes opened, and that is what he got. "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me" (Gal. i. 15, 16).

Two things must accompany each other: the revelation of God's Son, and the knowledge, by that revelation, of ourselves. Paul had all manner of truth before, but God was not revealed to him. So you, too, may have plenty of truth and doctrine, and not know God. If God is revealed to me, it is because I have not known Him before. Could you be conscious of being in the presence of God (every one is in His presence, but could you be conscious of it) and not know what you are? When the eye is open, we see with the truth of God.

Philosophers argue about God, but of what value are the thoughts of man about Him? Think of a man with plenty of money being told the Lord was to come to-morrow! What would he think of his money? Would he not hide it? We live the life of fools in this world (I do not mean Christians, but in our natural state); and what is more, we know it, and we do not like to know it. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm xiv. 1). You must take a child to get the simple expectation of good from this world: men do not expect it; they know they are pursuing what cannot satisfy them.

In verse 17 of this chapter we get a new

starting-point. Paul was one to whom the gospel came thus; his enmity having thus reached its height, he was turned from “darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God.” Paul tasted the perfect grace of God, that left not a thought of sin between Him and Paul. “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” He saw Christ, and was taken up in the midst of his enmity and sin, and made an apostle of, “to turn men from darkness to light.”

We are not only living *in* darkness, but we *are* darkness until our eyes are opened. The sun does not give light to a blind man; and such are we till our eyes are opened. When a person sees with the eyes of God both as to himself and as to light, this is repentance, not salvation yet; and a sinner needs salvation. You must be at home with God to have confidence; you must know Him.

The consciousness that we want God, and the consciousness of knowing Him, are different things. It is what God has done *for* man that is salvation, not what He has done *in* man. We can tell men they are lost, because we know we are saved. When I have got the remedy, and know it will cure, I can tell of it. I know there are sins; but I have got Christ, I have got something beyond the new nature that longs for holiness. I have forgiveness: no mention of sin against the man who believes in Christ.

The gospel not only tells men they need forgiveness, but it tells them they have it; not a single spot, all the sins gone. Any Christian can say he has it, who knows and believes the gospel.

But how can you say that? you ask.

Does not God say so? Perhaps you are not caring for it? It is terrible if you are not; terrible that God should spend His Son, and you not care about it! This is worse than breaking the law, for the blood was shed to wash away that sin. Now when atonement has been made, and is rejected, or treated with indifference, what can be done? For "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. x. 26).

By the gospel we announce the forgiveness of your sins, and a perfect righteousness wrought out for you. Have you got it? Do you think God has spent His Son to atone for our sins, and work out this righteousness, and we not need it? If you need it, have you got it? Nay, do you know you want it? Have you ever been in the presence of God? The blind man does not know his state. When God has clothed a man, he is not naked. God clothed Adam with skins. When a man has put on Christ, surely it may be said, "By grace ye are saved" (Eph. ii. 5). Christ has wrought out a righteousness, in which we can be in the presence of God, and in which He can Him-

self sit on the throne of God. He has clothed me with divine righteousness, as well as given me forgiveness, and He preaches peace. I know, when clothed, I have perfect peace.

After this there is the full and blessed result in glory. What Christ is entitled to we get. He has a title to everything, and I have a portion with Him in all that He has. The work which has earned the glory for Him, as Son of Man, gives it to me. When He comes we shall come with Him in the glory. There is the "inheritance"; but what is better, we are to be with Him who is the universal Heir. He has finished the work for salvation. For whom? For me; for every believer.

Do you say, Ought not I to wait till I am in the glory before I believe that I am cleansed from all sin? Surely not. The angels will see it then; but we, are not we to see the salvation? We do when we have faith. Those who only expect to see it when they get there will not see it at all. Ought I to wait till then to know the cross of Christ? The effect of knowing it is forgiveness. Am I to wait to know righteousness then? The only way to have it is to see Him *by faith*, while we cannot see Him by sight.

The gospel reveals the answer of God to my soul, that what I want I have in Christ: forgiveness, righteousness, life, peace, glory. My sins are borne away already, and my title to

glory is just as perfect as when I get there. "We have redemption through His blood" (Eph. i. 7). The consequence of knowing I have it is that I can walk with God.

How can you walk with God, if you have not peace, if you have not forgiveness, if you are not cleansed from sin? Could Adam walk with God when his conscience told him he had sinned? No. But the gospel brings salvation, as it is said: "The grace of God that *bringeth* salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus ii. 11). Now, have you got salvation? If your eyes are open you will want it; have you got it? God does not deceive you. He does not say you are saved if you are not. The craving after it is not the answer to it. If He has given the craving, He will complete the work; but it is not the answer.

If you say, How can I tell? You have not submitted to the righteousness of God; you are going about to establish your own righteousness by the fruits of grace you find in yourself, and so to get a proof of your standing before God.

But will fruits of grace give you forgiveness, righteousness? They are not the blood of Christ; they are not Christ. How can they cleanse from sin? God delights in the fruits of grace, but they cannot put away sin. IT IS THE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS WHICH ALONE DOES THAT. God has set Him at His

own right hand; and when I believe it, I see how God has loved me.

May you be in yourself so broken down that you may find One who never breaks down. Grace reigns through righteousness, and will produce all manner of fruits through our Lord Jesus Christ.

J.N.D.

The Lord Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He is the only peace-maker between God and man, the only peace-giver; hence He is called the Prince of peace. Some of you may think you have peace, because you do not feel particularly unhappy; but it is not so. If you awoke at midnight, and found your bedroom brilliantly illuminated, above any brightness you ever beheld, you would tremble, you would fear and dread, lest the Lord were come, because you have not peace with God. When you place a friend in the grave, and think how soon you may be laid there yourself, you are not happy, you have not peace. Why? Because you have not come to the Lord Jesus, and been reconciled to God by His death. You have no peace, because you will not come to Jesus. The vilest sinner may come. Publicans and harlots do come, and Jesus washes their crimson sins in His blood, and says to them, Go in peace! Nothing can be more simple.

H. H. S.

WHAT AND WHERE ARE YOU?

THERE is an immense difference between the position, portion, and prospect of a sinner and those of a saint.

A saint is one who is separated to God by the Spirit of God and the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A saint is a person who *has* got the present and eternal forgiveness of every sin; *has* everlasting life in the Son of God; *is* saved for ever; *is* indwelt by the Holy Spirit; *is* “accepted in the Beloved”; *is* “complete in Christ”; *is* a member of Christ’s body; and *is* made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

In short, a saint is one who has judgment behind him; hell shut under his feet; heaven open over his head; everlasting glory full in front of him. There is only a spider’s web between him and heavenly glory; by faith he can see Jesus there; and he only waits for Jesus to rise up, put His feet upon the spider’s web, and then he will be with and like his Lord for ever.

“He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, that I am ever with Him,
His, that I am there.”

But a sinner is one who loves his sins and his pleasures in preference to the Saviour and

pardon ; he is unforgiven, unpardoned, and unsaved ; he is a refuser of the love of God, a rejecter of the Christ of God, a resister of the Spirit of God, and a deliberate destroyer of his own precious and immortal soul.

In short, a sinner is one who has glory behind his back ; “ eternal judgment ” staring him in the face ; heaven is closed over his head, and hell is open in front of him ; he is a child of wrath on his road to the lake of fire, and ready for it.

What are you, a saint or a sinner ?

H. M. H.

My reader, *where* are you at this moment ? Are you still living and walking according to the course of this world ? Do its pleasures, honours, fashions, and its so-called progress, or its falsely called science, absorb your heart and mind ? We cannot serve two masters. It must be either God or mammon, Christ or the world. Which is it with you ? Sure I am that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for sinners, will give you peace, and bring you nigh to God. It is vain to look elsewhere ; for the God of truth declares that there is salvation in no other : for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ (Acts iv. 12).

H. H. S.

PRAYING OR PRAISING, WHICH ?

ONE morning, after having asked the Lord to guide with regard to whom He would have me give a tract, I saw an old woman walking feebly along, and felt led to speak to her.

She received the tract with evident pleasure, and, in answer to enquiries about her health, she told me she was very weak, and suffered from bronchitis; also that she lived alone in one room (pointing to a house close by), and would like to have a visitor, and the Bible read to her.

I was hindered for awhile, but when able to call and see her, she told me all about her illness; also that she had been a widow for a good many years, but had the pension, five shillings per week, to live upon, and a little help from two sons, adding, "So although I am poor, I am not as badly off as some. I can't always make the money last out, for by time I've paid the two shillings for rent, and bought my little things and coal, it's gone. And then I want a bit of wool and cotton for mending, and something for my cough. But I don't get much behind with the rent; and when I do my son helps me."

She was so simple and straightforward, and moreover looked so frail and ill, that my heart was drawn to her, and I presently began to

she speak of the Saviour, and asked her how she stood with regard to eternity.

Her answer was, "It is all very mysterious; I can't understand it."

I read her some simple scriptures, asking her if they sounded "very mysterious."

"Well, no," she said; "they seem simple as you read them; but there's a deal of sin in us, and I don't know, my head gets so muddled, I can't remember."

She was very weak, and had a good deal of suffering, and I could see she was not able to take in much; so, after a few simple words as to God's way of saving the poor sinner, I said good-bye.

She then said, "I think there are *very few* people in this life who can know they are saved," by her manner plainly showing that she really meant NONE could know.

When I called the next time she was getting ready to go out, but said she would go later on; she went out as much as she could, because she got so depressed staying indoors thinking so much.

Her Bible lay open on the bed, and she told me she read it a good deal, just at the places where it opened! but, indeed, she was not saved! "I am a lost sinner, I know," she said, "and *me do anything*, or keep God's commandments, why, I have not even been able to go to church for a long time! I am too

weak ! I am a lost sinner, and a very dark sinner."

She said this very earnestly. "Well," I answered, "would you not like to know that all your sins are forgiven?"

Her poor, thin face lighted up with such a bright smile as she answered, "Oh, yes, it would be nice if I could know that ! Why, it would not matter much my being poor and rather ill then, would it?"

I read her some scriptures which speak very plainly of the forgiveness of our sins. One, I remember, was "The blood of Jesus Christ His [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). And another, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His [Christ's] Name's sake" (1 John ii. 12).

Speaking to her very simply upon the finished work of Christ, I said that it is God Himself who tells the one who believes on Jesus that his or her sins *are* forgiven.

She listened attentively, and said, "I do believe on Jesus; and I must go on praying to God, and then I hope that He will forgive me."

I felt led to put before her the truth that it was God who was offering her forgiveness freely, that she had not to keep on praying for it. If anyone offered her something very valuable, would she keep on asking for it;

would she not rather take it, and thank the one who gave it to her?

After a little while she suddenly looked up, as though light had just dawned in upon her, and said, "Now, is that it? I have not to keep on asking God, but thank Him for sending the Saviour?"

I assured her it was so, and that if she truly took her place as a lost sinner, and believed that Jesus Christ had died upon the cross, shedding His precious blood to put all her sins away, she had not to keep on praying to God to forgive her and save her, but to thank Him.

After a little more conversation, I said good-bye, when she asked me to come again soon, saying, "I must go on praying, and then I hope you will find me feeling better next time when you come," meaning more at rest about her soul.

To this I replied, "No! if you *keep on praying* I know I shall not find you feeling any better."

When I called the next time, after first hearing about her many sufferings, for the poor body was indeed a tried one, I said, "Well, now, which is it, praying or praising?"

With a bright face she answered, "Oh! I have thanked God for His free gift, and I am grateful and thankful to Him, and I feel much better."

Just to test her a little, I said, "But God

says, 'The wages of sin is death,' and He is holy and righteous, as well as being love, so that these wages must be paid. We know, too, that we deserve death; what can we do about it, what can *you* do?"

She looked very grave; but then her face lighted up, and she answered, "Oh! my precious Saviour has paid them, and I am grateful to Him, and I do thank Him."

"Yes! that is it," I said, rejoicing indeed to see how God had given her simple faith, and that "the entrance of His word" had indeed given light to this dear, simple soul.

I then finished quoting the verse to her: "The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

I found, however, on subsequent visits, that there was still a further work of God needed to be done in this dear soul before she got settled peace, though she continued to thank Him for His free gift of the forgiveness of all her sins; and it was indeed a privilege to see how He graciously led her on into the full light.

On my next visit, after she had so simply confessed Christ, I found that doubts had come in. "I am so unbelieving," she said.

However, after reading Exod. xii. with her, and pointing out that it is written, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," she said,

“ I must not look in at myself, but right away to Christ; but I cannot remember.” Afterwards she spoke very simply of the precious blood which had washed all her sins away.

On another visit I read to her John x. 27-31, pointing out that it is Jesus who gives to His sheep eternal life, and that we become one of His sheep by believing upon Him.

She said earnestly, “ I have believed upon Him, and for a long time I have been longing to know more about Jesus Christ.”

I then asked her if she could say that she had eternal life.

She drew herself back a little, saying, “ *That* would be a great thing to say. Why,” she continued, her face getting very bright, “ that is worth more than all the money in all the world, isn’t it? ”

Another time I said to her, “ If Jesus Christ were to come to-day, where would you be? ”

“ I think I should be in heaven,” she said brightly; “ but I ought not to say ‘ I think ’; we ought to say ‘ we know,’ didn’t we? It is unbelief, and unbelief is sin.” And then she added with energy, “ I feel so different from what I did.”

I said to her, “ If you owed a debt of £100 and had nothing to pay, and someone paid it for you, you would no doubt feel happy, but would it be your happy feelings which made you safe from the creditor? ”

“ Oh ! no,” she answered, seeing the meaning at once; it would be because it was all paid.” She continued, “ It is peace which I now have; not like I ever had in the world ” (looking at me to see if I understood what she meant), “ it is the peace which never passes away.”

The next time when I saw her she said of her own accord to me, “ Christ says that He gives eternal life to His sheep.”

“ Then have you eternal life ? ” I said.

“ Yes,” she answered, “ it is worth more than everything else in the whole world.”

I quoted the whole verse to her : “ I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand ” (John x. 28).

“ And that is so safe,” was her answer. “ I used to be so restless and depressed, but now I can stay quiet, and leave everything to Him ”; adding, “ Christ is all, and in all.”

I have written this very simple and true account, trusting that God, in His great goodness may use it to some other anxious souls, and that they, too, may see that forgiveness and eternal life are His free gifts, and may thank Him for them, and for that precious Saviour in whom alone they are to be found. Then peace, through believing, will be theirs.

H. L. M.

“PROVE THAT THERE IS A DEVIL.”

I STEPPED into a railway carriage to take a short journey. There were six of us in the compartment. I felt in my pocket for some tracts, and found that I had but four, which I distributed to my fellow-passengers, and then began reading a little book.

The gentleman sitting in the extreme corner of the seat I occupied received one of the tracts, and taking out his gold pencil-case, read down a few lines, and coming to the word “Satan,” marked a dash under it, and wrote in the margin, “I don’t believe in a devil,” then handed the tract back to me.

I said nothing; but with a piece of india-rubber erased his writing, put the tract into my pocket, and continued my reading.

This was too much for the gentleman; he leaped up, and exclaiming with a loud voice, “I don’t believe there is any devil,” poured out torrents of abuse against such as believed in an evil spirit. “Sir,” he cried, “I challenge you before these people” (who looked upon him with astonishment), “I challenge you to prove that there is a devil. Where would you begin?”

“Nothing is easier, sir,” I said, looking up from my book, “nothing easier, sir. I should begin with yourself, and from your passionate language, ungentlemanly and unchristian conduct, prove that you are energised by a living, personal devil.”

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“ Well, well, I was rather hot,” said the gentleman, sitting down, but continuing to abuse the idea of an evil spirit.

“ If there is not a devil, what is it that stirs you up to be so angry ? ” I said.

“ That is the evil principle which is in me. You cannot prove that there is any other devil.”

Drawing out my Bible from my pocket, I said, “ Now, sir, if you please, take that book into your hand.”

He was constrained unwillingly to do so.

“ With that Bible in your hand I demand of you, Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ? ”

“ I do ; most certainly I do.”

“ Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of the eternal God ? ”

“ No, I don’t,” he replied, with great rage. “ Show me where it says so.”

A lady sitting by my side said, “ There are many passages which prove it, if not in the identical words.”

I then repeated some passages of the word of God to the man :—“ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us* ” (John i. 1, 3, 14). “ Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily,

I say unto you, *Before Abraham was, I am* " (John viii. 58). " I have glorified Thee on earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee *before the world was* " (John xvii. 4, 5). " Then saith Jesus to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side : and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, *My Lord and my God.*" " These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through His name " (John xx. 27, 28, 31). " GOD WAS IN CHRIST, reconciling the world unto Himself " (2 Cor. v. 19). " And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness : *God was manifest in the flesh*, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory " (1 Tim. iii. 16). " And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life " (1 John v. 20). And then added, " I see what you are, sir ; you are a Unitarian, and so you cut yourself off from the only hope of being saved, Jesus and His

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blood. Tell me what sort of a person is your Jesus? ”

“ The most lovely of men,” he replied.

“ Not so, sir; yours, according to your own belief, is either a sinner or false; my Jesus, the eternal Son of the eternal God, is the ‘chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely.’ ”

Turning to the fourth chapter of Matthew, I read, “ ‘ Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.’ Was that an evil principle within Him, or the veritable person of the evil one? ”

For a moment the unhappy opposer’s mouth was shut.

I continued, “ You have no blood in your religion; you hate the blood, sir; you hate the atoning blood.”

“ I thank God that I have not a drop of blood in my religion. I do hate it,” he answered.

“ Yes, I knew that you denied the blessed Person and the work of the Son of God. But you shall hear what God says about the blood before we separate: ‘ *The* BLOOD shall be to you for a token; . . . and when I see *the* BLOOD, I will pass over you ’ (Exod. xii. 13). ‘ For it is *the* BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul ’ (Lev. xvii. 11). ‘ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in HIS BLOOD ’ (Rom. iii. 25). ‘ He that despised Moses’ law died without

mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted *the* BLOOD of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ' ' (Heb. x.).

At this point the train stopped, and we parted, to meet no more, in all probability, until we meet in His holy presence whose person and work alone avail for the present and everlasting salvation of any and every poor believing sinner.

“ He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life* : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him ” (John iii. 36). H. M. H.

A dying believer lately answered the question, “ Where are your sins ? ” by saying, “ My sins are under the blood of Jesus.” Where, dear reader, are *your* sins ? Each one is written down in God’s book ; each one will be had in everlasting remembrance, unless all are blotted out by that precious blood. The vain world will give you a shroud and grave, its gifts to both kings and beggars ; but when your body lies beneath the sod, where will your soul be ? In happiness, if your sins are blotted out by the blood of Christ ; in woe, if they are written in God’s great book.

“HE HAS RECEIVED ME!”

“**S**ALVATION is of the Lord,” and a soul saved is God’s work, and therefore a work for *eternity*. It is a work that Satan can neither do nor undo; but a work that God delights to do, and that He will never undo. Do you believe this, poor sinner? Now listen to me for a few moments while I tell you of the free and sovereign grace of God in the salvation of a lost sinner.

I was on my way from the railway station to the little meeting-place where I was to preach, in a small fishing town in Scotland, when I was asked by a Christian man if I would go and see a poor young fellow who was dying. I at once consented to do so, having nearly an hour to spare before the time announced for the meeting.

The friend who asked me to visit the young man led the way, and soon we were in his room; and there, upon his bed, lay what had once been a fine young man, twenty-nine years of age. That deadly disease consumption had brought him thus low; and its awful sweat lay heavy upon him. I saw he was fast sinking, and that if he were to be saved at all it must be *now*.

His history as a sinner is soon told. He had lived hard and fast, and had to all intents and purposes been a prodigal. He had wasted his health and substance in riotous living; but he

had spent all that he had without obtaining happiness or satisfaction; and now, in all the weakness and helplessness of disease, he desired to return to the parental roof that he had so long deserted, and die under the care and nursing of those simple, Christian, praying parents. He was brought home on a Monday, on the evening of which day the friend who took me to his house first saw him.

The sick man asked to have read the Gospel narrative of the conversion of the dying thief. My friend read it, as it is given in Luke xxiii., which drew from the dying man the remark, "That's grand."

On Tuesday, the day following his being brought home, I saw him, and have already told you how I found him as to his body. Now I will tell you how I found him as to his soul.

I found God had been working in him by His Spirit, and had shown him that he was a lost sinner, and that it was an awful thing to go into eternity unsaved.

His agony about his soul seemed almost to make him forget his body, and he never expressed a desire to recover. Salvation was what he longed for, but he questioned if there was salvation for such a wretch as he had been and was.

I opened my Bible, and read to him from 1 Tim. i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and

“ HE HAS RECEIVED ME ! ”

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worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

I then asked, “ Are you a sinner ? ”

“ Indeed I am,” he replied.

“ Then Christ came into the world to save you,” I rejoined. I then turned to Rom. v. 8 : “ But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

I again asked, “ Are you a sinner ? ”

He replied, “ Yes, *that* I am.”

“ Then Christ died for you,” I said.

I then turned to a third scripture, in Luke xv. 2 : “ This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.”

Once more I asked, “ Are you a sinner ? ”

“ Yes,” was his earnest, emphatic reply ; and turning on his elbow, he looked across the room to the friend who had brought me, and said, “ I ken I see it plainer, Donald.”

“ But, man, you must believe it,” replied the friend.

I then went over the three scriptures above mentioned again, and asked him, “ Whom did Christ come into the world to save ? ”

“ Sinners,” he replied.

“ And what are you ? ”

“ A sinner.”

“ Then Christ came into the world to save you ; believe it.”

“ For whom did Christ die ? ” I asked.

“ For sinners,” he said.

“ And what are you ? ”

“ A sinner.”

“ Then Christ died for you ; believe it.”

“ Whom does Christ receive ? ”

“ Sinners.”

“ And what are you ? ”

“ A sinner.”

“ Then Christ receives you ; believe it, and you are saved.”

He drew a long breath, and exclaimed, “ I wish I could say I was saved ! ”

“ If you believe that you are a sinner, and that Christ came into the world to save you, and that He has received you, then you are saved,” I rejoined.

The blessed Spirit of God applied the word, light broke in upon him, and he was saved.

I now read a fourth scripture, Gal. ii. 20 : “ I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

“ Who does ‘ *who* ’ mean ? ” I asked.

“ Jesus.”

“ And who is ‘ *me* ’ ? ”

“ Thomas M——”

“ And what is between you both ? ”

“ Love.”

He turned on his back, and said, “ I wish

I could make a little prayer to Him.”

“ Thomas,” I said, “He wants you to thank Him”; when he immediately said, “ Lord Jesus, I thank you for having loved me and received me.”

My friend and I fell on our knees, and praised God for having shown this poor prodigal that Jesus had loved him, had died for him, received him, and saved him.

When we rose up, he said, “ Fetch in my mother.”

We gladly did so, and in an instant mother and son were weeping for joy, as each embraced the other; the mother praising God as she heard from her own son’s lips the cheering news, “ Mother, He has received me ! ”

Prayer was answered, the prodigal was saved, and the joy of that humble room and its happy occupants was but a faint picture of the peculiar joy that God the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and all heaven itself, were now indulging in over this returned, saved, and happy prodigal.

Thomas M—— was brought home to his parents on Monday, was saved on Tuesday, and on the following Thursday evening he fell asleep, without a doubt or a murmur.

Glory be to God for this trophy of His grace; surely where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ! (Rom. v. 20).

H. M. H.

NAAMAN THE LEPER.

This man was "captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper" (2 Kings v. 1).

WHAT does earthly greatness afford, after all? A man may be ever so popular; he may prosper in business to his utmost cravings; or he may climb the highest pinnacle of political honour or military greatness; but no matter how exalted his position in this world, he is a sinner. Ah! this spoils all, this makes every cup of worldly prosperity bitter. Naaman was all this, "but he was a leper."

Leprosy was incurable. Still it spread, until the whole person was filthy; bloated, pimpled, and scabbed: wretched picture of man's ruined, utterly ruined and lost condition through sin. And, what is still worse, like the leper he finds every effort in vain to cure himself. The fearful poison spreads.

Oh, how loathsome is sin! My reader may have long hoped to get better, but have you not rather got worse? Not a physician in Syria could cure the leper. Not a remedy on earth is found for sin. Search all nations, man has found no cure for sin. The whole world is one great leper-house.

“ God hath chosen the weak things of the world ” (1 Cor. i. 27). A little captive maid is God’s messenger to this mighty Syrian. She says, “ Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria ! for he would recover him of his leprosy.” And I can say to my reader, “ Would God thou wert at the feet of Jesus ; He would cleanse thee from thy sins.”

The king of Israel had no such faith as this little maid ; he only thought the Syrians sought a quarrel. He, thinking of himself, said, “ Am I God, to kill and to make alive ? ”

“ And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard,” he sent for the leper to come to him.

“ So Naaman came.” So like man was his way of coming ! Such gifts, such horses and chariots ! And he stood at the door. But Elisha received none of his gifts. “ The salvation of God ” is not to be sold. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, “ Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.” He does not even come out to him ; he sends a messenger. It must be by faith, not by sight, or by sign. God gives His bare word. He that “ believeth ” is saved (Rom. iv. 16 ; Acts xvi. 31).

Now Jordan was a type or figure of death. The ark had stood there, whilst all Israel

passed over dry-shod into the land of Canaan. Most striking illustration of Jesus taking our place in the waters of death. There was no cure for this great leper, but to be seven times dipped in the river of death. There is no means in the universe by which a sinner can be cleansed, but by the *death* of Jesus. His blood alone cleanseth from all sin (1 John i. 7).

This made the leper uncommonly, or rather commonly, angry; for it is the natural anger of the human heart against God's mode of cleansing from sin. Surely, the leper thought, there would have been some great thing done to him. And so with the sinner: Surely, he thinks, God must do some great thing to me or IN me, by which I shall be saved. Burial in Jordan! why, this is contemptible!

Besides, are not the rivers of my own country, "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." So now, one poor leprous sinner will say, Are not the doctrines of my own church better than this salvation through the death of Christ alone? My church tells me to fast; to keep the vows of my order; in fact, to keep all the orders of my church. Is it not far better to wash in these rivers of my own religion, than to simply believe God about the death of Christ?

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Well, try hard; wash, wash, wash : but find me one, out of all the millions who wash in man's own religious rivers, that *is clean from sin*. Find me one who knows even his sins forgiven by all his fasting, praying, and order-keeping. No, there is not one who washes in the rivers of "the old man" who either does, or even can, know with certainty that he is saved.

Naaman's servants say to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?"

All nations bear witness what man will do (if doing would do it) to get clean from sin.

"Then *went he down*, and dipped himself *seven times in Jordan, according to the saying* of the man of God : and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, AND HE WAS CLEAN."

How beautifully, to be sure, does this set forth death and resurrection, the two great lessons of God : the death of Christ the end of sin ; the resurrection of Christ the beginning of an entire new existence. The old leper goes *down* into death ; burial with Christ : the new man comes out in all the freshness of the newborn child. Oh, how spotlessly clean is that new creation ! "AND HE WAS CLEAN."

This is God's only way of cleansing. "In

the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in His sight" (Col. i. 22). Jesus went down into death. Every believer is dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him, perfect in Him; without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing (Rom. vi.; Eph. v.). Oh! to know the power of resurrection; being made conformable to His death; to leave the old leprous self in Jordan. Ah! the old leper takes some dipping. Often, when we think we have learnt the death of self on the cross, self still needs some dipping. Ah, you are occupied with the old leper still; remembering his sorry scabs and running sores. Oh, down with the leper, down, down to Jordan! Down, down in death is the only fit place for self. For its righteousness and its wickedness the grave of Christ is the only place. Look away from the old leper to the risen Christ. If Adam were full of the poison of sin, God hath made the risen Christ to be to the believer in Him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30).

There is no leprosy in the risen Christ. And "as He is, so are we in this world." "Perfected for ever." "Clean every whit." (1 John iv. 17; Heb. x. 14; John xiii. 10.)

Oh! my reader, hast thou learnt this wondrous lesson? Hast thou gone down into death? Art thou risen with Christ? Then

set thine affection on things above. Every old spot of leprous sin is gone. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation; old things are passed away, all things are become new, AND ALL THINGS OF GOD" (Col. iii. 1, 2; I Cor. v.).

CHARLES STANLEY.

THE BASIS OF ALL BLESSING.

WITHOUT the death of the Son of God, men must for ever have remained far off from Him, still in their sins and guilt, for "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul"; and Jesus taught the absolute necessity of His death when He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). It is not, then, the *incarnation* of Christ, the *life* of Christ, or the *example* of Christ, but the DEATH of Christ, the CROSS of Christ, the BLOOD of Christ, that cleanses our guilty consciences, and fits us for God's presence. It is Christ crucified that is the only peaceful meeting-place between God and the sinner. There God opened an all-cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness. There God shows sinners how much He loves them. There God brings salvation to the lost. There God mag-

nified His own holiness and justice, and manifested the exceeding riches of His grace to unholy men; and now in Christ Jesus, by His blood, God has made all that believe to stand in everlasting nearness to Himself.

All who now believe in Jesus have redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, because God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us. Our sins were laid upon Him, and He was made a curse for us. In this way He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. The wrath of God was thus poured out upon Him instead of us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." Hence, on the ground of strictest justice and holiness, God can speak of believers as a redeemed people, washed from our sins in the blood of Jesus, and that our sins and iniquities He will remember no more. The sole ground of forgiveness of sins, therefore, is not our works, our experience, our frames, or our feelings, but the blood of Christ; for without the shedding of blood is no remission; and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

H. H. S.

“HOW DOES A MAN BECOME A SOLDIER ? ”

I WAS leaving the Birmingham station for Manchester the other day, when I noticed three soldiers walking on the platform.

I felt an inward conviction that my Master had something for me to say to these men.

Taking my seat in the carriage beside their three knapsacks, I looked up in prayer, that the right man might come and sit next to me.

They took their seats. I remained silent for some time. At last I saw tears begin to roll down the face of the man next to me.

It is often better to pray than talk ; one gets to see more of God that way.

After a while I said to him, “ When I saw you three walking on the platform, I felt assured that the Lord had a message for one of you ; and I asked Him to bring the right man next to me ; and now, will you tell me what is giving you so much grief this morning ? ”

He looked very much surprised, and said, “ Oh, sir, it is eighteen years since I ran away from home. My father was a man of prayer. I never saw him again. He has been dead many years now ; but I can never forget his prayers for me. I have been abroad most of my time since I enlisted ; have never seen my dear mother from that day to this ; she

does not know whether I am dead or alive; but I am going to-day to see her; I have got her address in Manchester; and this brings to my mind those happy days when my father had a prayer-meeting in our house."

He also showed me a worn-out letter, written by his sister on his leaving his native shores. No words can tell the value he set upon this tender treasure; he had worn it near his heart in every part of the world he had seen. He also opened his knapsack, and showed me a well-worn Bible. His two companions also, I found, had each his Bible. They were, in fact, three praying soldiers. I read their testimonials, and three more noble, upright men I had seldom met.

The thrilling interest of that conversation I shall not easily forget. One point, however, I must name. Though these three soldiers were, like Lydia of old, men of prayer, and I trust the Lord had opened the heart of the one next me, yet they were totally ignorant of God's plan of salvation.

In order to meet this ignorance, I put the following question: "How does a man become a soldier? Does he go to some old rag-shop, and buy old cast-off regimentals, and try to imitate the soldier, until he gets to be one?"

"Well, well," said one of them, "a pretty soldier that would be, wouldn't he now?"

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“ But,” said I, “ then tell me, how does a man become a soldier ? ”

“ How, why simply *by receiving the shilling,** to be sure.”

“ Just so,” said I, “ does a sinner become a Christian. It is not by going to some religious rag-shop, and buying the rags of self-righteousness, and trying to imitate the Christian, until he gets to be one. No, it is simply as a lost sinner *receiving Christ*, as the man receives the shilling. ‘ As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ ” (John i. 12).

“ What ! ” said one of the soldiers, “ do you mean to say, then, that a man ought not to do his duty to God, to read His word, and pray ? ”

“ Oh, yes ! the Christian earnestly desires to do all this : but you have to do your duty, you have to keep your regimentals bright, and to obey your orders ; but tell me, have you to do your duty to be a soldier, or because (since you received the shilling) *you are one* ? Just so the Christian. He loves to keep his regimentals bright, to walk with garments undefiled, and to obey, as a son delights to obey, the will of his Father. But this is not to get to be a Christian, but because he is one.”

* This was still true when the above incident occurred.

“ I never saw it in that light before,” said he.

“ I know you never did ; and after all your sincere desires to live to God, and thus get to be a Christian, when you come to look back at your past life, have you not often done the things you most hate ? Don't you often feel you are as far from being what you wish to be as ever, sin has such terrible power ? Now, has it not ? ”

“ That's all true, sir. But what is a poor fellow to do ? You have no idea, sir, of the temptations of a poor soldier ! Why, now, we three, because we are steady men, are sent to be recruiting sergeants. It makes my very heart sick to think of the dens we shall have to go into to get our men.”

“ Oh,” said I, “ what a world of sin and wretchedness ! and how much there is in every fallen man that answers to the iniquity around ! If God had not known it all, and sent His own dear Son to die, the Sacrifice for sin, on the cross, so that salvation might be as free, yet as binding, as the soldier's shilling, who could be saved ? Who, with such a fallen nature, in such a world, could imitate the Christian until he got to be one ? ”

At Crewe two old pensioners got into the same carriage. One of them appeared to have tried hard and long to make himself a Christian. This man, I believe, found blessing to

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his soul through the conversation. As an old soldier, he remembered well the shilling; and he remembered he had not to buy his regimentals; and he remembered well that he had to do his duty, not to get to be a soldier, but because he was one. But he had never known that it is just the same with every sinner that is brought to God. When a man is enlisted, he is stripped of everything; not a rag is left. He then stands in royal uniform; but that royal suit is a gift; he has not to pay a penny for it. He *only receives it*. No matter how dirty his old rags were. Every man in the regiment stands in the same cloth. It will be so with thee, poor lost sinner, no matter how filthy thy life has been: no, if even thou hast been like the thief on the cross, or a very Mary Magdalene. If the Holy Spirit shall open thy heart to receive Christ as thy entire salvation, thy royal clothing shall be the very righteousness of God. Yes, every soldier of Christ wears the same spotless robe. “ For He hath made Him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him ” (2 Cor. v. 21). “ But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ” (1 Cor. i. 30).

Perhaps one of the dealers in old rags of self-righteousness will say, “ Won’t you come to my shop, and try my sacraments and

ordinances? I will teach you how to imitate the Christian best, and then *you* may hope to get to be one. I assure you my shop is the oldest in the line."

No, thank you; no religious rags for me. I have put on the Lord Jesus; He is my only trust; I need no more; for God says of all that are in Him, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." And, "Ye are complete in Him" (Rom. viii. 1; Col. ii. 10).

What God says is complete, let not man try to mend. No, no! fellow-soldier of Christ, don't be tempted into the rag-shops of the day; thou hast not to put on old regimentals to get to be a soldier of Christ. Watch and pray, that thou mayest walk worthy of thy royal uniform. As says the word of God, "I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed in God [those that are saved] might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus iii. 4-8).

It is impossible to describe that poor soldier as he came within sight of Manchester. I spoke of the return of the prodigal son. Whatever might be the joy of that poor mother's heart in receiving her long-lost son, still infinitely greater is the joy of God in receiving the long-lost prodigal.

Read Luke xv.

CHARLES STANLEY.

“YE MAY KNOW.”

WHEN I was preaching some time since, in a watering-place in the West of England, from the words, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John v. 24), I sought to impress upon my hearers that all who had really heard the life-giving words of the Son of God, and had believed God, who sent His Son to put away our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, were in the present possession of everlasting life; that it was not left to them or to me to say that they had it, for Christ Himself said that; but what they had to do was to believe that they had everlasting life, because Christ said so.

An earnest but questioning person, sitting at the extreme edge of the congregation, said, loud enough to be heard by those sitting alongside, “Yes, Christ did say ‘hath everlasting life’; but He did not say that we were to know that we had it.”

I did not know what thoughts were passing through the minds, or what words were dropping from the lips, of any in my audience, but at the moment the words that I have just given fell from the lips of the one who uttered them, I was led of the Holy Ghost, who was personally present in the meeting, and who

knew all that was going on in it, to turn to 1 John v. 13, where the following strikingly blessed words occur: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; *that YE MAY KNOW that ye have eternal life.*"

I was informed by the one who heard the words spoken that the questioner was confounded and silenced by the force and clearness of the word of God.

When I turn to the Scriptures, where the words "known," "knowest," "knoweth," "knowing," "knowledge," and "known" occur altogether above *one thousand times*, as any reader of the Holy Scriptures may see for himself who will take the trouble to look them out as they are given in Cruden's *Concordance*, I am perfectly amazed at the daring boldness of the man who can write or say that it is impossible for anyone to know he has eternal life or the forgiveness of sins in this world.

What would be the state of society if God, who has instituted and given the relationships of husband and wife, parent and child, had at the same time prevented our knowledge and enjoyment of those relationships? Imagine wives not knowing their own husbands! husbands not knowing their own wives! parents not knowing their own children! and children not knowing their own parents!

Could you conceive of anything more truly sad and sorrowful, and as far removed as possible from all intelligent enjoyment of the relationships of life, morally and socially? To say nothing of how unworthy such a state of society would be of Him who is the Author of our natural relationships! And where would be the *goodness and love of God in forgiving me, saving me, giving me eternal life, making me His child, putting His Holy Spirit in me, making me one with Christ, and fitting me for the glory, and then preventing my having, or not giving me, the knowledge and enjoyment of all these divine and eternal blessings?* Such teaching is a slur upon a kind, good, and loving God, and is totally opposed to the word of God.

But I will turn to a few scriptures, which are infinitely preferable to all our words and illustrations.

“ And He said unto them, Unto you *it is given* TO KNOW the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables ” (Mark iv. 11). Are you within the favoured circle of His own blood-bought and blood-washed ones to whom “ it is given to know ”? or are you “ without,” and therefore in *darkness and uncertainty?*

If you heard anyone saying that it was impossible to distinguish colours, you would

be justified in immediately concluding that such a one was colour-blind. So when I hear persons saying that nobody can know they are forgiven and saved in this world, I cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that such are not forgiven or saved themselves. Some have the hardihood to say that Paul the apostle did not know that he was saved. I find him speaking very differently himself in 2 Tim. i. 12, where he says, "*For I KNOW whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*"

Again, in 2 Cor. v. 1, where he associates others with himself, he says, "For WE KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

And in 1 Cor. ii. 12 he traces this wonderful knowledge up to its source: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; *that WE MIGHT KNOW the things that are freely given to us of God.*"

There is no uncertainty in these scriptures, where we have heard Paul saying by the Holy Ghost what was true of himself, and equally true of all saved persons. And remember, the Scriptures cannot be broken, and cannot contradict themselves.

If I turn to the writings of the apostle Peter

I find him speaking in the same strain : “ Forasmuch as YE KNOW that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ” (1 Peter i. 18, 19).

Now, let us listen to what the apostle John has to say upon this subject of assurance : “ But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : *hereby* KNOW WE that we are in Him ” (1 John ii. 5).

And again, in iii. 2 : “ Beloved, NOW *are we the sons of God*, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but WE KNOW that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is.” “ And YE KNOW that He was manifested to take away our sins ” (v. 5). “ WE KNOW that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren . . . ” (v. 14). “ And *we have* KNOWN and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him ” (iv. 13, 16). “ These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; *that* YE MAY KNOW *that* ye have eternal life.” “ And WE KNOW that we are of God. . . . And WE KNOW that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that WE MAY KNOW Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true,

even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (v. 13, 19, 20).

What can we say, in the face of such an overwhelming and unanswerable body of Scripture proof as to the doctrine of assurance, but what the blessed Lord Himself says in John vii. 17: "If *any* man will do His will, HE SHALL KNOW of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself"?

And yet once again Christ says, speaking prophetically of the days in which we are living, "At that day" (the day of the Holy Ghost being given, which was ten days after Christ's ascension) "YE SHALL KNOW that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 20).

I ask in all solemnity, "Whom am I to believe? Christ, who says that the characteristic of Christianity is, that "*ye shall know*," or those who teach it is impossible to know, and presumption to say that we do know?

Poor, anxious, troubled soul, drop all your reasonings and questionings. Flee from the dreary regions of frames, fears, feelings, and experiences which you are now putting in the place of simple faith. Cease from those who teach you cannot know that you are saved, and take God at His word, for He says, "YE MAY KNOW."

H. M. H.

THE SWISS WATCHMAKER.

“Show how great things God hath done unto thee” (Luke viii. 39).

HENRI ROCHAT was born in Switzerland, in one of the valleys of the Jura, where the leading occupations are cattle-raising and watch-making. His parents were orderly people, and laborious, but careless toward God, and unconcerned about the salvation of their souls. In spite of the awakenings in their valley, and the conversions of some of their relatives and friends, they had remained closed against all spiritual influence. If the father spoke of the Bible it was to question its being THE WORD OF GOD.

He sent his children to church; but it was, he said, to avoid being called a heathen. Otherwise religion was all foolishness to him, and a loss of time. Yet it is out of the deep darkness of that poor family that “THE GOD OF ALL GRACE” came to take one of its members to be His witness here, and an heir of glory hereafter.

But we will now let him speak for himself.

“Having been, according to my parents’ desire, taught the Protestant religion, I was received into a church in 1844. But, following my father’s example, I was more a reasoner than a believer, and quite ready to

deny all revealed truth. Two years after being confirmed, I denied the Bible to be THE WORD OF GOD, and rejected its contents, save the historic part, which I believed true, but only as history.

“At that time I was to learn a certain branch of watch-making. But in all our valley none could teach that but a Mr. H. B——. He was a man much esteemed by all, had lived three years in Geneva, and was accounted one of the most skilful watch-makers in the country. Only he was a ‘Momier,’ as were called there such as were true and devoted Christians. They said he knew the Bible better than any of the ministers. To my father this was very objectionable, but I quieted him by saying there was no danger for me, as I did not believe the Bible.

“So I was sent to Mr. B——. I found him a man of ripe years, free from the shyness so common to villagers in those parts. He was serious, full of knowledge on many subjects, and ready to impart it. Many seemed to fear him; but his manner drew me to him, and I felt at home with him at once. His house was conducted in a Christian way, and his conversation was always to a good purpose. There, for the first time in my life, I saw what is a true Christian and a true Christianity.

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“ I went with him to the meetings he attended. There, sometimes he, sometimes others, all of them simple people, expounded passages, or even whole chapters of the Bible. They sang beautiful hymns, and they neither read nor recited prayers, but poured them out in simple language, and from the abundance of their hearts. Sometimes what they called “ labourers ” visited them, and I noticed in them a superior ability in preaching or teaching the Scriptures. If I remarked on their abilities to my master, he quietly answered that I was the more responsible for the privilege of hearing them.

“ One of their company once said to me, ‘ I saw you so attentive last Sunday that one would think you were a believer enjoying THE WORD OF GOD.’

“ ‘ I wish I were,’ I replied; ‘ happy people who are able to rely upon the Bible as THE WORD OF GOD!’

“ Whenever I returned home, the neighbours warned me lest I should become a ‘ Momier.’

“ ‘ It would already be done,’ I would reply, ‘ if I could only believe that God has revealed Himself to men by means of a book.’

“ In 1852, having decided to emigrate to the United States, I bade good-bye to my parents and to my faithful and good master. The voyage was fearful, a storm raging for several

days; yet there was much wickedness on board our great ship. Temptations therefore were many for me, but the thought that only a plank lay between me and death kept me from doing evil.

“ Two years later, in 1854, I was established as a watchmaker in H., New York State. I paid for a pew in the Presbyterian Church, but only to show I was neither Jew nor heathen, and to help in the progress of good.

“ One rainy morning the pastor and a missionary called on me. We soon took up the subject of religion, and I freely expressed to them my unbelief in the Bible. He answered me by pointing to my fine regulator, and saying it was a fine piece of workmanship, and must have required a skilful workman.

“ ‘ You want me to understand,’ I replied, ‘ that there must be a God to create such a thing as the universe. I know that as well as you; but here is what I cannot understand, that God should have had a book written to speak to men, which many of them cannot read, and yet no salvation for them except through faith in what it teaches.’

“ ‘ They had the testimony of creation,’ replied the missionary; then added: ‘ You are a Swiss, I see, and a Rationalist also; I am very sorry.’ And they left, grieved at my scepticism. Perhaps they prayed for me afterward.

“ The afternoon of the same day I saw a shocking tragedy in the street, and I returned to my store shaken to the depth of my soul. On the way I had asked myself, ‘ Were it you, so suddenly ushered into eternity, where would now be your soul? For there it would be too LATE to be reconciled.’

“ From that moment I longed to be reconciled with God. My conscience was awakened. I saw my many sins, and felt their painful weight. What oppressed me most was my guilty unbelief. What testimonies of the grace of God despised! How many invitations to come to HIM I had refused! Yes, I felt I had mocked what God had done for me, despised ever so many proofs of His goodness, and how could there be forgiveness for me?

“ That day in my store I fell upon my knees to implore the mercy of that God I had so deeply offended. Then I sought my Bible, which, since my leaving Switzerland, had remained at the bottom of my trunk; and I began to read the Gospels with the thought of making acquaintance with God.

“ From that moment all my reasonings fell to the ground, and every doubt concerning that precious WORD OF GOD vanished. I argued no more whether it was really His Word. Reasonings, doubts, arguments, all disappeared as a morning mist before the sun.

Yes, the Bible WAS NOW THE WORD OF GOD to me, as I read it with the sincere desire to know HIM and the provision He has made for a sinner's salvation.

“Some passages gave me comfort; others condemned me. Nights were painful, with little sleep, and the days seemed endless. In that state of soul I called on the pastor, and told him my condition; but he himself did not believe in anyone possessing here the assurance of his salvation.

“I told him I knew people in Switzerland who possessed it. He replied that they were self-deceived. I then took my hat, and left; nor did I ever again set foot in his church, for I saw HE WAS IGNORANT of what my soul needed, and therefore incapable of helping me.

“There was another Christian community in the town, whose minister, at my request, called on me twice; but he only talked about ‘sanctification,’ whilst I needed PARDON. He, too, was powerless to help me; so I requested him not to call again.

“I thus continued for a time all alone. More than once I longed for my former spiritual sleep, for the quiet it afforded me; but this was now impossible. Then came the longing: ‘Oh, if only I could have a talk with those Christians in Switzerland!’ and the desire became so great that I could no

longer resist it. To find peace with God was now the chief need of my whole being. I found a friend to take charge of my business, and left for Europe in July, 1854.

“The friends at B—— were delighted to see me, especially as they saw the change which had taken place in me towards GOD and HIS WORD. I remained a month with them, and attended all their meetings. What a happy time! My need was FULLY MET. I heard much of CHRIST, HIS death, HIS resurrection, HIS exaltation in glory, and HIS expected return. The utter ruin of man I already knew in myself as true, and now I learned the perfect efficacy of Christ's sacrifice for man in that condition.

“In my intercourse with these Christians I found their peace of conscience and heart was not based on experiences, but upon what CHRIST HAD DONE FOR THEM ON THE CROSS, was doing now up there in the glory, and would do at HIS return. Through faith in THIS they enjoyed entire rest, and the perfect assurance of their salvation.

“I asked one of them if he had not been troubled with doubts in his beginnings as a Christian.

“‘Yes,’ he replied, ‘I have been just like you; but ever since GOD TAUGHT me by HIS WORD that HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST, had been delivered for MY offences and raised again for

my justification (Rom. iv. 25), and that in proof of the perfection of His sacrifice, by which we are saved, He has been crowned with glory and honour in heaven; yes, ever since that time I have had PEACE with GOD.'

"Thus GOD settled my own soul in peace. I had now found 'the Rock of Ages,' the One that had been smitten for my sins, and that could not be shaken. In HIM I could and did now rest, and I rejoice in God my Saviour.

"With my bliss I returned to my business in the States; and through the dark clouds and the many difficulties which have swept over my head since, toward God the sky has ever been bright. Days of sorrow have not been wanting in my life, but that deep peace that GOD gave me then has never been clouded. In the unchangeable JESUS I got and have rest, and Satan's attacks have been in vain. To 'the God of all grace' be the honour and the glory for this great and eternal salvation."

H. R.

Jesus is "THE ROCK," and "His work is perfect." He receives returning, sinful prodigals. He cleanses and justifies them by His blood, sends His Spirit into their hearts, and assures them they "shall NOT come into condemnation," but that they HAVE PASSED from death unto life. (John v. 24.)

“QUITE HAPPY.”

“Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water ” (John iv. 10).

A WHILE ago, a young Scotch woman called on me in the way of business.

She was tall and robust of frame; but her pale look, her hectic flush, and bright eye, told me at once that consumption had commenced its sure and rapid work. Besides, there was sadness on every feature.

After learning that she was a stranger in our large city; that her father and mother in Scotland were old and poor; and after advising her at once, if possible, to return to her home, she cast on me a most heartrending look. The big tears rolled down her cheeks, and she asked, with such tones as could only proceed from a distressed, aching heart, “Do you think my sickness is a decline?”

The instant reply was, “Oh, if you knew what a dear loving Friend and Saviour the Lord Jesus is to just such as you, it would give such rest of heart that you would not be troubled a bit as to whether it is consumption or not.”

A few more such words, in the bustle of business, and we parted.

Not hearing of her for some days, I concluded she had gone home to her parents; but after a fortnight I received a message that she was at the point of death.

I found her utterly prostrate from hemorrhage, and unable to speak a word; but a smile indicated that she knew me.

I whispered a few precious scriptures about Jesus, and, to my surprise (oh, unbelief!), I observed an expression of joy, as of a sunbeam, pass over her face.

Next day the crisis was passed, and she greeted me with gladness.

At once I said, "Are you happy?"

"Oh, yes; quite happy."

"How long have you been so?"

"Nearly a fortnight."

"What made you happy?"

"I can scarcely tell."

"Has anyone been speaking or reading to you?"

"No."

"Are your sins forgiven?"

"Oh, yes, all gone."

"What makes you so sure?"

Her strength was gone; she simply breathed out, "Jesus! Jesus! 'Whosoever believeth on Jesus.'"

She lingered for three months after that; and some of the happiest moments in my life were spent in witnessing her simple joy and

her longing desire to be present with the Lord. And see how the Lord ever gives a word in season ! She had been a domestic in a private hotel ; and she told me that, for months before I spoke to her, every day after her work was done she would retire to her room and weep by the hour at the thought of all her hopes being cut off, and death coming upon her so early. Oh, what an answer to all this did she find in the loving heart of Jesus !

Before her sickness she had sent her wages to support her aged parents ; now she was cast upon the Lord. And richly did He provide for her.

A little before she fell asleep in Jesus I asked if she had any special object for which we should pray. She replied, “ I am sometimes troubled about the doctor’s bill, and how my poor body will get buried when I am dead.”

I read some of the words of Jesus setting forth His care, and some of the promises of the Father to answer every request in the name of Jesus ; and then we together told both those matters to the Lord Jesus.

At my next visit, without any surprise (more than I can say of myself), she told me that two gentlemen had called on her from the hotel to tell her not to be troubled about either the expenses of her funeral, the doctor’s charges, or any expense attending her sick-

ness, as the gentlemen on whom she formerly waited had arranged to meet it all. And so they did.

She fell asleep in Jesus; her precious dust was committed to the earth; and for all her need there was enough and to spare.

I had never seen her before I first spoke to her. One simple sentence, addressed directly to her heart about Jesus the Lord, was used to dispel the gloom of a broken heart, to draw her sweetly to Himself, and to give her a taste of that "living water" after having partaken of which she never thirsted again. Oh, how many times have I heard her exclaim, "Happy! happy as happy can be! Lord Jesus, come."

H.

How blessed is the remembrance of the fact that the holy and spotless Jesus went into the cold waters of death for us, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." It is the death of Christ alone that removes the sting of death from us, and enables us to find access with confidence into God's presence. We know that, when Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to show us that through His death every hindrance was removed to the believer's coming into the presence of God.

SMASHED TO PIECES.

I HAD left Birmingham for Derby, in company with a friend, and after we had travelled some distance, he gave away a few tracts.

I observed an old man reading, with very marked attention, the one given to him. Though a working man, his wrinkled forehead and care-worn face bore marks of mental anguish of no ordinary character.

I felt a strong desire to speak to the old man, but could not make a beginning. I mentally offered a short prayer. It was this: "Lord, if it be Thy will that I should speak to this man, cause him to speak to me first."

I sat still a few minutes, when he put up his finger for me. I went and sat by him.

He said, "I want to speak to you."

If the reader does not know what prayer is, he will perhaps wonder at this.

I looked at his anxious face, as he said, "When I was a young man, I read Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and many such; and their writings suited me well then, for I liked to have my full fling in sin; and I had it, both here and far away across the seas. I travelled both on the Continent, and also in South America; and what scenes have I been in! But now" (pointing to his grey hair), "*oh, this remorse!* it smashes me to pieces."

I shall never forget the look with which these words were spoken.

“ O my soul ! ” thought I, “ how much like hell is the anguish of remorse ! ”

Almost before I could speak, he went on to say, “ I think the deceitful ways of professors make more infidels than all the writings that infidels themselves have written.”

“ Well,” I said, “ if it were not for an old book I have in my pocket, which tells all about that, I should be staggered myself.”

“ Indeed,” said he, “ what book is that ? ”

“ Oh,” said I, “ it is the Bible ; and there is not an evil in the professing church which was not plainly foretold. But you have looked long enough at man ; there is nothing in him to heal your broken, smashed heart. I want you to look at another object, and that object is God. You will find no deceit in Him ; indeed, all is sincere love.

“ I don’t ask you to do this or that to get to God, but I want to tell you, smashed under sin, and guilty as you are, *what God has done to get to you*. I want to tell you what He is, and what He has done, as displayed through the cross of Christ. The love that is seen there is all sincere, and it is all the work of God. Man put Christ to death ; but ‘ God so loved ’ (John iii. 16). Yes, it is the cross of Christ alone that heals the broken heart.

“ It has been truly said that to heal the

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broken heart, Christ's own heart must first be broken. It was broken. He died for us, 'the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God' " (1 Pet. iii. 18).

I pointed out the difference between our having to seek and to serve God in order to be saved, and God's having sent His Son to seek and to save that which was lost.

I told him the following anecdote to illustrate this most important difference :—

" A man I knew in Derbyshire was walking in a dangerous mine, with a candle in his hand, when a drop of water from the roof fell upon his candle, and put out the light. The mine was a very dangerous place, and he, alone and without light, could not find his way out. He remained a long time in this dreary condition, until he became greatly alarmed; indeed, such was the effect on his mind, that he was in danger of losing his reason.

" Whilst in this state, he thought he saw the glimmering of a light. It *was* a light; he fixed his eyes on that light; it came nearer and nearer, until at last he saw the face of his own brother, who had come to seek him. His friends having become alarmed on account of his long absence, his brother had descended into this pit of darkness to seek and to save him that was lost.

" Mind you," said I, " he did not stand at

the pit's mouth, calling out that if his lost brother would but come out of that pit of darkness he would then save him, as many falsely represent Christ as doing. No; he came to the very place where that brother was, and who needed his help."

I said to the old man, "You are in the dark pit of sin and death; your candle of youth has been put out; you are beginning to feel something of the fearful solitude; alone without God.

"Do you catch a glimmering of the light in the face of Jesus Christ? Fix your eye there. The light will come nearer and nearer, till it shows you, in that blessed One, the face of a Saviour who does not tell you to come out of the pit first to save yourself, and that then, when you do not need saving, He will save you. Oh no! He knew we were too far lost for that. He descended into the very pit of sin and death. He bore sin's curse and condemnation, that there might be none for us. And *He alone* can, and does, deliver from sin's power. He comes to you in the pit. Give Him your hand. He will lead you to eternal day."

There was power in the name of Jesus. A change passed over the old man's countenance; the raging storm was calming down; "the goodness of God" was leading him to repentance. He had never thus seen God

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manifest in the flesh, as the God of love (1 Tim. iii. 16). He had long been trying to get out of the pit, like many others, but had never before seen Jesus coming into it to save him.

Our conversation was suddenly stopped. We parted at Derby. I trust we shall meet again at the great and glorious terminus, *the coming of the Lord*.

Well, reader, what say you to these things? Have you been "smashed to pieces"? Have you felt the bitter sting of remorse? Judas felt that.

But I will ask another question: Have you ever felt the power of the love of Christ?

Judas felt the one. Peter felt both.

You may be saying, "I am too bad to be saved. I have tried so often. And oh, my sins! If I could but undo what I have done!"

Were you not saying this to yourself the other day?

You can never return to innocence. You can never have peace but through the blood of Christ. If you could be ever so good to the end of your life, still those past sins would come as fresh as ever before you; and, as the old man said, "The older we get, the heavier they become."

Ah! this will be true in hell for ever.

Oh! let me tell you, there is no relief but by looking at the blood of Christ. This only

gives me relief : my sins were laid on Him ; they have broken His heart.

But you say you have tried so often. How have you tried? Have you tried to prove yourself better than God's word says you are? Or have you tried to get out of the pit, and cannot?

God well knows you cannot. If you could have been saved in your way, Christ need not have died. You have tried, and failed. Christ did not fail. He FINISHED the work of redemption. This is most certain; for God raised Him from the dead (Heb. xiii. 20). Forgiveness of sins is preached in His name; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. v. 1.)

My friend, this is a great salvation, it is worthy of all acceptation, yes, of your acceptation, " that Christ Jesus CAME INTO the world to save sinners " (1 Tim. i. 15).

Now, you trust Him, and see if it cannot be done; nay, if you trust Him, it is done. " He that believeth hath everlasting life." " We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins " (John v. 24; Eph. i. 7).

Reader, dost thou believe on the Son of God? Have no confidence in thyself, praise Him for all that is past, trust Him for all that is to come. He says, " Sin shall not have dominion over you " (Rom. vi. 14).

“JESUS ONLY.”**67**

There may be falterings and faintings, but faith, that has done with self, and takes hold only on Christ, shall overcome to the very end.

CHARLES STANLEY.

“JESUS ONLY.”

A SHORT time ago the writer was visiting the residence of an elderly lady on business.

He was invited into an upper room, where he found her busily engaged in reading a newspaper; and, as his business was of such a character as not to interrupt, she continued her reading.

When his work was finished, the thought suddenly occurred to him, “If my Lord and Master were here, He would not leave this room without first setting forth the way of eternal life.” As he stood considering in what way he should open a conversation, he caught sight of a very large Bible.

Going up to it, and turning over its leaves, he said to the lady, “You have here a very old and valuable book.”

She very politely answered, “Yes, that book has been in our family many years.”

“Indeed! then I should judge you understand something of its contents?”

“I ought so to do,” she replied.

He then remarked, "I have on my mind a very serious question, and how glad I should be if you could answer it."

"Oh, tell me what it is! I will try to answer it to the best of my ability."

"Some time ago I was exercised with the solemn thought of appearing before God. Now, were I to die before evening, can you tell me in what way I could stand before God justified and saved?"

Having paused a few seconds, she replied, "I know of no other way than to keep the Ten Commandments."

"But I remember reading in the Bible, 'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight' " (Rom. iii. 20).

"Ah! but stop," she said, "does not that mean the ceremonial law?"

"Well, I don't think so; but if it does, I am afraid to say that either moral or ceremonial law is the ground of a sinner's justification before God."

"I am afraid you are wrong," she said.

He replied, "I remember reading in the Bible, 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth' (Rom. x. 4). Now, can you tell me for what purpose the 'Son of God came into this world?'"

"He came to die for sinners; and, if you believe on Him, and keep the Commandments, I believe you will be right."

“ JESUS ONLY.”

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“ But,” he said, “ I remember reading in the Bible, ‘ By Him [Jesus] *all that believe are justified* from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses ’ ” (Acts xiii. 39). On hearing this scripture she seemed somewhat puzzled to find an answer.

He then said, “ I stand here inquiring as to the way of eternal life, but are you not directing me wrong? First, you tell me to keep the Ten Commandments. Secondly, you tell me to believe in Jesus, *and* keep the Commandments; but here God says that if I believe in Jesus, *I am justified from all things*, from which I could not be justified by the law of Moses. Whose words shall I believe, yours or God’s? ”

She answered timidly, “ Believe God’s words.”

“ Oh,” said he, “ I will believe God’s words; they are words of life. I am saved through believing them, and shall go to heaven : God says so. How cheering ! How comforting ! Oh, the love of God ! Would not *you* be happy if you knew you were now pardoned and saved? ”

She answered anxiously, “ Yes, I should.”

He continued, “ Oh, take the place of a sinner before God at once. Believe on Jesus, *and* thou shalt be saved, for God says so. But, remember, it must be JESUS ONLY.”

Before they parted, she informed the writer

that she was about eighty years of age, that she had attended preaching for many years, and had had the word of God, the Bible, in her possession or within her reach from childhood. Yet, with all these advantages, she was like too many in circumstances equally favourable, ignorant of the truth that "a man is not justified by the works of the law," nor by works *and* Christ, but that, if saved at all, the sinner must be saved by JESUS ONLY.

It need scarcely be said the writer was thankful for the interview. It was a season not easily to be forgotten. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," cut down every prop, removed every difficulty, settled every question, and pointed this unestablished soul to JESUS ONLY!

H.

"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED."

JOHN xiv. 27.

IN the words before us the Lord Jesus calls upon the believer in the plainest terms, and says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

How gracious of the Lord so to speak in the language of sympathy and consolation, guarding the trembling one against trouble and fear!

“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.” 71

That blessed One, who knew what it was to suffer, what trial was, what the scorn of man was, gives us these precious words. His path here did not exempt Him from trouble, but the very reverse, it exposed Him to it. His way was rough indeed, His position a deeply trying one. Enemies surrounded Him on every side, He really knew what trouble was, what hunger was, what thirst was. “He *became* poor.” He had riches; He could create them. “He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” His prerogative was to *rule*; but He obeyed. What a wonder! He became man; He took our form; He was “made sin” *for us*. Let us then keep in mind whose words we are now considering; these comforting, cheering words, “Let not your heart be troubled.”

Whose heart is meant here? The heart of some one particularly privileged, some one more than all others? No. This word is to *you*, tried, cast down, and distressed believer. It is suited to your case. To you, afflicted and perhaps bereaved one. You may have lost a wife, a husband, a little one, on whom your affections rested. These words are for you, drooping, feeble one, if you know the speaker of them. This comfort is for you; take it to yourself. Do not pass it by; it is for you, for you who know Jesus, and need Him and His word in all its richness.

This word is comforting, strengthening,

cheering. At present we know that it is His WORD we have, but soon it will be HIMSELF that we shall have. He says, "I will come again." This is true, too.

All the way is known to Him; every turn in the way is noticed by Him; yesterday's trial He knew; to-day's difficulty is under His eye; and to-morrow's care is seen by Him; and He says, "Let not your heart be troubled." Doubtless the child of God feels he would be a wonder if he did not. The wilderness is felt, and the rough roads therein also, but this sweet word comes there too, "Let not your heart be troubled."

This is the Lord's word, and power comes with it to the believing soul; a power to bear up under the load. What is there a child of God is not entitled to take to the Lord, and there leave it? If it were the Lord's will that the believer should bear trouble, He would not direct otherwise. He does exercise the heart in the way of discipline, and it is good to be so *disciplined*. He remembers us in our weakness, and administers the comforting words, words that are for us who believe. Let us then take them in their full import and power, and bless Him for them. Once more, let us repeat them, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

“I’LL TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD.”

SUCH was the expressive utterance of one recently brought to rest for his salvation on the finished work of Christ.

For many years a *professor*, he knew not that he was not a *possessor* of eternal life. Many a word of admonition had been given him, but they all failed to reach his conscience, and to show him his condition before God, till the Holy Ghost began a most special work in his neighbourhood.

That the open, profligate, and careless sinner should be arrested and converted was to him nothing strange. How could *they* be in heaven unless they mended their ways on earth? Between them and him there was a great difference. They had never professed to be Christians, he had; and his profession was of a recent date. But when some who even he believed were as good livers as himself, as respectable, as moral, and as outwardly religious, were converted, and owned that now they had found something they had not before, and had experienced a change hitherto to them unknown, his conscience was roused, and he felt constrained to examine the ground on which he was standing for acceptance before God.

His eyes being opened by the Spirit of God to see the truth, he was brought to the con-

clusion that he had been all this time only a professor of Christianity, without possessing life in a risen Saviour. This brought him to seek after the chief concern of a fallen, ruined creature : salvation.

Nor was he alone in this : his wife and son were also aroused and concerned for their salvation. So, one day, three people might have been seen wending their way to a person in the immediate neighbourhood to ask of her to direct them aright. What a sight it must have been : a family together concerned and alive for the interests of their souls, father, mother, and son together asking what they must do to be saved !

The way of salvation was set before them ; the finished work of Christ was pointed to, as that with which God would have sinners to be satisfied, and on which He would have them believe and rest.

As the truth was thus declared, and God's plan of grace unfolded, light dawned on the once mere professor of Christianity ; and now, with an intensity of earnestness stimulated by the real sense of his soul's need, the old man exclaimed, " I'll take Him at His word ; I'll take Him at His word."

Then, turning to his son, who seemed slower in apprehending the truth, this new convert to Christ became a preacher of that grace which he had hitherto neglected :

“ I’LL TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD.” 75

“ Robin, man,” he said, “ take Him at His word ! ”

Simple indeed are these words, but how full of meaning ! This is just what God would have the sinner do. Not simply believe He speaks the truth (how many do that, and never get beyond it !) but believe what He says, and act on it. This is faith indeed.

Abraham, the father of those justified by faith, learned this lesson, and acted on it. When led abroad that night by God Almighty, he looked at the stars shining in the sky, and learned from the countless number that met his eye how numerous would be the seed that should own him as their common ancestor ; and we read, “ He believed God, and He counted it to him for righteousness ” (Gen. xv.). His body he had already come to regard as dead, but the word of God was enough, and he rested on it.

The alarmed jailor at Philippi took God at His word. His earnest, heart-stirring cry, “ What must I do to be saved ? ” received an answer which he acted on, and he found peace and joy before the morning. Nor he only. What met his need was suited for all in his house likewise ; and acting on it, they too, by God’s grace, believed the word, and were with him baptized. This is God’s way of justification and salvation. How little is it understood, and still less acted upon !

THE LUNATIC AND HIS KEEPER.

ON leaving the Gloucester Station the other day, I found that one of my fellow-passengers was a lunatic in the care of a keeper.

I soon found that this keeper held some most dangerous opinions respecting the Temperance movement. With him Temperance was a John the Baptist, to prepare sinners for Christ; and, as near as I could make out his meaning, he thought it was about one half a sinner's salvation; a sentiment as much like blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, whose blessed work it is to bring sinners to Christ, as anything I ever heard.

I should be most sorry to speak one word against Temperance as a great social benefit amongst men. Right glad should I be, where drunkenness is such a frightful evil, if there were not a drop of alcoholic drink to be got in the land.

Entirely apart from the question of a sinner's salvation, there can be no doubt the moral government of God so orders things, that a sober man must enjoy a greater amount of social happiness than a drunkard. But when the foundation of the gospel is attacked, is a Christian to be silent? God forbid.

This caused me to speak very strongly of the use that Satan may make of the Tem-

perance movement. This may startle my reader; but let me remind you, that it is ever Satan's policy to use the *best* things adapted to accomplish his purposes. He is wont to appear as an angel of light. I will just refer to a parallel case.

No one can question that the Law of God is holy, just, and good. No one can question the immense benefit of that Law in God's moral government of the world; or, that in this respect and for this purpose, to abolish it, would be to turn this whole world into one wide hell. And yet it was this very Law that the ministers of Satan were seeking to mix with the work of Christ, for justification *before God*.

The Epistle to the Galatians was written for the very purpose of meeting this work of Satan. Now, if he took up so good a thing as the Law, is it any wonder that he should take up so good a thing as Temperance, and use it in the same way?

It was not enough for salvation, said they, that a man should believe in Christ; he must also be circumcised, and keep the Law. This keeper was just saying the same thing over again; trying hard to prove that it was not enough for a poor, lost sinner to believe in Christ.

He must take the pledge first, and be a Temperance man; then he was fit to believe

in Christ. Mix the two together, and the man might be saved. A man must have poor eyes that cannot see this to be the devil's work over again.

Now, mark the rebuke of the lunatic. He suddenly stopped his keeper with these words, "CHRIST MUST BE ALL."

Yes, my reader, in the business of thy soul's salvation, these are words of truth. I felt they were the words of God, though through a deranged man. He spoke again, "Cease thee from man, whose breath is in his nostrils"; and when I put the question to all in the carriage, "What is it to be a Christian?" one said, "It is to do all the good I can to my neighbours"; another said, "It is to love God all I can"; another said, "I do not know much about it."

"Ask me," said the lunatic.

"Very well, what do you say it is?"

"To have a broken heart!" was the reply. "Is not a Christian," said he, "like a tree? Is not Christ the root, from which the tree gains the sap, which produces and supports ALL the twigs, the leaves, and fruit? CHRIST IS ALL."

What remarkable words from a man who had to be watched every minute!

Suppose my reader had to cross a fearful mountain current, rolling deep beneath a solid, firm bridge, built at great cost by the

government, and stretched across the frightful gulf.

A man sees you, and, pretending to be your friend, he brings a plank, *far too short* to reach across. He tells you the bridge is not sufficient; that you must walk first on his plank; or, that at all events you must walk a little on one, and a little on the other: what would you say to such a proposal? The plank might be useful enough for other purposes; but if you trusted it for crossing the gulf, you would find it a fearful mistake.

CHRIST is the bridge across the gulf of destruction, and Temperance is man's plank. It is useful in its place, but far too short to lay across that gulf. Trust it, and you are lost.

Shall I say that Christ is not able to save to the uttermost? that He who converted the mad persecutor Paul, cannot convert the poor drunkard, until he has half saved himself?

I tell thee thou art welcome this moment to Christ. Did He ever send a sinner away? Never. He is the only One who can deliver thee from thy hateful sins.

“But, oh!” say the modern ministers of Satan, “the bridge so often falls, and lets its travellers into the gulf; there are so few of its travellers get safely over, that you had really better try the plank.”

Find me a stone loose in that foundation

which God has laid! CHRIST fail! CHRIST let a soul perish that trusts in Him! Do you mean to say that?

It is plain enough that, if a traveller who is *on* the bridge falls in, the bridge itself must fall first. It is plain enough, too, that whatever plank man or Satan brings, it is calling in question the *all-sufficiency* of Christ Jesus, for the sinner's entire and eternal salvation.

But, perhaps, you may say, "Do all who are on that bridge, that is, who are saved by Christ alone, go safe to God?"

Yes, if one were lost, then Christ would have failed. Their going safe over is the proof that they are saved by Him.

"Then how is it that so many who profess do fall, and perish at last?"

Profess what?

Many are in this day walking on a plank of their own. They can only walk until their own weight sinks them in; and then they say the bridge has let them in. The fact is, they never were on the bridge.

Suppose the plank you are walking, or trying to walk on, is the Law, the keeping of the Ten Commandments. You have believed Satan, that Christ is not enough for your salvation. He gently lays down the plank, the Law. Can you walk across the gulf on that plank? It is far too short to carry a *sinner* across. You feel your sins are getting heavier

and heavier; another step, and the plank sinks lower. Hold! stop! man, you will be in.

Another is trusting to his sacraments, ordinances, and the like. He goes back to Judaism, and calls it High Church. He is walking on his own plank: it is sure to let him in, and all that are blind enough to follow him.

Yes, and if thou art trusting to thy pledge, to thy Temperance, to thy morality, or to *thyself* in any form, thy plank is too short; and, keeping to it, thou wilt perish for ever.

“I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the Law,” or by the pledge, or by anything that man can do himself, “then Christ is dead in vain.”

Yes, if any plank could have been found able to carry the sinner across the fearful gulf and torrent of iniquity and sin, God would have spared His Son; those words would never have been heard from the holy lips of Jesus, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Oh, what has that bridge cost God! The death of His only begotten Son! It is not my loving God with all my heart that makes me a Christian, but believing that God has loved me with all His heart; so loved, that He spared not His beloved Son!

It is not my doing all the good I can to my neighbour that makes me a Christian. No, it is God that has done all the good He can

to me, when an enemy. As the lunatic said, "It is learning this love at the foot of the cross that breaks my proud heart."

Reader, hast thou thus got a broken heart? Is Christ thy *root*? thy bridge? Is Christ thy all? If not, beware of Satan's planks. It is quite true what the apostle says of "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which [says he] I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"; but it is also true, that Jesus is the Saviour who shall deliver, who hath delivered, and who doth deliver His people from their sins.

FELLOW-BELIEVER, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 14). c. s.

It was the determinate counsel of God that Christ should suffer for sins not His own; and while it was perfectly true that man displayed his hatred of God in nailing Jesus to the cross, yet no sooner is the soul of any sinner made sensible of his guilt in this respect, and thus brought under divine conviction of his actual moral state, than the Holy Ghost holds up to view that very cross of Christ as the foundation of the fulfilment of the counsels of redeeming love, and the ground of the full and eternal forgiveness of sins to him who believes in Jesus.

LOOKING FOR A CHANGE.

WHEN the day dawns, and midnight darkness disappears, you do not hear the tramping feet of daylight coming in, or the flapping wings of darkness going out. God does not bring daylight in in that way. The daylight quietly comes in, and drives the darkness quietly out; and you know that without any convulsion the light has come in, and the darkness is gone.

You sow seed in the fields, and it grows up, pushing aside the clods so silently, until by-and-by the fields are rich with corn. What a change has taken place! But it has not come about with sudden convulsion as of an earthquake; it came about just as quietly as in the case of the daylight.

Many of the movements in creation are thus silent. The sun rises in the morning, and shines upon the earth; and, speaking after the manner of men, it makes no noise. So is it when divine light shines in upon the soul. Great indeed, I grant, is the difference between midnight and noonday; between seed-time and harvest; yet neither of these changes is brought about with great and sudden convulsions. Look at the stars moving along the skies; they make no noise. Or look at the budding rose upon the tree, unfolding morning by morning so quietly, until it becomes a full-blown rose.

Some persons know the day when they were

converted. A Saul of Tarsus will never forget the day. And some know the night. A Philippian jailer will never forget the night. But some know neither the day nor the night. "The Lord opened" Lydia's "heart." That was the way Lydia was converted. Her heart was opened as quietly as the dawning of the day. People who are brought up under exciting religious teaching are often expecting visions, but you do not so find it in the case of Lydia. In the conversion of some, there is *no more noise than in the dawning of the day*.

"The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." The Lord Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, **HATH** everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]." "**HATH** everlasting life"; that is the *beginning of a new career*; that is what conversion is. It is change of position, as well as of condition. "Shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]; but is **PASSED** from death unto life." "Is **PASSED** from death unto life"; that is, passed from *one state into another*. But you must not expect to rejoice before you *believe* the fact. (See Acts xvi. 14. ("A still small voice." 1 Kings xix. 12.) Psalm cxix. 130. John v. 24. 1 John v. 11.)

FAITH BEFORE FEELINGS.

THERE is all the difference possible between *saying* in your heart and *believing* in your heart. The former is the fruit of unbelief, and the latter of trust in God.

So long as a soul is "saying" in its heart, it is looking for signs and wonders; namely, expecting to see a vision, or have a remarkable dream, or feel some wonderful feelings.

Now, souls in this state never are certain of their salvation; and no wonder, as such a state is produced by unbelief "saying" such things in the heart, which the heart is guilty of listening to.

If you will turn to the tenth chapter of Romans you will see these words, "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, *Say not in thine heart.*"

Why not?

"Because the word is *in thine heart.*"

What for?

That you may "*believe in thine heart*" (vv. 6-11).

Having the Word in your heart is not enough to save you; therefore we read, in Luke viii. 12, "Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, *lest they should believe and be saved.*"

Again we read, in Heb. iv. 2, "The Word

preached did not profit them, *not being mixed with faith* in them that heard it."

So you see that it is not enough to hear the Word preached, nor even to have the Word in your hearts; it must be mixed with faith, or it cannot profit you.

How solemn to think of the devil being present at every gospel preaching, and that all who listen to the gospel without believing it allow the foul fiend of hell to put his filthy fingers on the Word; and to take it away, "lest they should believe and be saved." Ah, well he knows that every earnestly anxious soul believing the word of the gospel will be saved, and therefore he watches for the opportunity to take it away out of the heart, that they may not be saved.

Oh, poor, troubled, anxious souls, keep not yourselves in this state any longer! "Say not in thine heart" through unbelief, but believe in thine heart that God delivered Christ for our offences, and raised Him again for our justification, and thou shalt be saved (Rom. iv. 25).

Look at the three blessed *shalts* in Rom. x. 9: "If thou *shalt* confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *shalt* believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou *shalt* be saved."

"But surely we must feel it first," says somebody. This is all the fruit of saying and

reasoning in your heart, the fruit of putting feelings before faith, and reminds me of two cases I once met with in visiting.

In the first house sat a woman busy sewing. I had seen her at the meetings, where God was working, saving precious souls, and I knew her to be anxious to be saved; but her difficulty was that of thousands of others: she wanted to feel that she was saved before she could believe that she was saved. Her own words were, "How can I know I am saved until I feel it?"

I asked her to take the cotton with which she was sewing out of the needle's eye. This done, I asked her to lay aside the needle, and try to sew with the cotton alone.

She smiled as she heard me ask her to do an impossible thing, and saw that the needle must come before the cotton; and that just as the cotton followed the needle, so faith must come first, and that feeling follows faith.

The second case referred to was a young woman who had for years been anxious about her soul. She was the child of Christian parents, and she told me that she had "wept, prayed, repented, been a member of class, and done her best for years; but that she could not feel she was saved."

I saw at once that she also, like the first case I have spoken about, was putting feelings before faith.

I was asked to take tea with her and her friends. At the tea-table I was placed between her and her elder sister, who was making tea, and asked to pass a cup of tea to our anxious friend. Having received the cup of tea to pass, I held it in my hand, saying at the same time to the one for whom it was intended, "Now, when you feel this cup of tea inside you, tell me, and I will give it to you."

She replied, "How is it possible for me to feel it before I have taken it?"

"And yet," I said, "you want to feel salvation before you have taken it."

She saw at once where she had been making a mistake, and that unbelief was at the bottom of it all. She left the table, and retired to her bedroom, where she confessed to God her sin of unbelief, and before she rose from her knees she accepted God's salvation by simple faith.

The next time we saw her she told us that she had believed with the heart unto righteousness, and was now able to make confession with the mouth unto salvation.

I doubt not that many who may read this paper are in the same condition of soul as the two I have named, and from the same cause, that they are putting feeling before faith. May God show such that it is all unbelief, and deliver you from this God-dishonouring, Christ-dishonouring, Holy Ghost-dishonour-

ing, heaven-forfeiting, hell-filling, and soul-damning UNBELIEF.

“Hark! the voice of Jesus calling:

Come, ye laden, come to Me;

I have rest and peace to offer;

Rest, thou labouring one, for thee:

Take salvation;

Take it NOW, and happy be.”

“*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,*” and when you are saved, you will know it; for Christ came “to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins,” and how could you possibly be in possession of such divine knowledge without feeling happy?

Once more, in closing, I would press upon you that it is and must be FAITH BEFORE FEELINGS.

H. M. H.

In a village not far from London, a poor man was dying. A gentleman of the village came to his bedside, and kindly asked if he could do anything for him. “I am *very, very* happy,” was his simple reply. “But” (producing a prayer-book) “you are dying; shall I not read a prayer with you?” “Oh! no, sir, I am *very* happy; I’m resting on THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.” Having so said, he bade his friends farewell, and in a few moments he was absent from the body and present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8).

“YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.”
“THE SON OF MAN MUST BE
LIFTED UP.”

READ JOHN III.

THIS chapter tells us of One who has come down from heaven, who speaks what He knows, and testifies what He has seen; who knows God fully, and who knows what is in man; and He tells us what God requires, and what God gives. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17). He, the Son of God, came “the Light” into this world; but men loved (and still love) darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil (*v.* 19).

He was born into this world in grace for you. He has not left us in anywise in the dark about it, but has brought perfect light to your hearts and consciences, which testifies what is OF heaven, what is FROM heaven, and what is needed for any connection WITH heaven, and in order to be there. So that, when I come to heaven, there is nothing in its moral nature that is not brought to my heart and conscience now. You will not get a more blessed thing in heaven than that which Christ was on earth!

Nicodemus had a mere human conviction about Christ; he knew that He was a teacher come from God. When they saw His

“ YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.”

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miracles, many believed on Him. How many Christians are like that now! giving a mere human assent to who He is. It is not insincerity or dishonesty, but they do not know Him. There is no want created in the heart. The Son of God is here: is that enough for you? You do not care to know what He is here for, or whether you have any part with Him! You do not trouble yourselves further, or care to listen to one word He says; not an anxiety as to what He has said concerning you, or interest as to one thought or feeling He might have.

Could you be *quiet* if you thought you were *lost*? You could not. You are LOST! and there is no greater proof of the utter ruin of man than that Christ does not attract his heart, speaking and testifying of divine things. Any bit of news will occupy you; a bit of family interest; a newspaper; a thing passing in the street; and here is news from heaven, news from God, and you do not care! nor for all the love in His coming down from heaven to tell it to you!

IS IT NOT TRUE THAT YOU MUST HAVE A NEW
NATURE?

You are indifferent to all that God can do, and you tell me that it is not crime. But is it no testimony of the state of your soul? That Christ has no beauty that you should desire

Him? (Isa. liii. 2). And yet you are "hoping" to go to heaven! And what is there in heaven for you? Do you expect to be happy there if this Christ, who is the very centre of heaven's delight, has no attraction for your heart?

Impossible! It is quite clear that, if I am to be happy in heaven, it is with God. What pleasure have you in God? Is there one thing in your heart now that would make you happy in heaven, one single affection in your heart that finds its pleasure and company in those who fill heaven?

Oh! may it come home to your soul, the conviction I am all wrong, the tree bad, and as I am I can never be better.

Here the Lord, speaking what He knows, says,

"YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN."

This was what God required.

And now we come to the other side:

"THE SON OF MAN MUST BE LIFTED UP."

God gave His Son. This is the grace; this is the glad tidings; that you "might not perish, but have everlasting life." He "must," according to the glory of God, but He "must," because you are a sinner perishing! Because you are a sinner, you will reject Him, and prove yourself so bad that

nothing but the crucifixion of the blessed Lord could meet your case. Oh! you “ must ” be born again.

But there is another, a deeper, a divine “ must ”; the Son “ must ” be lifted up. Terrible necessity of righteousness! God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity (Hab. i. 13). The Son of God spoke what He knew. Oh! how He knew it! With God there is no allowance of evil, not an unholy thought. We have all had plenty of unholy thoughts.

Christ comes down from heaven, and says, “ The Son of man must be lifted up.” What blessed grace in His mouth! And mark the complete subjection of His soul, the depth of the love in it, the peacefulness and quietness of Christ thus looking at the necessity of His drinking that cup of wrath, that you might not. And, farther on, when it was going to be accomplished, He set His face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood as He approached that hour (Luke xxii. 44). Yet here, in the beginning of His career, He states it as the thing He had come down from heaven to do. He came to do His Father’s will, and that will was our salvation.

DO YOU DOUBT THAT YOU ARE PERISHING ?

Or do you mark how fully grace rises up above all your ruin? Do you discover that

the *sin* that is pressing on your conscience, and plaguing your heart, is the very thing that Christ died for? that He took it off you on Himself? Now you have got to the gospel, to the glad tidings, the grace, that the blessed Lord Jesus put Himself in my whole place before God; "made sin"; He who "knew no sin." Suppose I see Him on the cross, standing thus in my place, answering for me because I could not answer for myself, I see that He has not left a thing that could bar my entrance up to God. He appeared once, in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He has finished the work. (Heb. ix. 26, x. 11, 12.)

Did He put me away into outer darkness? No; that will be day-of-judgment work; but He put my sin away, and set me there before God without sin. That was His Father's will, which He came down from heaven to do. And oh! what unspeakable comfort! there is not a sin in my heart that God does not know, because there is not a sin in my heart that Christ has not died for. He drank the cup, and God set His seal upon it in righteousness when He said, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool"; and now grace reigns through righteousness; grace has risen above all our sin. (Ps. cx. 1; Rom. v. 21.)

What true rest to be able to say, "It was

all done there between God and Christ; righteousness made good before the universe.” The moment your soul gets hold of what those three hours of darkness on the cross were, you see that all was settled there between God and Christ, outside yourself; for if you had got there, you must have got into wrath.

Hence, when you believe in Christ, you come to God to find the whole question settled by Himself, God for you. Sweet and conscious truth! You can say, “God so loved me that He sent His Son: though my sins were as scarlet, I am white as snow; I can ‘go in peace.’” One who came down from heaven to tell me, “You are the vilest of the vile; but I have taken up your cause; I have redeemed you to Myself; go in peace.” *He who made peace by the blood of His cross*, who says, “Peace I leave with you” (wonderful love!) He is able to tell, at such a cost of Himself, having drunk the cup that you earned and filled, that He has made peace. (John xiv. 27; Col. i. 20.)

CAN YOUR HEARTS GO IN PEACE ON HIS WORD?

Do not let anyone make you doubt the efficacy of what He has done. And the Lord give you to hear Him declare in the quietness and grace of that moment, that the “Son of man must be lifted up”; and may He tell you *why*, in applying it to yourself. And may

you learn how blessed it is to be in light, the light of God; where light shows you "as white as snow"; clean according to God Himself; and you will know what it is to walk in the light of His countenance. Amen.

J. N. D.

"CALL UPON ME."

A MARRIED relative, with children, wrote and told me he could not get any work. He had tried for a long time, and was in much trouble.

I wrote back and asked him if he had been to *God* and asked God to *help* him.

In two or three weeks' time, his wife wrote, saying God had answered their prayers, and her husband had got work. There had been a strike at some large works, and one of the managers (through the children, I believe, going to the Sunday-school) had tried him for a week, and being satisfactory had kept him on.

I forgot to mention that when I wrote I sent the text (God's own words): "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee" (Ps. 1. 15).

L.

THE ONLY PLACE OF SAFETY.

WE remember meeting somewhere a very striking incident which occurred on one of those vast and trackless prairies which abound on the continent of America.

A party of travellers were making their journey under the conduct of an experienced guide, when suddenly they perceived him halting, and looking very anxiously behind him.

He stooped down, and put his ear to the ground, that he might assure himself of the true state of the case. That practised ear had caught the dreadful sound of flames. The prairie was on fire behind them ; and, what was most appalling, the wind was rapidly driving the flames after them, so that in a few minutes they might be consumed.

Quick as thought the intelligent guide struck a light, and set fire to the prairie *in front of his party*, thus clearing a space on which he placed every one of them. There they were perfectly safe from the devouring flames, for the simplest of all reasons, that they were standing on ground already cleared by fire. They had been transferred in a moment from a place of imminent danger to a place of perfect safety ; from a place in the which they were of necessity filled with anxiety and terror, to

a place in which they might lie down and sleep in repose and security. It was impossible that the fire could touch them, inasmuch as it had already done its work. The very flames which they once dreaded had cleared for them a place of safety. The once dreaded enemy had become their best friend. The danger was past and gone.

In all this, we have a beautiful illustration of that true place of safety in which the believer stands. He too, like the travellers on the prairie, has been in a place of danger. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). "Every one shall be salted with fire" (Mark ix. 49). There is judgment coming. The flames of divine wrath are rolling on in terrible volume, and must before long overtake all who are in their sins.

Men may not believe this: but it is true. They may seek to forget all about it; but that in no wise alters the weighty fact. They may try to put off the solemn moment; but it is of no use. Every throb of the pulse brings them nearer and nearer to that terrible hour in which "the dead, small and great," shall "stand before God" (Rev. xx. 12).

The great day of reckoning is at hand; the day of vengeance must come. It is only a question of time. The acceptable year, the day of salvation will soon close. The door

of mercy will be shut, and shut for ever; and the devouring flame of God's righteous indignation shall roll over all who died in their sins.

Reader, where art thou? On what ground? Art thou on the ground of judgment, or on the ground of safety? Art thou in thy sins, or in Christ? Do not turn aside the question. Look it full in the face, just now. It must be met. Meet it now. Do not put it off for a single hour. You know not the moment when you may be summoned away into eternity; and if you die in your sins, the flames of hell must be your everlasting portion. Escape for thy life!

Dost thou inquire as to the way of escape? Hast thou been brought to ask, from the very depths of a broken and repentant heart, "What must I do to be saved?" If so, we have good news to tell thee; balmy tidings to bring to thine ear and to thine heart. Christ Jesus has cleared the ground for His people. He has met the fire of divine wrath, and quenched, on their behalf, the flames of divine judgment. He took the sinner's place, died the sinner's death, bore the sinner's judgment, paid the sinner's penalty. He was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21). All who simply and heartily believe in Him are as safe as He is. There is no judgment for them, because

the judgment has done its work on Him in their stead.

Thus it stands. Here is the place of safety, the only place. "There is . . . no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). How can there be, seeing that He was condemned in their stead? He went down under the full weight of their sins, and has taken them clean off the ground of judgment, and placed them on the ground of divine and eternal security. He has settled every question that could possibly be raised between God and the believing soul; and, having done so, He has become our subsisting righteousness before God. It is as impossible that any charge of guilt could be made good against the believer as against the risen Saviour. He did once stand charged with guilt; but He has put it away for ever; and now all who believe in Him are in a place of perfect safety, where judgment can never overtake them, because the judgment is past and gone for ever (John v. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 24, iii. 18).

All those who trust in Christ alone,
 The Lamb who once was slain,
 And nature's purest works disown,
 A welcome will obtain;
 For God, who knows a sinner's needs,
 Accepts the Lamb in lieu of deeds.

“THE WAY OF CAIN.”

(JUDE 2.)

THE inward thought of many who have been kept from gross manifestations of evil is that they are better than others whose lives openly declare them to be “publicans and sinners”; and, so far as this life is concerned, they are no doubt better members of society, and fulfil their natural obligations with greater propriety and decorum.

But have they any room to boast even before men on this account? How much less before God! Is not much of their outward propriety traceable to education and the influence of favourable circumstances, or of kind and considerate friends?

And, after all, do not the outwardly moral spring from the same sinful stock as the most profligate and profane? Have they not been conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity? (Psalm li. 5). Are not their minds at enmity against God? (Rom. viii. 7). Have they not sinful hearts, thoughts, and desires? (Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21; Matt. xii. 34; Mark vii. 21-23). Yes, assuredly; for, whatever difference there may be among men, “ALL [without exception] have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 23).

The “natural man” can, no doubt, produce *natural* fruit in abundance. He can exhibit skill and intelligence in the things of

man, and even show kindness and benevolence to his fellow-creature; but he cannot bring forth fruit *unto* GOD, for “they that are *in the flesh* cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 8). And, “*without faith* it is impossible to please Him” (Heb. xi. 6).

Cain, the firstborn of Adam, “brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord,” but the Lord had not respect unto him, nor to his offering (Gen. iv.). And why? Because it *was* the fruit of the *ground*. Probably it was the best which the earth could produce, still it was the fruit of the earth which had been cursed for man’s sin, and consequently could not be accepted by God as a suitable presentation by a sinner to Him who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil” (Hab. i. 13).

Abel, on the other hand, “brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering.” He came before God as a *sinner*, bringing with him a *victim*, in token of the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of his sins. “By faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts” (Heb. xi. 4).

If it were possible, which it is not, for a man to keep the whole law, except in one point,

that one offence would be fatal to him (James ii. 10). But not only is man a sinner in practice, but what is worse, he is one by nature; and, as a consequence, cannot bring forth good fruit; for “ a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit ” (Matt. vii. 17). Hence the necessity of the work of Christ, who “ once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ” (1 Peter iii. 18). He “ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ” (Heb. ix. 26). He shed His precious blood “ for the remission of sins.” He who knew no sin, was made sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21). Having “ died unto sin once,” and “ offered one sacrifice for sins,” and thus put away that which otherwise would have been an impassable barrier to a sinner’s entrance into the presence of God, He “ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,” and has “ sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ”; the proof to the believing soul that his sins have been put away : for He “ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification ” (Rom. iv. 25).

The question for every soul then is, “ What think ye of Christ ? ” Have you God’s thoughts of Him ? Are you taught of God to say, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God ” ? Have you brought the offer-

ing of faith, and found acceptance in God's beloved Son? "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," but the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts iv.).

The offering of works by man in unbelief cannot find acceptance with God, for how can the Living God own dead works? which are all that a man "dead in trespasses and sins" can produce. No; the acceptance of a sinner is in and through Christ; and as God will not give His glory to another, neither will He *share* it with him; the glory of our salvation must be *all* His own. The offerings of Cain and Abel cannot be blended. Salvation must be by Christ *alone*. Not by Christ *and* works, but simply and solely by Christ Himself, without any addition whatever to His one full and finished work upon the cross; owned and recognized by God, who raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory at His own right hand (1 Pet. i. 21).

Have you, then, come to God? If you have, happy are ye; for nothing shall be able to separate you from "the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 39). If you have not come to Him, oh, delay not! but while God's one and only way of salvation is proclaimed, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus find acceptance with God, and blessing in Him for ever and ever. Amen.

“ NO DIFFERENCE.”

“ There is no difference ; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ” (Rom. iii. 22-23).

BE the man rich or poor, learned or illiterate, moral or immoral, refined or unrefined, he has sinned, and he thus comes short of the glory of God. So that there are these two things : not only have you sinned, but you come short of the glory of God.

There is, of course, a deal of difference morally between a drunkard and a sober man ; there was a great difference between Nicodemus in the third chapter of the Gospel of John, and the woman of Samaria in the fourth chapter ; between the dying thief and Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee of the Pharisees ; a wide moral difference between the rich, law-observing ruler and the woman of the city in Luke vii. But the one has sinned, and so has the other. Nicodemus had need to be “ born again,” and so had the woman of Samaria ; and there was as much need for Saul of Tarsus to hear the “ still, small voice ” as the dying thief.

People who have, as they suppose, few sins, often think that they stand a better opportunity of being saved than those who have more sins. Not so. Often the reverse is the

case. The individual who thinks he has some goodness of his own to fit him for the glory of God, trusts to this, and is LOST; while one who is aware from his past conduct that he has no goodness, trusts to Jesus, and is SAVED. The young ruler, with all his religious impressions, and kneeling to the Lord, "went away sorrowful," while the repentant, weeping woman of the city went in peace, her sins forgiven. The repentant prodigal is welcomed home, and has the best robe put upon him, and is brought into the Father's house, while the pharisaical elder son "would not go in."

Did you ever think it was only ONE sin that caused Adam and Eve to be shut out of paradise? Sins, not even one, can be allowed where God is. There is no communion between light and darkness; and as well might a drowning man trust to the waves to save him, as a man to his sobriety, honesty, or what he may term his "good works," to deliver him.

"No difference." These words are once more used in Romans x. 12: "For there is NO DIFFERENCE between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over ALL is rich unto ALL that call upon Him." In the first "no difference" the door is shut to ALL, so to speak. In this the second "no difference" the door is opened to ALL. In the first, you have no righteousness of your own to fit you for God's presence. In the second, He pro-

vides a righteousness for you. Since the death and resurrection of His Son, He welcomes ALL comers. He is rich unto ALL that call upon Him, be he who or what he may. “ WHOSOEVER shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Just as in the first “ no difference ” ALL are involved in one common ruin, so in the second “ no difference ” ALL shall be saved who call upon the name of the Lord.

How many are sincerely calling upon the name of the Lord who do not know that they are saved ! And why ? Because they do not believe God ; they do not believe that He is as good as He is.

This verse of Scripture was quoted to a man anxious to be saved, and he replied, “ Why, I have been calling upon the name of the Lord for twenty years, and did not know that I was saved before.”

In the Old Testament, the Lord commanded that when Israel were numbered, every man was to give a piece of money, “ a ransom for his soul ” ; from twenty years old and upward, each man was to give a half-shekel. The rich were not to give more, and the poor not to give less than half a shekel.

Here the rich and poor met together ; the rich man might have wanted to give more, and the poor might have wanted to give less ; but no, both were to give alike :

there was "NO DIFFERENCE." This illustrates the truth that all receive salvation on the same terms. Not that you have to give half a shekel, for

"Jesus paid it all;
All that from me was due,
So nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do."

What a happy thing it is to be able to say that God is satisfied with what Jesus, His beloved Son, has done for me.

Salvation is put within the reach of all. It is as near as your mouth and your heart; for "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED" (Rom. x. 9).

My reader doubtless believes that the Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners. Let me ask, Have you ever in your life thanked Him for dying for you?

Let none think that they are not good enough to be saved. It is because NONE were good enough that God sent His Son to die for ALL, that through Him those who believe might be saved.

W. R. C.

THE GRACE OF GOD TO A ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST.

AS I walked on the platform of the railway station at Shipley I noticed a priest with a very swollen face. I felt greatly interested in him, and felt assured I had to speak a word from God to his soul.

We waited a considerable time, passed and repassed each other; and yet I had not courage to speak to him.

At length the train arrived from Bradford. He stepped into one carriage, and I into another. Thus we travelled, until the train reached Leeds.

Again there was delay. We passed and repassed; but not a word did I speak. A fellow-priest was waiting for him. I took my seat. He now walked from end to end of the train. Not a seat could he find but the one next to me. He stepped into the carriage, and sat down by my side, his companion remaining on the step outside.

I learnt from their conversation that my fellow-traveller was going to Sheffield, to undergo an operation of no ordinary character.

I still felt a lack of courage to speak. We travelled in silence until we reached the station for Barnsley. Here all the passengers in our compartment left us. We were alone.

I then inquired if the large swelling on the

cheek arose from anything wrong with the teeth.

He explained very fully to me the nature of the case. It was a formation of bone on the cheek-bone. He had had the best possible advice, and was told that he could not live more than two years, unless he submitted to the painful operation of having the bone removed; and so he was going to Sheffield to undergo the operation the very next day.

He then described to me how the difficult operation would have to be performed.

I said, "And if you do well, how long do you expect to be confined to bed?"

"Well," said he, "I shall not be allowed to speak for seven or ten days, and shall no doubt have to lie in bed as many weeks. The thought of it feels very strange, for, with the exception of restless nights, I am, as you see, quite well and strong."

I then said, "And if you die under the operation, what then?"

He looked surprised, and said, "My dear sir, I have been so occupied with the operation, I really have not given that one serious thought."

I saw God was awakening his soul to the awful thought of a never-ending eternity; and I said, "I will give you one text of Scripture that was made a great blessing to a friend of mine in Sheffield, who was bed-ridden for

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months; and I feel sure, whether you die under the operation, or lie in bed some months, this scripture will be made a comfort to you.

“This is it (quoting from the Roman Catholic translation): ‘Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting; and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death unto life’ (John v. 24). Is not that very clear and wonderful? ‘*Hath* life everlasting’; ‘cometh *not* into judgment’; ‘*is* passed from death unto life’?”

At the first moment this seemed too good to be true.

He said, “Yes, if we hear Christ, and if we keep His commandments, and serve Him faithfully, we shall then have life everlasting.”

“No, no,” I said, “that is adding a great deal to the words of Christ. All that will come after, as fruit; but, on the ‘Amen’ of Christ, if we hear His words, and believe God that sent Him, we have at this moment life everlasting.”

“Yes,” he said, “I see it.”

“And now, as to judgment, as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment, so, we are assured, Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; and so, when He comes the second time, it is not

for judgment on sin, but for salvation to them that look for Him.

“ And notice the infinite value of that one sacrifice, of Himself once, in contrast with the many offerings under the Law, which could never take away sins. This blessed Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, ‘ having offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sitteth on the right hand of God. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.’ And God the Holy Ghost testifies, ‘ And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more ’ (see Heb. ix., x.). Oh, yes; ‘ Amen, amen,’ it is most certain, if we hear the words of Jesus, and believe God that sent Him, life everlasting *we have*, and into judgment for our sins we shall never come. How can we, when God says He will remember them no more? ”

Oh, if you had seen that face light up with joy! God opened his heart to receive the testimony of Christ. In a few minutes we must part, yet knit together for eternity. Had I known him for fifty years I could not have felt more intense affection for him. Nay, it was the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. I said, “ Now tell me, if you die under the operation, are you afraid? ”

I was both surprised and delighted to hear his reply: “ Whether the Lord shall come first, and I go to meet Him; or I die, I am ready to go and be with Him! ”

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I had not spoken one word on the coming of Christ, save the reference to Hebrews ix. 28.

The train was drawing up at Masbro': we shook hands, with the deep, real joy of those who have passed from death unto life.

"Good-bye!"

"Good-bye! The Lord be with you in the painful operation! Adieu!"

I saw him no more. The operation was too painful for me to describe. A few Christians had prayer for him, the same evening, at Rotherham.

His suffering was very great; and in a week or eight days from the day I met him he fell asleep. He was "absent from the body, present with the Lord." I did not even know his name, but I shall meet him in that supreme moment when we awake in the likeness of our risen Lord.

Can you say, reader, that you have life everlasting? Have you been brought to receive the words of Christ? Do you believe God who sent Him, His own eternal Son, to bear our sins in His own body on the tree? Has He not died, the one all-sufficient, because infinite, sacrifice for sin? Oh! have you peace with God by the blood of Jesus?

The moment we believe God, all is true to us. Life everlasting we have; Jesus says it. Into judgment we shall not come. Jesus says

it. We are passed from death unto life. Jesus says it.

Do you hear Him? Do not add a word. It is not, If you do this or that, then you may hope to have everlasting life. Those who are thus doing works for salvation never lead a holy life; that is, they never walk according to God's word. It is only those who are born of God who have eternal life, who have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, who love God, because He hath first loved them.

Oh, precious words of Jesus! "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death unto life."

One who lives near where the operation took place met Dr. H., who took part in it, and said, "Oh! Dr. H., I have a friend greatly interested in the priest you operated on; he wishes to know about the state of his soul at his departure."

Dr. H.'s reply was, "I never saw so happy a death-bed scene."

Truly, "the wind bloweth where it listeth"; "so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any

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pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John x. 27-29).

That priest with the swollen face was one of Christ's sheep. The Father had given him to Christ. The Shepherd had died for that sheep; and now the moment came when he must hear His voice. Eternal life was given to him.

Very beautiful it is to see a sheep of Christ in that moment when the ear is opened to hear the voice of Christ. The ear of the thief was opened on the day of his death (Luke xxiii. 42, 43); the ear of this priest eight days before. Has that voice, that word, ever entered my reader's soul? This may be the day of your death, or it may be eight days before. It is only a question of time. Hark, He says, "I *give*, I give unto them eternal life." "And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

Oh! Jew or Gentile, Romanist or Protestant, "WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water of life freely"!

Surpassing grace! Lord, make us more like Thyself!

Dear reader, are you still a stranger to Christ? To this day have you been reading the Scriptures as you would read a news-

paper? Have you never heard the voice of Christ? Remember the love of Christ to this Catholic priest. The moment he heard the voice of Jesus in the word, he passed from death unto life; life everlasting he hath, and into judgment he shall never come. What joy! What peace! What assurance of salvation! On the authority of Thy precious word, Lord Jesus, here our souls rest, without the shadow of a doubt.

CHARLES STANLEY.

THREE GOOD THINGS TO LEARN.

WE lately met with an old man, in the West of England, whose case interested us not a little. For forty-five years he had never entered any place of religious instruction. He was, however, induced by a friend to come under the sound of the gospel; and, on the very first occasion, his soul was arrested. He continued to attend regularly, and divine light shone in gradually upon his soul. After attending, for some weeks, on the preaching, he was speaking to a Christian friend, and telling him, in his own simple style, his spiritual experience.

“Sir,” said he, “the first thing I learnt was that I had never done a right thing all my life. The next thing I learnt was that I could

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not do a right thing, my nature was that bad. And then, sir, I learnt that CHRIST had done all, and met all."

Now, these are what we may call "three good things to learn"; and, if the reader has not already learnt them, we would earnestly entreat him to apply his heart to them now.

Let us briefly glance at these three points of Christian knowledge. They lie at the very foundation of true Christianity.

1. And first, then, our old friend discovered that he had never done a right thing all his days. This is a serious discovery for a soul to make. . It marks an interesting epoch in the history of a soul when the eyes are first opened, and thrown back upon the entire career, from the earliest moment, and the whole thing is found to have been one tissue of sin from beginning to end, every page of the volume blotted from margin to margin. This, we repeat, is very serious. It marks the earliest stage of spiritual conviction, and is intensely interesting to all who watch for souls, and take an interest in the precious mysteries of God's new creation.

2. But there is more than this. Our old friend not only learnt that his acts, all his acts, the acts of his whole life, had been bad; but also that his *nature* was bad; and not only bad, but utterly unmendable. This is a grand point to get hold of. It is an essential element in all

true repentance. It will invariably be found that whenever the Spirit of God works in convicting power in the soul of the sinner, He produces the sense of *sin in the nature*, as well as of *sins in the life*.

It is well to learn this thoroughly at the first. Many souls, when first converted, are more occupied with the forgiveness of their sins than with the judgment of their sinful nature. They see that the blood of Christ has cancelled the sins of their life; but they do not see that the death of Christ has condemned sin in their nature. Hence it is that when the early bloom of their joy passes away, and they begin to feel the workings of indwelling sin, they are cast down, and almost driven to despair. They begin to think that they never were converted at all, and are in great danger of making shipwreck. It is of all importance, therefore, for the reader to give attention to the second point learnt by our dear old friend in the West. He will have to learn, not only that the acts of his life have been all bad, but that his nature is incurably so. No doubt, people differ as to their acts and their ways; but the nature is the same. A crab-tree is a crab-tree, whether it bear but one crab in ten years, or ten thousand crabs in one year. Nothing but a crab-tree could produce even a solitary crab; and hence the nature of the tree is as clearly proved by one crab as by ten thousand. And fur-

ther, we may say that all the art of man, all his cultivation, all his digging and pruning, cannot change the nature of a crab-tree. There must be a new nature, a new life, before any acceptable fruit can be produced. "Ye must be born again" (John iii. 7).

3. But this leads us to look at what our old friend learnt as the third point, namely, that Christ has done all, and met all. Precious fact! Blessed knowledge for every convicted soul! The Lord Jesus Christ (all praise to His precious Name!) has met the sins of my life and the sin of my nature. He has cancelled the former, and condemned the latter. My sinful acts are all forgiven, and my sinful nature is judged. The former are washed away from my conscience, the latter is for ever set aside from God's presence. It is one thing to know the forgiveness of *sins*, and another to know the condemnation of *sin*. We read, at the opening of Romans viii., that "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." It does not speak of the forgiveness of *SIN*. This could not be. *SINS* are forgiven, the sinner is pardoned; but *SIN* is condemned: an immensely important distinction for every earnest soul. The reign of sin is ended for ever, as to the believer; and the reign of grace is begun. The knowledge of this is peace and liberty, victory and strength to the Christian.

This glorious doctrine is unfolded in the sixth chapter of Romans, a chapter which we earnestly recommend to the young disciple. In it he will notice the interesting fact that the apostle is not speaking of SINS, but of SIN. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that *the body of SIN* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve SIN. For he that is dead is freed from SIN. . . . For in that He died, He died unto SIN once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto SIN, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not SIN therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto SIN, but yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For SIN shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace " (vv. 6-14).

This is a most precious, emancipating truth for the soul. It forms the true basis of victory over indwelling sin. To know that the dominion of sin is broken by the cross, and that grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, is the divine secret of all progress in personal holiness.

C. H. M.

RUIN AND REDEMPTION.

READ 1 PETER i. 17-25.

WHAT is man's real condition before God?

He knows it not; but this is the great preliminary question before he can be brought under the ministry of the *grace* of God.

The very ground necessarily assumed before preaching the gospel of God's grace is that every man is a lost and ruined sinner. God has asserted it (Rom., iii. 10-23). And if we 'come to practical Christianity, it is equally an axiom that the great ground of Christian action is *redemption* security (Eph. i. 7).

The point at issue between God and every soul is whether man is as bad as God's testimony says he is; for the starting-post in preaching the gospel is God's declaration: "*All flesh is grass.*" Take man in every state of moral and intellectual improvement, and he is grass. "*All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass*" (the flower is a much more fleeting thing than the grass itself). "*The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away*" (1 Pet. i. 24).

Job was a man remarkable for integrity and uprightness, according to God's own declaration: "*Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a*

perfect and an *upright* man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? ”

But when he comes to stand before God it is, “ I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth Thee. *Wherefore* I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes ” (Job i. 8 ; xlii. 5, 6).

Here Job learnt that as flesh he was grass.

Whenever a plea is made for the flesh, for anything merely human, whether righteousness, wisdom, or strength, the plea cannot be established except by condemning God. The Lord had said, when speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, “ Wilt thou *condemn Me*, that *thou* mayest be *righteous*? ” (Job xl. 8).

In seeking to bring the testimony concerning truth and grace before the conscience, I would not take the dregs of humanity to prove that all flesh is grass ; here, in the first instance, you have *righteous* Job.

Again, Solomon was a remarkable specimen of a person blessed of God in various ways, but principally in having wisdom *given* to him, the *gift* of wisdom directly from God. “ God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men. . . . And there came of

all people to hear the *wisdom* of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom " (1 Kings iv. 29-34).

All his experience ended in this: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. . . . For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow " (Eccles. i. 14, 15, 18). "*All vanity and vexation of spirit* " ! "*All flesh is grass* " !

Again, as to the *religious man*. If any really thinks that religion consists in doing this or doing that, the Pharisee was more religious than any of us. The era of our Lord's ministry on earth was a most religious era; and yet, when our Lord Jesus Christ came seeking *fruit*, He could not find any. He was cast out and murdered *because* they maintained their religion.

Here we see that human RIGHTEOUSNESS, human WISDOM, and human RELIGION are all hindrances in the way of knowing God really as He is and ourselves as we are. One of the most genuine marks of real conversion to God is the utter and entire denial of any goodness in ourselves, or expectation from ourselves.

Man, as an intellectual and moral creature,

is now putting forth all his powers to establish that which God says is "grass." Modern philanthropists are seeking to raise and cultivate man's intellect.

They may succeed above all their expectations; but no philanthropic efforts, or society for the amelioration of man, however honest the intention, can meet the ruin of the condition in which man is before God, because it falls short of the cross of Christ. It can do nothing but leave man as it found him, a ruined sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, unaltered before God, knowing nothing of Him, or what it is to have thoughts and desires in communion with Him, and in a world as ruined as himself.

Every man by nature is a lost and ruined sinner, and he *is in* a lost and ruined world. It is quite necessary to state these things together in order to know what *salvation* is.

What was salvation before the Flood? It was to get into the ark, because the world was going to be judged.

What was salvation in the days of Lot? To get out of Sodom, because Sodom was going to be burned.

And what is salvation now? Not merely to be saved from hell. It is that; but it is also deliverance "from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4).

Persons may be REFORMED, and yet not be

CONVERTED. I do not like the expression "a converted character"; conversion is the being turned from everything, whatever it may be, and brought to God (1 Thess. i. 9).

What is God's testimony now to man, thus ruined himself and in a ruined world, but testimony to His own grace and His own power, to His own ability to meet him in these circumstances, in a way that nothing but His own grace could provide. The apostle says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

It is impossible to be the subject of God's power without effects following. Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto us which are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 23, 24).

This may be folly to the present age, as it was to the Greeks, to men who are seeking wisdom, a stumbling-block to those who are requiring a sign, as the Jews; but unto those who believe, Christ is "the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God."

The same God that has told us that "all flesh is grass," the same God who, after long experience of man, has said "flesh profiteth nothing," is now sending forth the testimony

unto salvation through "the precious blood of Christ" (John vi. 63; 1 Pet. i. 19). He is not any longer testing man, and in that sense, it is not *now* a state of probation to ruined sinners. They have been tried under the best and most favourable circumstances in Israel, under the Law, and found wanting. The Son of the living God has come, and found man to be "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1). Man, therefore, is pronounced as bad as he can be, utterly ruined.

But grace would never be known as it is, if it could not meet a sinner "dead in trespasses and sins." This was exhibited in the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the expression of grace and truth when here, and it was thrown in His teeth by the self-righteous Pharisee, that He was receiving publicans and sinners (Luke xv. 1, 2).

Man is more angry with God for meeting ruined sinners in *grace*, than for dealing with them in *righteousness*. Grace is the one thing he cannot understand. Human wisdom cannot grasp that word. It can understand law, but that God should be dealing in *grace* with poor lost sinners, the human understanding cannot grasp that.

You will find, if you test your heart, that you naturally hate grace a great deal more than you hate holiness. Well, grace meets the sinner *just where he is*, in all his misery

and ruin : the love of God meets him *there*. Each one of us who has received Christ into his own soul can give his Amen to that. We were loved by God, not when we had improved ourselves, but when we were dead in trespasses and sins. " God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us " (Rom. v. 8).

What is it that enables God thus to have to do in grace with poor lost sinners? " THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB." " Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot : who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory : that your faith and hope might be in God " (1 Pet. 18, 19).

It is *the blood of the Lamb* which enables the *holy* God to meet *unholy* sinners ; it fills up the amazing gap between the throne of God and them, as lost and ruined sinners. " God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life " (John iii. 16). And this after man had proved that there was no response in his heart to the love of God. Had there been a

spark of good in him, it would have been called out by the Lord Jesus Christ. But no, the answer to all His love and grace was, "Away with this man!" "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" (Luke xxiii. 18, 21).

Man has preferred a murderer to Jesus: "Not this man, *but* Barabbas!" Nay, God's Son *has been murdered!* And now the ministry of reconciliation is granted to that world *where* He was murdered. God's answer to all the hard thoughts of man's heart is, "I have given you My Son." His answer to all man's pretensions, "You have *crucified* My Son."

It is always of strengthening power to my own soul to see that when God begins, He begins with those who crucified His own Son! What a blessed thing to find, that from among the very murderers of Jesus a number were brought to know God's love through the blood of His Son. (See Luke xxiv. 47; Acts ii. 36-42.)

The gospel is the proclamation of the value, not only of the *Person* of Jesus, but of His blood which has been shed. God's controversy with man therefore is, What estimate have you of My Son, and of the *blood* that He has shed? You cannot be neutral: "He that is not *with* Me is *against* Me." But it matters not what your thoughts are; God's thoughts, and the thoughts of *all redeemed*

sinners are, that there is nothing so "precious" as the blood of God's own Son.

The *blood* of Christ not only brings God down in grace to us; it brings us up to God. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). A ruined sinner washed in the blood of Jesus is immediately brought into the presence of God. All the great things of God are very simple. By one and the same blood a sinner who believes in Jesus is washed from his sins, justified, and brought nigh to God. And in the glory the theme of the redeemed will be "the blood of the Lamb." "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by *Thy blood* out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9). "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in *His own blood*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

What becomes of a person so "washed from his sins," "redeemed," and "brought unto God"?

Here we find the importance of his seeing his position in Christ, the Head. He is redeemed as he fell: he fell in one, he is redeemed in One, in a Head: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 12). Believers are IN Him as the

RISEN ONE, and derive from Him new life, a new nature connected with a new sphere of things, new affections, a new world. The redeemed man is brought into a new creation with Jesus, and all those who are redeemed by Him unto God.

This a remedy *worthy* of God. It is that which the apostles preached: "Jesus and the resurrection." Deny grace, and you deny the wisdom of God.

J. N. D.

"THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD."

(EPH. vi. 17.)

A FRENCH preacher of the gospel, named Cæsar Malan, when travelling in the provinces on one occasion, met an infidel, with whom he entered into conversation.

In the course of his remarks, he quoted various passages of Holy Scripture.

The infidel told him it was of no use his quoting from that Book to him, inasmuch as he did not believe one word of it; and that he should first establish its authenticity.

Malan replied, "Suppose I were to plunge a sword into your body; there would surely be no need of any logical proof that it was a

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sword; it would prove itself by its effect upon your person.”

He then proceeded with the conversation, still quoting from the Word of God.

They parted; but the truth of God did its own work. It entered, as “ the sword of the Spirit,” into the heart of the infidel, and cut its way through his infidel system, showing it to be a mass of folly, and himself to be a guilty, hell-deserving sinner.

Time rolled on, and, after many years, Cæsar Malan was one day accosted in the streets of Paris by a gentleman who asked him if he remembered having met him in the stage coach. He then told him that “ the Word of God” had, in very deed, proved itself in his case to be “ the sword of the Spirit,” and he now needed no logical proof.

“ The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart ” (Heb. iv. 12).

“ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received THE WORD OF GOD which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, THE WORD OF GOD, which effectually worketh also in you that believe ” (1 Thess. ii. 13).

“CAN YOU SPELL REPENTANCE?”

THESE words were once addressed by a dying child to a godless father. The man was going on in his wickedness, but the child on her sick-bed was bound for heaven, and was soon to be in the presence of Christ.

Unhappy about her wretched parent's state of soul, she one day suddenly addressed him with, “Father, can you spell repentance?” And through the blessing of God the question was effectual in awakening his conscience.

“Spell repentance!” said he, “Why, what is repentance?”

Nor did God allow him to go unanswered. He found what a stranger to it he was; a *guilty, lost sinner, ready to perish*. But through grace “repentance unto life” was granted to him, and he learned to spell out its eternal significance. By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God has exalted “to give *repentance*, and remission of sins,” he got “the knowledge of salvation,” and lived to bless God for the little question that his dying daughter put to him, and which God used to turn him upside down that He might bless him for eternity. That is the way to spell repentance in the school of God! Dear reader, have you ever been to that school, or have you never yet learned to spell?

W. R.

THE SERGEANT'S TESTAMENT.

HAVE you, dear reader, ever thought of the responsibility of having God's Word in your possession? We are privileged to have free access to the Word of God, and therein to read what God has to say about ourselves, our sins, and above all about His beloved Son. Yet many to-day care little or nothing for these divine communications.

May I ask you just to turn to a few scriptures, and ask yourself the question as to your attitude towards them?

Firstly, with reference to ourselves, God's Word declares in Romans iii. 23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Secondly, with reference to our sins, we read in Romans vi. 23, "*The wages of sin is death.*"

Thirdly, with reference to His beloved Son, we find in John iii. 35, 36, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

These words are true, and every living soul will prove it is so sooner or later; but oh! the blessedness of having to do with God now, and believing the testimony God has given us of His Son, while it is "the day of salvation."

I was much struck by an incident that happened lately in France, told me by a friend.

A colporteur was selling portions of God's Word to some soldiers, and he came to a sergeant, and endeavoured to sell him a New Testament. This young soldier refused, when a comrade near suggested that he might find the paper useful for lighting his pipe; so he decided to have it, and paid the money and took the book.

Time went on, and the colporteur, being in the same district again, called on the parents of the young man. On making inquiries he heard that their son had died from wounds received in action, but he died quite happy, and they had only recently discovered the cause of his happiness.

Evidently he had read the Testament he had bought, for it was found under his pillow, and at the end the following words were written: "Despised, rejected, disbelieved"; and underneath, "Read, rejoiced in, believed in, I die happy."

The whole of Matthew was torn out, which he had evidently used for the purpose his comrade suggested. But he had been led to read the rest of this blessed book; and not only that, but to believe and rejoice in it too.

Now, dear reader, I would ask you again, What is your attitude towards the truth of God? He tells us we are sinners, and that "it

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is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment " (Heb. ix. 27). He reveals to us our true and guilty condition; but He does not leave us there. He then shows us how in love He gave His own beloved Son to die in our stead, to bear the punishment of our sins; as we read in 1 John iv. 10, " Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And again in 1 Peter iii. 18, " Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

Have you ever thought of the love of God expressed in that wondrous Gift, and then the love of the Lord Jesus Christ shown in bearing the wrath of God for sinners? Now, what is your attitude towards such love, such truth? Can it be said, You despise it, reject it, disbelieve it?

Solemn words these, true alas! of so many; for there can be no doubt of the final doom of such, if they still continue in their unbelief; as we read in Rev. xxi. 8, " But the fearful, and UNBELIEVING . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Oh! I trust those three words, " Despised, rejected, disbelieved," are not true of you, but that you may know the blessedness of the Word being " Read, rejoiced in, believed in,"

and you will then live happy, and should death overtake you, you can die happy.

By reading the Word of God you find out what you are, and what He has done, and when you believe it, you will prove that the God of hope will fill you with all joy and peace in believing (Rom. xv. 13).

W. E. S.

A young friend of mine, a bright young Christian not seventeen years old, recently fell asleep in Jesus. His sufferings were great during the last few days of his illness. He knew to Whom he was going, and a few hours before he passed away his father said to him, "It is all peace and joy, dear F., is it not?"

"Oh," he replied, "it has been peace and joy all along, but now it's *overflowing*."

Think of that! overflowing peace and joy in the midst of suffering, and with the certainty of death close at hand. A scene such as that makes the possession of Christ a wonderful reality.

A. P. G.

“ WE BELIEVE AND ARE SURE.”

“**Y**OU can be sure of nothing in this world but death,” is a very common saying, but not at all a scriptural one. It is true that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”; but then Christ has borne both death and judgment for all those who believe in Him, and such know and can say,

“ Death and judgment are behind me,
Grace and glory are before;
All the billows rolled o’er Jesus,
There exhausted all their power.”

Indeed, instead of the believer in Jesus being sure that he will die, it is the very thing that he is not at all sure about; for the Word of God says, “Behold, I show you a mystery; *we shall not all sleep*” (or die), “but we shall all be changed” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 58). The coming of the Lord, and not death, is the hope of the believer.

I only notice this common saying, which I have given above, in passing on to what we are, or ought to be, *sure* about.

There are many passages of Scripture where the little word “sure” occurs, but I would now ask you to look at seven of them; and may God’s rich blessing rest upon our brief examination of each.

(1) “ And we believe and are SURE that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God ” (John vi. 69).

Now, God judges of everybody by what they think and believe of Christ; and it is of the very first moment that we should be clear about the Person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, as neither salvation nor everlasting life are to be had apart from faith in His Person. “ He that believeth *on the Son* hath everlasting life.” “ Believe *on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house ” (John iii. 36; Acts xvi. 31).

It is not faith in a text that saves. I believed all the Bible was true, from Genesis to Revelation, before I was saved, and it did not save me. You must believe in the living, loving Lord Jesus Christ, at God’s right hand. Hark ! A voice from heaven says, “ Look unto ME, and be ye saved ” (Isa. xlv. 22).

Jesus, when He was here, asked His disciples, “ Whom do men say that I the Son of man am ? ” They answered, “ Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” So much for popular opinion; it never reaches up to the glory of the person of the Christ. Jesus then asked, “ But whom say ye that I am ? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” But how came Peter to know this?

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“ Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven ” (Matt. xvi. 13-17).

And when God by His Spirit reveals Christ to you, and in you by His word, you will be able adoringly to say, “ We believe and are SURE that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” What an important thing to be sure about, seeing that there is no salvation without it ! “ Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby *we must be saved* ” (Acts iv. 12).

(2) “ The foundation of God standeth SURE ” (2 Tim. ii. 19). In this day, when infidelity and superstition are joining to pull everything to pieces, it is blessed to know that they cannot touch or shake God’s foundation. And whilst thousands of poor deceived souls are resting upon the shifting sand of ordinances and religious performances, it becomes us to see to it that we are on the foundation that nothing can prevail against. Jehovah Jesus says, “ Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a *sure* foundation ” (Isa. xxviii. 16).

Are you on this only “ sure foundation ” ? Do you answer, “ I wish that I knew I was ” ? Then listen to the words of Jesus : “ Whoso-

ever *cometh* to Me, and *heareth* My sayings, and *doeth* them, I will show you to whom he is like : he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock ” (Luke vi. 47-49). Have you *come* to Jesus? Have you *heard* His words? and are you *doing* them? If you can answer these questions in the affirmative, then you can surely sing :

“ On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

(3) “ We are SURE that the judgment of God is according to truth ” (Rom. ii. 2). Are you quite sure of this? Can you look back to the cross and see Jesus suffering untold agonies, and hear Him cry, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? ” (Ps. xxii. 1), as He groans and expires beneath the weight of a holy God’s judgment against sin, and say, “ I am *sure* that the judgment of God is according to truth ”? If you do not bow to the judgment of God against sin at the cross, you will have to bear it in your own person throughout eternity in the everlasting flames of the lake of fire, when you will be obliged to own “ that the judgment of God is according to truth.” Do it now, before it is too late.

(4) “ Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both SURE and stedfast ” (Heb. vi. 19). How many thousands there are who say, in

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this day of earnest personal dealing with precious souls, when asked the important question, “ Are you saved? ” “ I hope so.” Have you got Christ? for Paul says, “ Lord Jesus Christ, our hope ” (1 Tim. i. 1); and He being “ our hope,” if you lack Him you most certainly have no hope.

When a captain of a ship gives orders to his men to drop anchor, what would he think of them if they dropped it in the hull of the vessel? And yet this is just what many simple souls are doing, dropping their anchor into their own hearts : no wonder they are all adrift. Where is Christ? He is at the right hand of God. Accept Christ for your hope, and then you will be in Christ, anchored to the very throne of God, and you will know that your anchor, being outside of yourself, is “ both *sure* and *stedfast*,” and you will be able to say, “ I have Christ; what want I more? ”

(5) “ Thy testimonies are very SURE ” (Ps. xciii. 5). Yes, they are not only *sure*, but “ *very sure*,” whether He speaks about man’s condition by nature as being lost and guilty, as “ all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way . . . ” (Isaiah liii. 6), therefore the whole world is “ become guilty before God ” (Rom. iii. 19); or whether He speaks about His own rich provision for the blessing of such, as “ God so loved the world, that He gave His only be-

gotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16); or whether He speaks of the present portion of the believer and the unbeliever, as "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life*, and he that believeth *not* the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36); or whether He speaks of the destiny of the believer, or the doom of the unbeliever, as, "And these" (the unbelievers) "shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 46).

Yes, depend upon it, God's "testimonies are very sure," and "he that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John iii. 33); and "he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar" (1 John v. 10). Have *you* set to your seal that God is true, by receiving His "very sure" testimonies? or are you making Him a liar by calling them in question and doubting them?

(6) "Give diligence to make your calling and election SURE" (2 Peter i. 10). I am amazed at the audacity of people in saying, "You cannot be sure you are saved in this world," when God says I am to be sure. "Yes," you say; "but I do not know if I am one of God's called ones." Well, turn to 1 Cor. i. 26-29, and look at the persons whom He calls: "God hath chosen the *foolish* things

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of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the *weak* things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and *base* things of the world, and things which are *despised*, hath God chosen, yea, and *things which are not*, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

Now, do you answer to this fivefold description of God's called and chosen ones? Have you ever confessed to God that you are “ foolish, weak, base, despised, and nothing ”? If so, you are most certainly one of God's called ones. Has God's gospel come to you, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance? if it has, and you have answered to the fivefold description of God's called ones, then you have made “ your calling and election *sure* ” (1 Thess. i. 4, 5).

(7) “ Be SURE your sin will find you out ” (Num. xxxii. 23). We have now come to the last scripture I wish to call your attention to where the word “ *sure* ” occurs, and a most solemn one it is for a certain class of sinners. Oh, ye hypocrites, ye deceitful and secret sinners, ye may go on undiscovered for weeks, months, and even long years, but your sin will hound you and find you out in the long run! Oh that it might find you out now, and cause you to come to Jesus, the sin cleanser

and the sinner's Saviour! "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all* sin" (1 John i. 7).

I have done, and must now leave God's word to do its own work, earnestly praying that all who may read this paper may be led of God truthfully to say, "We believe and are SURE."

H. M. H.

Why be so thoughtless, careless, and negligent about salvation which is in Christ Jesus? No amount of present gain, gratification, or pleasure, can make up for eternal misery.

"ONLY BELIEVE."

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" (John iii. 36).

Can you delay? Surely not. To-morrow may be too late. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15). If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ your name is written there, but if not, your name is not there, and because of unbelief you are "condemned already" (John iii. 18).

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

W. E. S.