

GOSPEL LIGHT.

VOLUME X.

LONDON :

JAMES CARTER,
Aldine Chambers,
13, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C. 4.

1920.

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Vol. X. No. 109. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.

GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

(LUKE X. 25-37.)

THE lawyer's question, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” seems at first sight very similar to that of the Philippian jailor in Acts xvi. 30: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

In reality, they are very different. The lawyer's implies his own ability to gain life as a result of what he could do; while the jailor's is the cry of a troubled soul for someone to save him, thus owning he could not save himself.

The blessed Lord, however, takes occasion of the lawyer's question to bring out the wretched and helpless state of the sinner; while in reply to his second question, “And who is my neigh-

bour?" He gives a full and beautiful picture of Himself as the Saviour.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." These words present to us the downward course of every man. Jerusalem was the city blessed by the presence of God, who had put His name there (Exod. xv. 17 and 1 Kings viii. 29). Jericho, on the other hand, was the first city to withstand Israel when they entered Canaan to take possession of the land that God promised them; therefore the city was accursed and utterly destroyed; moreover, Joshua pronounced a curse on the man who should rebuild it (Joshua vi. 17 and 26-27).

It was not till the days of the wicked King Ahab that a man was found daring enough to defy the curse and rebuild Jericho; and then, though more than five hundred years had passed since the curse was proclaimed, the words of Joshua were fulfilled; for "he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub" (1 Kings xvi. 34).

The sinner—and let us remember "all have sinned"—has his back to God and all blessing, and his face towards the place of the curse; his feet are treading the downward road that leads to destruction. On his journey "he fell among thieves, which stripped" him, and left him half dead by the road-side. What a picture of misery and helplessness! and yet how slow is man to realise that the Lord thus depicts his state. Dear reader, let me ask, "Have you done so?" Well is it, indeed, when he discovers that he has nothing with which to meet the claims of a holy God, for this leaves God free to deal in grace; as

with the two debtors the Lord tells us of in Luke vii. 41, 42: "When they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." Again, helplessness is no hindrance to God: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6).

"By chance" (note these words) "there came down a certain priest that way." Ah! we should have thought that was just the one the poor man needed. But, although he sees him, he passes by on the other side. If the poor man had had an offering the priest could have offered it on his behalf, and with its blood made an atonement for his soul. But he was stripped of all, and had nothing, and so the priest was unable to help him.

So is it with the sinner. He has nothing to offer to God as a ransom for his soul, or for that of his brother, and "the redemption of the soul is precious" (Ps. xlix. 7, 8). God, however, in His abounding grace, "if any say, I have sinned," replies, "I have found a ransom" (see Job xxxiii. 23-28). The Apostle Peter reminds us of what this is, even "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter i. 19).

"Likewise," that is, by chance, "a Levite . . . came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." Why was the Levite no more able to help the half-dead man than the priest? Because the man was unable to do anything. The Levites of old were appointed to teach the people the law (Deut. xxxiii. 8-10), and what they should do to please God. The poor man was, however, beyond teaching what he should do—he was helpless. Again in this, how he typifies the sinner, who, according to God's Word, is "without

strength" ! But it is just in that state that God in grace tells us, " In due time Christ died for the ungodly " (Rom. v. 6).

In blessed contrast to the priest and the Levite we find the " certain Samaritan." He came not, like the others, " by chance," but " as he journeyed." It was by no mere chance that the loving Saviour came to save the sinner, but with purpose of heart He journeyed from the glory to the manger, from the manger to the cross, and from the open grave He has gone back into the glory of God—the mighty Victor over Satan, death, and the grave.

That journey was undertaken to do the will of God (Heb. x. 9), and " to seek and to save that which was lost " (Luke xix. 10).

The good Samaritan did not ask the man for anything : he did not tell him to do anything—not even to come a step towards him, but he " came where he was," his heart was moved with compassion, and he " bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine." The wine speaks to us of the cleansing blood of Jesus, that " cleanseth us from all sin " ; the oil, of the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Having thus ministered to him, he " set him on his own beast." The man needed a power outside himself to carry him. The very power of God that sustained and preserved the Lord Jesus through this scene (for as perfect Man He took the place of dependence, saying, " Preserve Me, O God : for in Thee do I put My trust " (Ps. xvi. 1) is the power that carries and keeps those whom Christ saves. We are " kept by the power of God " (1 Peter i. 5).

He " brought him to an inn, and took care of him." An inn is not where travellers make their

home, but a place of shelter and refreshment on the journey. So with the rescued sinner; he is brought to the company of those travelling to glory—the church of God on its way through this world (see Acts. ii. 47), cared for and ministered to by the Host to whom Christ has committed the charge of His people, even the Holy Spirit or Comforter. He it is who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us for our comfort, refreshment, and joy, and to glorify Christ, to whom the Father has given all that He Himself has (John xvi. 13-15).

The Good Samaritan departs on the morrow for a little while only, leaving two pence with the host—an amount to meet the man's needs for the day. Yet there was no lack, for "whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." What a bright and cheering thought for the poor man, that his deliverer was soon coming for him again! So with us who believe in Jesus. He has said, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. xxii. 20). While He tarries the Holy Spirit ministers to us specially in two ways—by the Word of God and prayer—answering, I believe, to the two pence of the parable. This thought gains confirmation from the fact that Luke, who gives us events in their moral order, brings them to our notice just after the parable.

Mary sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word: and in the beginning of chapter xi. Christ teaches His disciples to pray. "We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us. . . ." (Rom. viii. 26).

May He, indeed, so engage our souls through the Word with Christ, and keep us in prayerful dependence, that the longing cry of our hearts,

in answer to Christ's parting message to us of His near return, may be, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." W. HUBERT S. FOSBERY.

"THIS IS WHAT I WANT."

A certain man on the Malabar coast had long been uneasy about his spiritual state, and had inquired of several heathen devotees and priests how he might make atonement for his sins. He was directed to drive iron spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals, and on these spikes to walk a distance of about four hundred and eighty miles. He undertook the journey, and travelled a long way, but could obtain no peace of soul. One day he halted under a large, shady tree, where the gospel was sometimes preached. While he was there a missionary came, and preached from the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) During the preaching the poor man's attention was excited, and his heart was touched. Rising up, he threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, "This is what I want!" He became thenceforward a lively witness of the healing efficacy of the Saviour's blood. Are there not thousands of persons throughout the length and breadth of Christendom trying to get peace of soul by walking, as it were, on iron spikes? May God lead them to rest in the precious blood of Christ.

GOD'S SALVATION AND MAN'S CONDITION.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Hebrews ii. 3.)

THERE is no subject of such importance to a sinner as that of salvation, the salvation of his own soul. Compared with this, all others dwindle into utter insignificance. Indeed, were any sinner truly alive to his condition as such he could think of no other, feel interested in no other, occupy himself with no other, until he knew that this all-important one was really settled on a solid basis. He would seek *first* to have this secure, whatever else was left in uncertainty.

The unsaved sinner is like a person on the brink of an awful precipice, up to the very edge of which an enemy has maliciously decoyed him, and then with fiendish subtlety, watches for an opportunity to give him the fatal push, that would plunge him headlong down the fearful abyss.

Now, what should we think of a person, in such a condition who could remain unconcerned if he knew his danger; who, though faithfully warned of his position, and of the enemy who was seeking his destruction, nevertheless gave no heed to the warning, manifested no desire to flee from the danger, or to escape from the hands of his crafty, cruel foe? We should justly conclude that he was an insane person, one who was alike insensible to the dangers of his situation, the kindness of his friend, and the treachery of his enemy.

Well, such, and worse than such, are the condition and the conduct of every unpardoned sinner who neglects God's “great salvation,” who despises, or trifles with the faithful warnings and

the affectionate invitations of the gospel. He is on the very brink of the slippery precipice of "the lake of fire." (Rev. xix. 20; xx, 10, 14, 15.) He is every moment exposed to the yawning gulf beneath. Another step, and his doom may be sealed for ever; for who can tell what a moment may bring forth? Yet, strange to say, he professes to know his danger, and dares to make light of it. Awful delusion! But he believes the lie of Satan rather than the truth of God, and shuts his eyes to the danger he is in.

Such, indeed, is the awful condition, the imminent danger, of every one who *neglects* the "great salvation." He may be kind, loving, gentle, moral, amiable. He may not openly despise or avowedly reject salvation, but in heart he *neglects* it, treats it with carelessness, and the only termination of such a course, if persisted in, is eternal condemnation. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And oh! what immense numbers there are of this class! Many of the most moral and well conducted amongst men are living in the utter "neglect" of God's "great salvation." Oh fearful condition! Oh fatal delusion! And the great enemy of souls and salvation is doing his very utmost to hide from the view of his poor deluded victims the reality of their position until it be too late. Moreover, while the sinner's ear continues shut to the voice of God, and his heart closed to the love of God, he is in the hands of Satan, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 2.) He is led on by him as his prince, and energized by his spirit. He may think he has an independent will of his own, and may boast that he can think

and judge for himself, yet all the while he is the merest dupe of Satan, and "taken captive by him at his will." (2 Timothy ii. 26.)

Some he leads on very gently, getting them to believe that God's time for their conversion is not yet come, and that they must wait His time, for He only can change the heart; but, in the meantime, they may take their enjoyment, such as the world offers, in a rational way, honestly confessing they are not Christians yet, so that they are quite consistent.

Alas ! such persons are as surely, though quietly and orderly, on the broad road, as those who are violent opposers of the truth. This is a subtle, but most successful snare of the devil. It well suits those who have a measure of light, but who have at the same time a real love for the world. Some who have less light, and less conscience, he pushes along more roughly; while others he drives furiously, and their race is soon run. But at whatever speed, and in whatever character they go, his only terminus is the burning lake, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. xiii. 42, 50.)

But, blessed be the God of all grace, so long as the soul is on this side of "the lake of fire" it is in the place of hope. God is above Satan; He is above all. He keeps the door of mercy wide open, night and day, for the chief of sinners. "And let him that is athirst come: and *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

The first look of faith to Jesus is immediate deliverance. "Look unto me, and ~~be~~ ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there

is none else." (Isa. xlv. 22.) Many, when on the very brink of hell, have been rescued by the Saviour-God, and plucked as a brand out of the fire. (Zech. iii. 2.) He only can do it, and we must look to Him.

We have many examples recorded in Scripture, and set up as finger-posts, pointing out to us the way of escape, and the way of eternal life. Such are the dying thief on the cross, Saul of Tarsus, and the Philippian jailor. Let us look for a moment at the latter. When, by Satan, driven to the very point of despair, "he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself." (Acts xvi. 27.) But the voice of love from "the inner prison," that cried aloud, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here," stayed his hand, and rescued him from the snare of the enemy. He was just about to strike the fatal blow, and rush headlong into the gulf of hell. For a moment, he stood quivering on its slippery edge, and Satan eager to push him in; when, lo! the sweet accents of love and mercy from the heart of God, fell upon his ear, arrested his attention, and turned his thoughts to the voice that spoke.

Those kind words, "Do thyself no harm," broke the poor jailor's heart, and he fell a captive not to the malice of Satan, blessed be God, but to the victorious love of Jesus. The prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive was delivered from the terrible one. (Isa. xlix. 24.)

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. . . And he rejoiced, be-

believing in God with all his house." (Acts xvi. 29, 34.)

Oh ! that my dear reader may be led to pause, and listen to the voice of love. It is Jesus that speaks, and words of perfect grace fall from His lips. I am come, He says, "to seek and to save that which was lost." Oh ! then, turn to Him, before you take another step. As a lost one turn to Him. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Ps. ii. 12.)

That which may, alas ! be treated with neglect, thought little of, and cared little for, is nevertheless God's "great salvation." Hence the solemn warning, appeal, and exhortation in the word before us. "THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE, IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?"

These truly solemn words were first spoken to the Hebrews, who had made a profession of Christianity, but were in danger of slipping back into Judaism. Still, they are equally true and applicable to us, and to all who, at any time, or on any ground, are found neglecting this salvation.

This subject, this salvation, is one of universal and individual importance, and it cannot be overlooked or disregarded by any without incurring God's sore displeasure. "Salvation is of the Lord." (Jonah ii. 9.) It is of His providing and preparing. "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage."

(Matt. xxii. 4.) This salvation is divinely suited to man's condition. It is ready *now*, ready for acceptance of all who will receive it. It is full and free, free to the most unworthy. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money : come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." (Isa. lv. 1.)

It is emphatically called the " great salvation." And that for several reasons. We will notice some of them.

1. Because of the greatness and authority of Him by whom it was published. " Which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD." " God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." (Heb. i. 2.) The law was spoken by angels. The Jews " received the law by the disposition of angels." (Acts. vii.) But God has spoken to us by His own beloved Son, who is essentially and officially above angels. " For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee? " What a messenger ! Oh ! what importance must be attached to the message which He brings ! " THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard."

2. Because of the greatness and glory of Him by whom it was accomplished. When Christ, " by Himself," had " purged our sins," He " sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He who, in perfect grace to us, when working out our salvation, went down to " the lowest parts of the earth," is now in the highest place in heaven. (Eph. iv. 9, 10.) The cross has been exchanged for the throne, and the reed of mockery for the Royal Sceptre of universal dominion.

“But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.” Oh ! what a Workman ! What must His work be !

3. Because of the greatness of the guilt and ruin from which it saves. How few know their real condition in the sight of God, though it is written on every page of Scripture. Vain man's thoughts of himself, and God's true statement of his condition, are widely different. By nature he is a child of wrath ; because of unbelief “condemned already.” Yet out of all this sad, sad condition, God's “great salvation,” effectually and immediately delivers. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Who *hath* delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath* translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son : in whom we *have* redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Revelation iii. 17 ; Colossians i. 12-14.)

4. Because of the greatness of the blessedness into which it introduces. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might *bring us to God.*” (1 Pet. iii. 18.) We can never get higher or better than this. To be brought to God, is to be brought to the knowledge of God, into fellowship with God, full conformity to God, and the eternal enjoyment of God. This is perfect blessedness. “We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. v. 11.) “To Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. ii. 7.) Oh ! what a place to be brought into ! “The midst of the paradise of God.” This is rest, God's own rest ; a higher, a

holier, a happier, can never be found. And to feed on Christ there, as "the tree of life." No "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" there. How different from man's paradise! (Gen. ii. 9.) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (1 Peter iii. 18; Rom. v. 11; Rev. ii. 7.)

Well may the grand theme of the gospel testimony be called the "great salvation." Oh! how great; how good; how glorious! It is salvation from the depths of hell to the heights of heaven; from "the wrath to come," to an "eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

And is this, is this really, what so many are neglecting? Is this what so many are despising and rejecting? Few will say, in plain terms, that they are doing the latter, but many will confess to the former. Many will acknowledge that they are neglecting the "one thing needful." (Luke x. 42).

Well, my dear reader, be assured that the former comes to the same thing as the latter in the end. "How shall we escape if we *neglect* so great salvation?" Escape from eternal woe is utterly impossible if we persist in neglecting Christ, in whom alone salvation is to be found. "How shall we escape?" is the deeply solemn and unchangeable word of God.

May you, my dear reader, be led to realize its full weight on your heart and conscience *now*. May you be kept from trifling with a matter of immediate, unspeakable, and eternal importance to your own soul. Can anything compensate for the loss of your precious soul? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the

whole world, and lose his own soul?" No amount of pleasure, gain, or gratification, in this world, can ever make up for eternal misery in the world to come. Why, then, oh! *why* should you be so thoughtless, careless, and negligent about salvation, "which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"? Oh! receive Him by faith as your Saviour, and then you receive salvation "with eternal glory." Then you possess, as your present and everlasting portion, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." All is open and free to faith. "Only believe." Salvation is by faith alone, faith in Jesus. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) But oh! believe on Him now. His word can never be truer, His salvation can never be freer, and you can never be more welcome. Why not come now? He is waiting for you. It will be joy to His loving heart to embrace you. It will be joy to all heaven to receive you. Can you delay? Surely not. Flee to the arms of His mercy, flee at once. To-morrow may be too late. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

A.M.

He is a path, if any be misled;
 He is a robe, if any naked be;
 If any chance to hunger, He is bread;
 If any be a bondman, He is free;
 If any be but weak, how strong is He!
 To dead men life is He; to sick men health;
 To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth;
 A pleasure without loss;
 A treasure without stealth.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—Is it proper, in preaching the gospel, to press upon people responsibility to believe? S.

ANSWER.—Our blessed Master called upon men to “repent, and believe the gospel.” (Mark i. 15.) And when asked by the men of His time, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” His reply was, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.” (John vi. 28, 29.) Again, He challenges the Jews with this pungent question, “If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (John viii. 46.) Then, when we turn to the Acts of the Apostles, we find Peter calling upon the Jews to repent, and be converted. We find Paul also telling the Philippian jailor to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts xvi. 31.) He tells the Athenians that “God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts xvii. 30.) We read in 2 Thessalonians that our Lord Jesus Christ will take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel, and further that “God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth.” (2 Thess. i. 8; ii. 11, 12.)

It is when we turn to the sacred page of God’s word that we find *the truth*, not one side of truth, but the whole truth in all its bearings. We find, lying side by side, the truth of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Are we called to reconcile them? Nay, they are reconciled already, because they are both set forth in the inspired Word. We are to believe, and obey.

Vol. X. No. 110. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

**"Not by Might, nor by Power but by
My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."**

ZECHARIAH IV. 6.

IT is related that a celebrated minister in America once prepared and preached a course of sermons against infidelity, especially for the purpose of convincing and bringing over to Christianity an intelligent infidel neighbour who was a regular attendant on his ministry.

Just after the close of the said series of sermons, the infidel professed to be awakened, and the preacher was anxious to know which of his sermons did the execution.

Soon after, the new convert, in relating his experience, said, "The instrument God was pleased to use for my awakening and conversion

was not the preaching of those sermons against infidelity, but the simple remark of a poor old coloured woman. In going down the steps of the church one night, seeing that the poor old woman was lame, I gave her my hand, and assisted her. She looked up at me with a peculiar expression of grateful pleasure, saying, 'Thank you, sir. Do you love Jesus, my blessed Saviour?'

"I was dumb. I could not answer that question.

"She said, 'Jesus, my blessed Saviour,' with so much earnest confidence, that I could not deny that she had a blessed Saviour, and felt ashamed to confess that I did not love Him. I could not dismiss this subject from my mind, and the more I thought of it the clearer my convictions became that the old coloured sister had a Jesus, a blessed Saviour; and I thought of how kind a Saviour He must be to impart such joy and comfort to such poor, neglected creatures as she was; and I soon began to weep over my base ingratitude in denying and rejecting such a Saviour. I earnestly sought that Saviour, and found Him; and now I can say, 'I do love Jesus, my blessed Saviour.'"

In the simple remark of the old coloured woman there was clearness of faith, a joyous confidence that shook the foundation of the infidel's refuge of lies. It had earnestness in it. The old sister was very grateful for a small favour, and very solicitous about the soul of the kind stranger. The Holy Spirit gave the whole an appropriateness of application which knocked the underpinning out of his infidel fort, and the walls that withstood the "great guns" of the preacher, tumbled down as suddenly as the walls of Jericho at the blast of the rams' horns.

THE ONLY WAY INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

JOHN III.

NICODEMUS, the Pharisee, had heard of Jesus, and desired to have some intercourse with Him. How could it be accomplished? How could this honoured "master of Israel," this "ruler of the Jews," have an interview with the despised Nazarene? What would the people say?

Nicodemus, however, was not at rest, for he believed that Jesus was "a teacher come from God," and see Him he felt he must. He therefore came to Jesus by night; for in this way he could satisfy his conscience without displeasing men, or exposing himself to their scorn and persecution.

Such is man. Such was the spirit in which this "man of the Pharisees" approached "the Lord of glory." His thought was about Jesus being "a teacher." He might have imagined it would be beneficial to him professionally to listen to His instruction. Though he was constantly occupied with the letter of Scripture, and the religious duties of the synagogue, it does not appear to have once entered his mind that he was a sinner, and needed a Saviour.

Now mark the way of Christ with this man.

Did He say, You come to Me in such an unworthy way, I cannot grant you an audience?

Did He say, Cast away this and that first, and then I'll speak to you?

Did He say, Get better first, and then I'll receive you?

Oh, no. The loving Saviour in this, as in every other instance, fulfilled His own blessed word, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37.) How full of encouragement this is, and how blessedly it unfolds to us the graciousness of the Lord Jesus! Nicodemus did not see that he was "condemned already," and exposed to the wrath of God. (John iii.) Alas! alas! a "master of Israel," a teacher of others, and not concerned about his own salvation. A religion not true, a religion of dead works, the religion of the fathers, the religion of the people, the rites and customs of synagogue duties, with their attendant honours and official trappings, was the powerful current which was hurling this "ruler of the Jews," and others, downward at a fearfully rapid course, and that, too, without any idea of God's way of salvation. How very solemn!

But is it not the same now? What is the real condition of thousands around us? Is it that they deny the existence of Almighty God? Do they contend that He should not be worshipped? Do they set aside ecclesiastical office? Do they dispute the veracity of the Holy Scriptures?

Certainly not. But if you ask them if they have experienced the new birth, you will find that some will hang down their heads in confusion; others will judge you a ranter, or a wild fanatic; while others will try to shelter themselves behind some delusive sacramental form, and deny altogether the truth of the new birth by the word of truth, and the sovereign power of the Holy Ghost.

But some, perhaps, may say, Is it not very uncharitable to conclude that all who have not experienced the new birth are hastening on the broad road to eternal destruction? May there not be

something good and hopeful in them without this?

We unhesitatingly reply, No; because the Lord Jesus said, "Except a man be BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE the Kingdom of God."

Oh! that the Holy Spirit might so work in the hearts of thousands of professors around us, that they might know the folly and unprofitableness of that religion which does not begin with being "born again"!

The words of our text show us how pointed and personal our Lord was in His ministry: "YE must be born again." This tells out His faithful love. He did not propound attractive doctrines, or get up eloquent addresses, to please the itching ears of His audience. No. He was the Faithful Witness, and He came not to destroy, but to save. He knew the worth of the soul, and salvation had its paramount claim in His mind. His loving heart would bear with the unworthy manner in which He was approached, and set salvation before His hearers in the plainest and most pointed way.

To the cavilling Jews in the synagogue His word was, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." On another occasion He said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins." Again we see Him standing in the midst of a crowd, and saying, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." To the careless Samaritan He said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give Me to drink,

thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." He said to the seeking blind man, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" And when he replied, "Lord, that I may receive my sight," Jesus said unto him, "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee."

And so in the chapter before us, our Lord did not set before Nicodemus some profound points of theology for his consideration, as the ruler perhaps expected; neither was it a display of eloquence, such as a learned man might have appreciated; neither did He set truth in a general way before him. No; He came at once to the point, and said, "YE must be born again"! Oh! that searching word, "YE"! This is divine ministry; this is the way of the perfect preacher; and this is the style that should be imitated in the present day. It is when the Holy Ghost powerfully and personally applies the truth, so as to say to the conscience, "Thou art the man," that decided good may be expected. Persons may read the Bible, and think it is all about others; they may hear the gospel, and say that the preacher was very faithful to some present; but it is when a person feels that the truth read or heard affects himself, that we may expect blessed results.

"Oh, yes," said a learned gentleman, after reading in the Epistle to the Romans about the universal depravity of mankind, "I see this doctrine in the Bible."

"But do you feel it in your heart?" replied his friend.

That question led him to consider, and make the truth of such personal application as to be the means of his conversion.

Fellow-Christians! we should be pointed and personal, as well as deeply affectionate, in putting the gospel before persons, both publicly and privately. Clear doctrines are not enough. We should remember our Master's oft-repeated word, YE! People do not think we are in earnest and sincere, if we only make general statements.

I was much struck the other day in reading an account of a young man to whom a faithful servant of Christ said, "Do you know that you are going on to perdition?"

"No!" said he, "neither do I think your people believe it either. My mother is one of your congregation, and I am sure she loves me dearly; and if she believed it, I am persuaded she would have told me of it. My sister also goes there; she loves me very much; and I am sure, if she believed it, she would throw her arms round my neck, and say, Don't, oh! don't go to perdition!"

We may next notice how decidedly the Lord insisted on the necessity of the new birth: "Ye *MUST* be born again." Not you may, but you *must*; not, you should desire it merely, but you *must*. Yes, without the new birth, you *must* be for ever in darkness, "you cannot see the kingdom of God." Without the new birth, you *must* be shut out for ever from the presence of God, "you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." How plain! how decisive! How essential to be "born of the Spirit"! This secret of the new birth the learned Pharisee was entirely ignorant of, and vainly tried to argue the impossibility of a second birth; but it only drew from the loving, faithful heart of Jesus a thrice-repeated testimony to the absolute necessity thereof, and the explana-

tion that the new birth was from above and spiritual.

This positive declaration at once cut at the root of the Pharisee's religion, and razed to the ground all his cherished confidence and expectation; for it pronounced a verdict on the best man in the flesh, as being so fallen and corrupt as to be unfit for the presence of God. But while it exposed man's total inability to fit himself for the kingdom of God, it referred to the power and goodness of God in quickening those who were dead in trespasses and sins.

The doctrine which our Lord here propounds is of the highest importance; for men may be moral, amiable, benevolent, outwardly religious, and the like, yet they "must be born again." They may even be high in ecclesiastical office, far advanced in theological education, yet they "must be born again."

Man's thought of religion is that he must gradually improve, and perhaps be ultimately good enough to be saved. God's religion is, first to have life, and then rejoice in an assured hope of glory. Man's thought is to work for life; God's way is to work from life. Man proposes to himself eternal life at the *end*; God presents it to the true believer at the very *beginning*. Man's wisdom consists in the reformation and improvement of the flesh, with persevering efforts to pile up a quantity of supposed creature-merit and self-righteousness; the Lord Jesus knocks it all down with that uncompromising sentence, "Ye must be born again."

But what are we to understand by the new birth? "Ye must be BORN AGAIN." Certainly it is not an alteration of the old fleshly nature into

that which is spiritual; for our Lord in the previous verse clearly shows the distinction between the two natures and the two births: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

The apostles, too, in their writings, continually keep up this distinction of the two natures, not only as a matter of doctrine, but also of experience and practice. They speak of the believer as made a partaker of the divine nature, and as having the Spirit of Christ in him; his experience is referred to as necessarily one of conflict, because of the opposite workings of the two natures, flesh and Spirit: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." In reference to practice, he is exhorted to "walk in the Spirit," and "not fulfil the lusts of the flesh"; to "put off the old man which is corrupt, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

This is a subject of immense importance; for if a really exercised soul imagines that being born again is a conversion of the old Adam, sinful nature into that which is holy, he cannot have perfect peace; for he must find that his experience does not correspond with the idea. So many a quickened soul thinks he cannot be a Christian, because he finds, with a principle of delight in the law of God, that there is another principle working in him which is contrary to holiness; while the truth is, he would not be "born again," if he had no experience of this inward conflict. His conscience must find peace alone through the blood of the cross. Instead of Paul's

saying that he felt sin was rooted out of him, he says, "Sin dwelleth in me"; though instead of obeying it, he by the Spirit mortified the deeds of the body; he kept his body under, and brought it into subjection. He regarded his "old man" as an enemy, and kept it under; and exhorted saints not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Clearly, then, being born again is not a conversion of "the flesh" into "the Spirit."

Neither does the new birth consist in mere outward reformations and moral amendments; for "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Let the immoral become moral, the licentious chaste, or the drunkard sober, still, before God, he is only "born of the flesh." You may trim neatly, or cut off the branches of a thorn-tree, and make its appearance more agreeable to the eye; still it is a thorn, and cannot bear grapes. The new birth, then, is something very different from outward reformation.

Neither are persons born again by sacramental rites. It is easy to say it is so, but it is a fearful delusion. It is true that our Lord spoke of being born of water, but it was of water *and of the Spirit*: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By "water," our Lord doubtless referred to the word of grace, that "living water" which God dispenses to thirsty souls, as presented in the story of the woman of Samaria. (John iv. 10-14.) We read also in the First Epistle of Peter of being "born again" by the word.

The new birth is a spiritual work: "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." We feel His

operations in our hearts, but we can tell nothing of His coming or going. It is a heavenly work; we are born from above [margin]. It is not man's work, but the work of God; we are "born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of men, but of God." It is a new life, so that those who are partakers of it are new creatures: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." It is done once and for ever; we are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." This new creation, then, is clearly the work of God the Holy Ghost by the word: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Nicodemus might well be astounded at our Lord's decisive preaching, and exclaim, "How can these things be?" This at once opened the door for Jesus to present to him the wondrous story of the cross. Having broken down the ruler's religion by the doctrine of the new birth, Jesus now presents to him the glorious salvation of the God of all grace, and shows him that the only place a man can truthfully take is that of a perishing sinner, and a receiver of life from Him. This is the way in which sinners are born again. Man is a fallen creature; he has been driven out from the presence of God, and is "dead in sins." Jesus is the fountain of life, and the cross is the fountain opened; there the water of life flows freely. Christ crucified is the smitten Rock, whence streams of living water flow abundantly to the needy and undone; and there the Spirit brings perishing, thirsty souls to look and live; to drink, and live for ever. Wherever else they drink they thirst again, but whoso drinketh of the

water that Jesus gives shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Yes, Jesus crucified, risen and glorified, is everlasting consolation, a never-failing, soul-satisfying portion. There is no possibility of being born again apart from Christ crucified and risen. There the river of life flows. There it is written, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." All who believe on the Lord Jesus for salvation, have received Him whom God hath sent, and have passed from death unto life.

An intelligent Israelite ought to have known something about the new birth. The plain statement of Ezekiel, "I will give them a new heart," should have been enough to have taught the ruler this, while the prophet's vision of the resurrection of the dry bones should have shown him that God is the Quickener of the dead. Jesus, therefore, exposes still further the ignorance of this "man of the Pharisees" by the question, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

The ruler's question, however, "How can these things be?" was speedily responded to; and the difficulty of how a man is born again was very simply and beautifully told out by the Lord. He refers the inquirer to His own Scriptures; the Book of Numbers is selected, and the well-known tale of the serpent of brass is brought forth as the key to unlock the mystery of the new birth. The Pharisee's conscience is brought at once to the fountain of living water; the bitten, dying Israelites are depicted as receiving life through looking at the serpent of brass lifted up; and there Nicodemus might learn that, with all his Phari-

saic religion and theological science, he is still dead in sins, and, like the bitten Israelite, must perish, unless he look simply to the Son of man lifted up on Calvary's cross. By looking only to the brazen serpent, the dying Israelite lived; and so now, dead and ruined sinners receive life eternal only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was life, eternal life, that Christ presented to the sinful Pharisee, as the free gift of God to "every one," "any one," "whosoever" that believeth on the Son of God.

In this beautiful discourse with Nicodemus, Jesus showed how competent He was for this great work of giving new life to the dead in sins, and the amazing power and virtue of the work of the cross, by telling him that He was Son of God as well as Son of man, God and man in one Person, in heaven and yet on earth. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Lord also most plainly showed the freeness of the grace of God, that is, the willingness of His heart to receive all, and cast out none that come to Him, by twice saying, "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The doctrine of the new birth is therefore taught by our Lord in connection with the cross. A new birth is inseparable from new life; that new life is here defined to be not temporal, but eternal,

and as flowing only to us from God, through the death of Christ, and that to every one that believeth. Therefore our Lord told Nicodemus, that to be born again of water and of the Spirit, he must take the place of a ruined, perishing sinner before the Son of God, who was crucified, and thus he would receive eternal life, and stand no longer as one condemned, but as having pardon and acceptance with God. This, indeed, is being born of God. The Holy Spirit always directs the soul to the person and work of Christ. The Holy Ghost does not say, Look at me for salvation, look to my operations for peace, look to my gifts for assurance. Oh, no! He is the Glorifier of Christ, therefore He saith, Look to Jesus lifted up, look to the Lamb slain, the Saviour of sinners; "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"; and if we be led of the Spirit, we shall surely testify of Christ.

Were I merely to preach, Ye must be born again, it would be no message of glad tidings, no balm for the weary and heavy laden, no comfort for the anxious inquirer; but when, with the doctrine of the new birth, we connect the blessed truth that Christ crucified is an ocean of boundless love, an overflowing fountain of living water, a well of everlasting life to every sinner that believes, we announce good tidings of great joy.

My reader, what think you of Christ? Has your thirsty soul drank the living water of His salvation? or are you perishing with hunger while there is bread enough and to spare in the Father's house? The fashion, pleasure, and honour of this present evil world are rapidly passing away. The summons of the God of the spirits of all flesh may soon call you into His presence. Your own

conscience admonishes you that you are a sinner. Experience has long ago convinced you that you are hastening to the chamber of death. You have often tried earth's best refreshments, and as often proved that he that drinketh of this water shall thirst again. You have avoided the foul habits of the licentious; you have shunned the companionship of the riotous; you have declined to walk with scoffers; you refuse the assumptive vanity of rationalists; you have withdrawn from Socinian blasphemy, and the infidelity of popery: but have you been born again? In other words, have you, as a guilty, undone sinner, been brought consciously into God's presence, and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation? If you have not, let me, dear reader, affectionately say to you that you are dead in sins, and that what you want is life, eternal life! Sacraments and ordinances of any kind cannot give you eternal life. Separation from immoralities cannot give it you. Withdrawing from the foulest forms of blasphemy and delusion still leaves you without this life. Enlisting yourself among the ranks of your most religious neighbours cannot give it you. The strictest outward propriety cannot give you eternal life. Neither can church office, ecclesiastical honours, nor theological knowledge, as we have seen in Nicodemus, give it you. God only can give you eternal life, and this life is in His Son, Jesus Christ. Beware, then, lest you die without Christ; for "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. H. S.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—How can a person obtain “the gift of God,” which “is eternal life”? A.

ANSWER.—The testimony of God is the divine means of communicating life to the soul when applied by the Holy Ghost; that is, by faith. And if we want still further to know what specially in the truth of God is used to quicken those who are dead in sins, it is always more or less the revelation of Christ. My believing that the creature was made by God will not quicken my soul. I might believe any facts in the Old Testament, and be assured of all the miracles, discourses, and ways of Jesus in the New, and yet my soul might still be unquicken. But believing in Christ Himself is a very different thing from not doubting things about Him. It supposes that I have, more or less, come to an end of myself; that I have bowed to the humiliating sentence of Scripture upon my nature, and that I own myself to be lost in the sight of God. . . . We must take care that we put things in their proper places. It is the word brought home by the Holy Ghost that produces faith, and this not by mending the first Adam, but by revealing the last, Christ. God has come down from heaven to accomplish this great purpose, to give me this new life, to deliver me from sin and self: and how is it done? It is the Holy Ghost who effects it by the word of God, which makes Christ known to the soul.

MARCH, 1920.

GOSPEL LIGHT.

GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

A VOLUME IN A VERSE.

I.

THERE are some passages of Holy Scripture which seem to contain in a line or two an entire volume of most precious truth. Such a verse is John iii. 16. It is part of our Lord's memorable discourse with Nicodemus, and it embodies, in a condensed form, a very full statement of gospel truth. Let us quote it here: "For 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.)

It should ever be borne in mind that one grand object of the gospel is to bring God and the sinner together in such a way as to secure the sinner's eternal salvation. The gospel reveals a *Saviour-God* to a *lost man*. In other words, it presents

Vol. X. No. 111. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo. Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post. JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

God to the sinner in the very character that meets the sinner's need.

A Saviour is precisely what suits the lost; just as a life-boat suits a drowning man, or a physician a sick man, or bread a hungry man. They are fitted the one for the other; and when God as a Saviour and man as a lost sinner, meet together, the whole question of salvation is settled for ever. The sinner is saved, because God is a Saviour. He is saved according to the perfection which belongs to God, in every character He wears, in every office He fills, in every relationship He sustains.

To raise a question as to the full and everlasting salvation of a believing soul is to deny that God is a Saviour.

So is it in reference to justification. God has revealed Himself as a Justifier; and hence the believer is justified according to the perfection which attaches to God in that character. If a single flaw could be detected in the title of the very weakest believer, it would be a dishonour to God as a Justifier. Grant me but this, that God is my Justifier, and I argue, in the face of every opposer and every accuser, that I am and must be perfectly justified.

And on the same principle grant me but this, that God has revealed Himself as a Saviour, and I argue, with unclouded confidence and holy boldness, that I am, and must be, perfectly saved. It does not rest upon aught in me, but simply and entirely upon God's revelation of Himself. I know He is perfect in everything; and therefore perfect as my Saviour. Hence, I am perfectly saved, inasmuch as the glory of God is involved in my salvation, according to His own sovereign pro-

clamation: "There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me." What then? "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." (Is. xlv. 21, 22.)

One believing look from a lost sinner to a just God and a Saviour, secures eternal salvation.

"Look"! How simple! It is not "Work," "Do," "Pray," "Feel." No; it is simply "Look." And what then? Salvation; everlasting life. It must be, because God is a Saviour; and the precious little monosyllable "Look" fully implies all this, inasmuch as it expresses the fact that the salvation which I want is found in the One to whom I look. It is all there, ready for me, and one "look" secures it, secures it for ever, secures it *for me*.

It is not a thing of to-day or to-morrow; it is an eternal reality. The bulwarks of salvation behind which the believer retreats have been erected by God Himself, the Saviour-God, on the sure foundation of Christ's atoning work; and no power of earth or hell can ever shake them. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him, shall not be confounded." (Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Peter ii. 6.)

But let us now turn directly to the profound and comprehensive passage which forms the special subject of this paper. In it most assuredly we listen to the voice of a Saviour-God, the voice of Him who came down from heaven to reveal God in such a way as He had never been revealed before. It is a marvellously blessed fact that God has been fully revealed in this world, revealed so that we, the writer and the reader of these lines,

may know Him in all the reality of what He is; know Him, each for himself, with the utmost possible certainty; and have to do with Him in all the blessed intimacy of personal communion.

Reader, think of this! Think, we beseech you, of this amazing privilege. You may know God for yourself, as *your* Saviour, *your* Father, *your* own very God. You may have to do with Him; you may lean upon Him, cling to Him, walk with Him; live, and move, and have your being in His own most blessed presence, in the bright sunshine of His loving countenance, under His own immediate eye.

This is life and peace. It is far more than theology or systematic divinity. These things have their value; but, be it remembered, a man may be a profound theologian, an able divine, and yet live and die without God, and "perish" eternally. Solemn, awful, overwhelming thought! A man may go down to hell, into the blackness and darkness of an eternal night, with all the dogmas of theology at his fingers' ends. A man may sit in the professor's chair, stand in the pulpit, and at the desk; he may be looked up to as a great teacher and an eloquent preacher; hundreds may sit at his feet and learn, thousands may hang on his lips, and be enraptured; yet, after all, he himself may descend into the pit, and spend a dismal, miserable eternity in company with those who have been the most profane and immoral among men.

Not so, however, with the one who knows God as He is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. Such a one has eternal life. "This," says Christ, "is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast

sent.” (John xvii. 3.) It is not life eternal to know theology or divinity. A man may sit down to the study of these, as he would to the study of law or medicine, astronomy or geology, and all the while know nothing of God, and therefore be without divine life, and “perish” in the end.

So also as to mere religiousness. A man may be the greatest devotee in the world. He may most diligently discharge all the offices, and sedulously attend upon all the ordinances, of systematic religion; he may fast and pray; hear sermons and say creeds; be most devout and exemplary; and all the while know nothing of God in Christ; yea, he may live and die without God, and sink into hell for ever.

Look at Nicodemus. Where could you find a better sample of religious human nature than in him? A man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a master in Israel; one, moreover, who seemed to discern in the miracles of our Lord the clear proofs of His divine mission; and yet the word to him was, “Ye must be born again.” (John iii. 7.) We surely have no need to go farther than this to prove that a man may be, not only religious, but actually a guide and a teacher of others, and yet not have a single spark of divine life in his soul.

But it is not so with one who knows God in Christ. Such a one has divine life and a divine object. He has God Himself for his priceless portion. This is divine. It lies at the very foundation of personal Christianity and true religion. It is above and beyond everything else. It is not, we repeat, mere theology, divinity, or religiousness; it is God Himself, known, trusted,

and enjoyed. It is a grand, unmistakable reality. It is the soul of theology, the groundwork of divinity, the life of true religion. There is nothing in all this world like it. It is something which must be experienced in order to be known. It is acquaintance with God, confidence in Him, and enjoyment of Him.

Now, it may be that the reader is disposed to ask, "How can I possess this priceless treasure? How can I know God for myself, in this living, saving, powerful manner? If it be true that without this personal knowledge of God, I *must* perish eternally, then how am I to obtain it? What am I to do, what am I to be, in order to know God?"

The answer is, God has revealed Himself. If He had not, we may with decision say that nothing that we could do, nothing that we could be, nothing in us or of us could possibly make us acquainted with God. If God had not manifested Himself, we should have remained for ever in ignorance of Him, and have perished in our ignorance. But seeing that He has come forth from the thick darkness, and showed Himself, we may know Him according to the truth of His own revelation, and in that knowledge find everlasting life, and a spring of blessedness at which our ransomed souls shall drink throughout the glorious ages of eternity.

We know of nothing which so clearly and forcibly proves man's utter incompetency to do aught towards procuring life as the fact that the possession of this life is based upon the knowledge of God; and that this knowledge of God must rest upon the revelation of God. In a word, to know God is *life*; to be ignorant of Him is *death*.

But where is He to be known? This is, truly, a grave question. Many a one has had to cry out, with Job, "Oh! that I knew where I might find Him." (Job xxiii. 3.) Where is God to be found? Am I to look for Him in creation? Doubtless, His *hand* is visible there; but ah! that will not do for me. Merely a Creator-God will not suit a lost sinner. *The hand of power* will not avail for a poor guilty wretch like me. I want *a heart of love*. Yes, I want a heart that can love me in all my guilt and misery.

Where can I find this? Shall I look into the wide domain of Providence, the widely extended sphere of God's government? Has God revealed Himself there in such a way as to meet me a poor lost one? Will Providence and government avail for one who knows himself to be a hell-deserving sinner?

Clearly not. If I look at these things, I may see what will perplex and confound me. I am short-sighted and ignorant, and wholly unable to explain the ins and outs, the bearings and issues, the why and the wherefore of a single event in my own life, or in the history of this world.

Can I account for the fact that a most valuable life is suddenly cut short, and an apparently useless one prolonged? There is a husband and the father of a large family: he seems wholly indispensable to his domestic circle; and yet all in a moment he is cut down, and they are left in sorrow and destitution. On the other hand, yonder lies a poor bed-ridden creature, who has out-lived her relations, and is dependent on the parish, or on individual benevolence. She has lain there for years, a burden to some, no use to any.

Can I account for this? Am I competent to

interpret the voice of Providence in this deeply mysterious dispensation? Certainly not. I have nothing in or of myself wherewith to thread my way through the mazes of the labyrinth of what is called Providence. I cannot find a Saviour-God there.

Well, then, shall I turn to the law, to the Mosaic economy, the Levitical ceremonial? Shall I find what I want there? Will a Lawgiver, on the top of a fiery mount, wrapped in clouds and thick darkness, sending forth thunders and lightnings, or hidden behind a veil, will such a One avail for me?

Alas! alas! I cannot meet Him; I cannot answer His demands, nor fulfil the conditions. I am told to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my strength; but I do not know Him. I am blind, and cannot see. I am alienated from the life of God, an enemy by wicked works. (Col. i. 21.) Sin has blinded my mind, blunted my conscience, and hardened my heart. The devil has completely perverted my moral being, and led me into a state of positive rebellion against God. I want to be renewed in the very source of my being, before I can do what the law demands.

How can I be thus renewed? Only by the knowledge of God. But God is not revealed in the law. Nay, He is hidden, hidden behind an impenetrable cloud, an unrent veil. Hence I cannot know Him there. I am compelled to retire from that fiery mount, and from that unrent veil, and from the whole economy of which these were the characteristic features, the prominent objects, still crying out, "Oh! that I knew where I might find Him." (Job. xxiii. 3.)

In a word, then, neither in creation, nor in providence, nor in the law, is God revealed as "a just God, and a Saviour." In creation I see a God of power; a God of wisdom in providence; a God of justice in the law; but I see a God of love *only* in the face of Jesus Christ. "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*" (2 Cor. v. 19).

To this stupendous fact we call the reader's earnest attention; that is, if he is one who does not yet know the Lord. It is of the very last possible importance that he be clear as to this. Without it there can be nothing right. To know God is the first step. It is not unrenewed nature turning religious, trying to do better, endeavouring to keep the law. No, reader; it is none of these things. It is God known in the face of Jesus Christ. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) This is the deep and blessed secret of the whole matter.

The reader, so far as his natural condition is concerned, is in a state of darkness. There is not so much as a single ray of spiritual light. He is, spiritually and morally, just what creation was physically before that sublime and commanding utterance fell from the lips of the Almighty Creator, "Let there be light." All is dark and chaotic, for "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.)

Here are the two things, namely, the god of

this world blinding the mind, and seeking to hinder the inshining of the precious illuminating beams of the light of God's glory; and, on the other hand, God, in His marvellous grace, shining in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Thus all hinges upon the grand reality of the knowledge of God. Is there light? Is it because God is known. Is there darkness? It is because God is not known.

No doubt there are various measures in the experience and exhibition of this light; but there is light, because there is the knowledge of God. So also there may be various forms of darkness; some more hideous than others; but there is darkness, because God is not known. The knowledge of God is life and light. Ignorance of God is death and darkness. A man may enrich himself with all the treasures of science and literature; but if he does not know God, he is in a dark, a primeval night. But, on the other hand, a man may be profoundly ignorant of all human learning; but if he knows God, he can walk in the broad daylight of divine revelation in the Scriptures of Truth.

In the passage of Scripture which is engaging our attention, namely, John iii. 16, we have a very remarkable illustration of the character of the entire Gospel of John, and especially the opening chapters. It is impossible to meditate upon it without seizing this interesting fact. In it, we are introduced to God Himself, in that wondrous aspect of His character and nature, as loving *the world*, and giving His Son. In it, too, we find, not only the "world" as a whole, but the individual sinner, under that most satisfactory title of "whosoever." Thus God and the sinner

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are together : God, *loving* and *giving*; and the sinner *believing* and *having*.

It is not God judging and exacting; but God loving and giving. The former was law; the latter, grace : that was Judaism; this, Christianity.

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

LEVITICUS XIV.

THE ordinance in Israel of the cleansing of the leper gives us a touching picture of God's way of cleansing a sinner, and bringing him back into His own blessed presence to worship and serve before Him.

Leprosy was a remarkable type of sin. It entirely unfitted a man for the presence of God. His place was "outside the camp." Whether he had few spots or many, he was pronounced "utterly unclean." All that he could therefore truly say of himself was, "Unclean, unclean." The disease was most defiling. God alone could make a leper clean, and fit to come into the camp.

The true place of a leper, therefore, was outside the camp of Israel, outside everything of God, His presence, His service, His worship; with rent garments, head uncovered, and upper lip tied up, calling out "Unclean!" lest any coming near should contract defilement.

It is well for any now who take this self-loathing place, as without God, unclean, and undone before Him, unfit for His presence. Surely it is the only true place; for we are told, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," that all are "guilty" before Him. (Rom. iii. 19; viii. 8.)

God, however, could meet the leper in this foul and hopeless condition, and bring him back into the camp, cleansed, and fit for His presence. And in this ordinance we see GREAT PRINCIPLES shadowed forth, as to the way in which God has met sinners in their sin and guilt, fitted those who believe for His own blessed presence, and made them to find rest and peace before Him in love.

1. THE LEPER WAS BROUGHT TO THE PRIEST. (v. 2.) Wherever else he went, or to whatever person, it would have been wholly unavailing. Out of all the people in the world, this one, and he only, had power from God to deal with the leprosy, and pronounce the leper clean. So we know that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts iv. 12.) Jesus only is "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life": no man comes to the Father but by Him. (John xiv. 6.) The sinner must have to do with the Lord Jesus about his sins, or be kept outside God's presence for ever. There is salvation in no other. Jesus says, "Come!" "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) How clear and encouraging this is!

2. HE WAS EXAMINED BY THE PRIEST. "The priest shall look and behold if the plague of leprosy be healed." The leper stood with his leprous spots exposed to the scrutinizing eye of God's priest. Dealing with God, through Christ, about our sin is no light matter. It is a deeply solemn experience, to fall under the searching eye of God in His infinitely holy presence. To feel one's self a sinner *before a sin-hating God*, can only be endured by the knowledge of the fact that He is a sinner-loving God; for all things are naked and

open before Him. There is not a secret thing which is not wholly uncovered before His eye. (Heb. iv. 13.)

3. CLEANSING ONLY BY THE DEATH OF ANOTHER.

The leper had to learn at this solemn moment, that he could be cleansed only by a sacrifice being offered. A live bird was therefore taken, and *killed* over running (or living) water; for the death of Christ is connected with the outflowing of eternal life. (John iii. 14.) And surely God teaches the soul that is exercised about his sins before Him, that it is only by the death of Christ that he can be brought to stand in acceptance with Him; for "without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) The leper saw, in the suffering and death of the bird, God's way of meeting him in order to cleanse him from his uncleanness. So it is only by the death of Jesus, the Son of God, that the sinner finds peace with God, and cleansing of sins; "for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) Then he saw the living bird, with cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, dipped into the blood of the dead bird. Thus in a figure the dead bird is identified with the living bird, in order to be a type of Him who was dead and is alive again, and that for evermore. The dignity or majesty, incorruptibility, perfect humility, and other characteristics of Christ, may be typified by the scarlet, and cedar wood, and hyssop, to show us the infinite power and efficacy of His precious blood. (1 John i. 7.)

4. THE SPRINKLING OF BLOOD.

There the leper stood looking at God's work for him, and then receiving God's remedy, and hearing God's sentence. He did nothing to merit any good, but

received all from the God of Israel. Feeling his utter uncleanness and unfitness for God's presence, his mouth was stopped, while the priest sprinkled the blood upon him seven times, and pronounced him "clean."

This is most blessed. It touchingly shows us that "salvation is of the Lord." It gave perfect assurance to the leper, and left no room for a question. Whatever he felt, or others suggested, he had the consciousness that he was under the virtue of the blood; and, through that alone, God's priest had pronounced him "clean." And so the believer now, who simply has to do with Christ about his sins, is entitled to perfect peace, entirely on the ground that Christ died for our sins, died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; for *God's word* declares we are *now* justified by His blood. (Rom. v. 9.) We are thus *pronounced clean*.

5. THE LIVING BIRD IS THEN LET LOOSE, to prefigure a risen Saviour. After He had purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb. i. 3.) So that the resurrection and ascension of Christ give perfect assurance that God was fully satisfied with Christ's atoning work, and that He saw in His death upon the cross an answer to every claim of divine holiness and justice, and the complete blotting out of the sins of His people.

It was not possible that He should be holden of death; His flesh saw no corruption; but He was counted worthy of all glory, because He had so fully glorified the Father on the earth, and finished the work that He gave Him to do.

Until the leper was cleansed, the living bird was detained; but the efficacy of the dead one

being fully attested by the leper being pronounced clean, it was "let loose into the open field." What peace and comfort this must have ministered to the poor leper! And what perfect rest of soul the knowledge of Christ risen from the dead and gone into heaven gives us! Surely we can confidently sing:

"Clean every whit," Thou saidst it, Lord;
 Shall one suspicion lurk?
 Thine surely is a faithful word,
 And Thine a finished work."

6. THE LEPER CLEANSED HIMSELF. After he was pronounced clean, he cleansed himself, and came into the camp. He washed his clothes, shaved off all his hair, and washed himself, and in this way came into the camp.

So the believer that has had to do with God about his sins, and has the enjoyment of present forgiveness and cleansing by the blood of Jesus, has no confidence in the flesh; he sees that he himself in the flesh is thoroughly unclean, that everything connected with him naturally is unclean also, and that all his natural comeliness, all that he formerly gloried in, cannot bear the light of God's presence. But he acknowledges it unclean and unfit for God's eye, and sees it all cleansed by the word of God, which testifies to the everlasting efficacy of the blood of Jesus. "Now," said Jesus, "*ye are clean*, through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.)

Made nigh in Christ Jesus, and through His blood, we can, by the Spirit, enjoy God's presence, worship the Father, and serve Him acceptably.

H.H.S.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—What should be the Christian's attitude towards the periodical records of the world's sayings and doings? W. F.

ANSWER.—We know, by the teaching of God's word, that he carries about with him two natures (see Gal. v. 17); and, it may be asked, Which of the two is it that feeds upon the world's news and the world's unhallowed literature? Is it the old or the new? "the flesh" or "the spirit"? There can be but the one reply. Well, then, which of the two am I desirous of cherishing? Assuredly, my conduct will afford the truest answer to this inquiry. If I really desire to grow in the divine life, I shall seek, with my whole heart, that character of nourishment which is designed of God to promote that growth. This is clear. A man's actions are always the truest index of his desires and purposes. Hence, if I find a professing Christian neglecting his Bible, yet finding ample time, yea, some of his choicest hours, for the newspaper, I can be at no loss to decide as to the true condition of his soul. I am sure he cannot be spiritual, cannot thrive, cannot be feeding upon, living for, or witnessing to, Christ.

If an Israelite did not, in the freshness of the morning hour, gather his daily portion of the divinely appointed food, the manna, he would speedily have become lacking in strength for his journey. Thus it is with the Christian. He must make Christ the paramount object of his pursuit, else his spiritual strength will inevitably decline. He cannot even feed upon feelings and experiences connected with Christ; for inasmuch as they are fluctuating, they cannot form the soul's spiritual nourishment. It was Christ yesterday, and it must be Christ to-day, and Christ for ever.

C. H. M.

Vol. X. No. 112. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 11/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN?

BEFORE proceeding to treat of the subject of forgiveness of sins, I should like to ask my reader a very plain, pointed, personal question, namely, Dost thou believe that thou canst have the clear and settled assurance that thy sins are forgiven?

I ask this question at the outset because there are many now-a-days who profess to preach the gospel of Christ, and yet deny that any one can be sure that his sins are forgiven. They maintain that it is presumption for any one to believe in the forgiveness of his sins; and, on the other hand, they look upon it as a proof of humility to be always in doubt as to this most momentous point. In other words, it is presumption to believe what God says, and humility to doubt it.

This seems strange in the face of such passages as the following: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke xxiv. 46, 47.) "In whom *we have* redemption through His blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.)

Here we have remission or forgiveness of sins (the word is the same in the three passages) preached in the name of Jesus, and possessed by those who believed that preaching. A proclamation was sent to the Ephesians and Colossians, as belonging to the "all nations," telling them of forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. They believed this proclamation, and entered on the possession of the forgiveness of sins. Was this presumption on their part? Or would it have been piety and humility to doubt the forgiveness of sins?

True, they had been great sinners, "dead in trespasses and sins," "children of wrath," "aliens and foreigners," "enemies by wicked works." Some of them had doubtless bowed the knee to the goddess Diana. They had lived in gross idolatry and all manner of wickedness. But then "forgiveness of sins" had been preached to them in the name of Jesus. Was this preaching true, or was it not? Was it for them, or was it not? Was it all a dream, a shadow, a mist? Did it mean nothing? Was there nothing sure, nothing certain, nothing solid about it?

These are plain questions, demanding a plain answer from those who assert that no one can know for certain that his sins are forgiven. If

indeed no one can know it now, then how could any one have known it in apostolic times? If it could be known in the first century, then why not in the twentieth?

At all times forgiveness of sins was known with all the certainty which the word of God could give. "David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 6—8). Hezekiah could say, "Thou *hast* cast *all my sins* behind Thy back." (Isa. xxxviii. 17.) The Lord Jesus said to one, in His day, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matt. ix. 2.)

Thus, when I open my Bible, I find persons who had been guilty of all manner of sins brought to the knowledge of forgiveness; and I therefore argue that it is possible for the very vilest sinner to know now, with divine certainty, that his sins are forgiven. Was it presumption in Abraham, in David, in Hezekiah, in the palsied man of Luke v., and in numbers besides, to believe in the forgiveness of sins? Would it have been a sign of humility and true piety in them to doubt?

It will perhaps be argued that these were all special and extraordinary cases. Well, it matters not, so far as our present question is concerned, whether they were ordinary or extraordinary. One thing is plain, they completely disprove the assertion that *no one* can know that his sins are forgiven. The word of God teaches me that numbers of people subject to like passions, like infirmities, like failures, and like sins as the writer and reader, were brought to know and

rejoice in the full forgiveness of sins. Consequently, those who maintain that no one can be sure on this momentous question have no scriptural foundation for their opinion.

But is it true that the cases recorded in the Holy Scriptures are so special and extraordinary as not to afford any precedent for us?

By no means. If any case could be so regarded it is surely that of Abraham; and yet we read of him that "it was not written for his sake alone, that righteousness was imputed to him; *but for us also*, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 23-25.) "Abraham believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.) And the Holy Ghost declares that righteousness shall be imputed to us also, if we believe. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man [JESUS] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) "To Him give *all the prophets* witness, that through His name *whosoever believeth* in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.)

Now the question is, What did the apostles Peter and Paul mean, when they so unreservedly preached the forgiveness of sins to those who listened to them? Did they really mean to convey to their hearers the idea that no one could be sure that he possessed this forgiveness of sins? When, in the synagogue of Antioch, Paul said to his audience, "We declare unto you *glad tidings*,"

did he entertain the notion that no one could be sure that his sins were forgiven? How could the gospel ever be called "glad tidings" if its only effect was to leave the soul in doubt and anxiety?

If indeed it is true that no one can enjoy the assurance of pardon, then the whole style of apostolic preaching should be reversed. We might then expect to find Paul saying to his hearers, "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that no one can ever know, in this life, whether his sins are forgiven or not."

Is there aught like this in the entire range of apostolic preaching and teaching? Do not the apostles everywhere set forth, in the fullest and clearest manner, remission of sins as the necessary result of believing in a crucified and risen Saviour? Is there the most remote hint of that which is so much insisted upon by some modern teachers, namely, that it is a dangerous presumption to believe in the full forgiveness of all our sins, and that it argues a pious and humble frame of soul to live in perpetual doubt? Is there no possibility of ever enjoying, in this world, the comfortable certainty of our eternal security in Christ? Can we not rely upon God's word, or commit our souls to the sacrifice of Christ? Can it be possible that the only effect of God's glad tidings is to leave the soul in hopeless perplexity? Christ has put away my sins; but I cannot know it! God has spoken; but I cannot be sure! The Holy Ghost has come down; but I cannot rely upon His testimony! It is piety and humility to doubt God's word, to dishonour the atonement of Christ, and to refuse the faith of the heart to the record of the Holy Ghost!

Alas! alas! if this is the gospel, then adieu to

peace and joy in believing. If this is Christianity, then in vain the Dayspring from on high visited us, to give the knowledge of salvation through the remission of our sins. (Luke i. 76-79.) If no one can have this "knowledge of salvation," then to what end has it been given?

And let my reader bear in mind that the question before us is not whether a person may not deceive himself and others. This would be at once ceded. Thousands, alas! have deceived themselves, and thousands more have deceived others. But is that any reason why I cannot possess the absolute certainty that what God has said is true, and that the work of Christ has availed to put away all my sins? Men have deceived themselves, and therefore I am afraid to trust Christ! Men have deceived others, and therefore I am afraid that God's word will deceive me!

This is really what it all amounts to, when put into plain language. And is it not well to have things thus put? Is it not needful at times to strip certain propositions of the dress in which legality and fleshly pietism would clothe them, so that we may see what they really are? Does it not behove us, when men stand forth as the professed and authorized exponents of a sound and enlightened Christianity, to test what they say by the unerring standard of Holy Scripture?

Assuredly it does; and if they tell us we can never be sure of salvation; and that it is presumption to think of such a thing; and, further, that the very utmost we can attain to in this life is a faint hope that, through the mercy of God, we may get to heaven when we die; we must utterly reject such teaching as being in direct opposition to the word of God. False theology

tells me I can never be sure; God's word tells me I can. Which am I to believe? The former fills me with gloomy doubts and fears; the latter imparts divine certainty. That casts me upon my own efforts; this upon a finished work. To which shall I attend? Is there, throughout the entire volume of God, a shadow of foundation for the notion that no one can be sure of his eternal salvation? I most fearlessly assert there is not. So far from this, the word of God, in every section of it, sets before us, in the clearest way, the privilege of the believer to enjoy the most unclouded certainty as to his pardon and acceptance in Christ.

And, let me ask, is it not due to God's faithful word, and Christ's finished work, that the soul confiding therein should enjoy the fullest assurance? True, it is by faith that any one can so confide, and this faith is wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost. But all this in no wise affects our present question. What I desire is that my reader should rise from the reading of this paper with a full and firm conviction that it is possible for him to possess the present assurance that he is as safe as Christ can make him. If any sinner ever enjoyed this assurance, then why may not my reader now enjoy it? Is Christ's work finished? Is God's word true? Yes, verily. Then, if I simply trust therein, I am pardoned, justified, and accepted. All my sins were laid on Jesus when He was nailed to the cursed tree. Jehovah made them all meet on Him. He bore them and put them away; and now He is up in heaven without them. This is enough for me. If the One who stood charged with *all* my guilt is now at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, then clearly

there is nothing against me. All that divine justice had against me was laid on the sin-Bearer, and He endured the wrath of a sin-hating God that I might be freely and for ever pardoned and accepted in a risen and glorified Saviour.

These are glad tidings. Does my reader believe them? Say, beloved, dost thou heartily believe in a once dead and now risen Christ? Hast thou come to Him as a lost sinner, and put thy heart's full confidence in Him? Dost thou believe that He died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures? If so, thou art saved, justified, accepted, complete in Christ. True thou art, in thyself, a poor feeble creature, having an evil nature to contend with, every moment; but Christ is thy life, and He is thy wisdom, and thy righteousness, thy sanctification, redemption, thy all (1 Cor. i. 30.) He ever lives for thee up in heaven. He died to make thee clean. He lives to keep thee clean. Thou art made as clean as His death can make thee, and thou art kept as clean as His life can keep thee. (Rev. i. 5; Heb. vii. 25.) He made Himself responsible for thee. God sees thee to be what Christ has made thee to be. He sees thee in Christ and as Christ. Wherefore, I pray thee, tread no more those gloomy corridors of legalism, pietism, and false theology, which have resounded for ages with the sighs and groans of poor sin-burdened and misguided souls; but seeing the fulness of thy portion, and the completeness of thy standing in a risen and victorious Christ, rejoice in Him all thy days upon earth, and live in the hope of being with Him for ever in His own mansions of heavenly glory. (Col. ii. 9, 10; iii. 4.)

A VOLUME IN A VERSE.

II.

IN the Law we see God demanding obedience in order to life. In Christianity we see God giving life as the only basis of obedience. In the one we see man struggling for life, but never obtaining it. In the other we see man receiving life as a free gift, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. vi. 23.)

Such is the contrast between the two systems, a contrast which cannot be too deeply pondered. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.) But let us mark the way in which this is unfolded in our text.

"God so loved the world." Here we have the wide aspect of the love of God. It is not confined to any particular nation, tribe, caste, or family. It embraces the whole world. "God is love"; and, being so, it is not a question of the fitness or worthiness of the object of His love. It is what He is. He is love, and He cannot but always be so. It is the very energy and activity of His nature. The heart may have many a question, many an exercise, as to its state and condition before God; and quite right it should have them. The Holy Spirit Himself may produce such exercises, and raise such questions; but, after all, the grand truth shines forth in all its lustre, "God is love." (1 John iv. 8, 16.)

Whatever we are, whatever the world is, *that* is what God is; and we know that the truth as to God forms the deep and rich substratum which underlies the whole system of Christianity. The soul may pass through deep and sore conflict, under the sense of its own wretchedness; there may be many doubts and fears; many dark and

heavy clouds; weeks, months, or years, may be spent under the law, in one's inward self-consciousness, and that, moreover, long after the mere intellect has yielded its assent to the principles and doctrines of evangelical religion. But, after all, we must be brought into direct personal contact with God Himself, with what He is, with His nature and character, as He has revealed Himself in the gospel. We have to acquaint ourselves with Him, and He is love.

Observe, it does not say merely that God is *loving*, but that He is LOVE. It is not only that love is an attribute of His character, but it is the very essence and activity of His nature. We do not read that God is justice, or holiness; He is just, and He is holy; but it would not express the full and blessed truth to say that God is loving. He is much more. He is *love itself*. Hence, when the sinner ("whosoever" he be, it matters not) is brought to see his own total and absolute ruin, his hopeless wretchedness, his guilt and misery, the utter vanity and worthlessness of all within and around him; that there is nothing in the whole world that can satisfy his heart, and nothing in his heart that can satisfy God, or satisfy even his own conscience, when these things are opened in any measure to his view, then is he met by this grand, **substantial** truth that "God is love," and that He so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son.

Here are life and rest for the soul. Here is salvation, full, free, and everlasting, for the poor, needy, guilty, lost one; salvation, resting not upon anything in man, or of man; upon aught that he is or can be, aught that he has done, or can do, but simply upon what God is and has done.

God *loves* and *gives*, and the sinner *believes* and *has*. This is far beyond creation, government, or law. In creation, God spake, and it was done. He called worlds into existence by the word of His mouth. But we hear nothing, throughout the entire record of creation, of loving and giving.

So as to government, we see God ruling in unsearchable wisdom, amid the armies of heaven, and among the children of men; but we cannot comprehend Him. We can only, as to this subject, say, with the Christian poet, that

“God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.”

Finally, as to the law, it is, from beginning to end, a perfect system of command and prohibition, a system perfect in its action as testing man, and making manifest his entire alienation from God. “The law worketh wrath.” And again, “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” But what could such a system do in a world of sinners? Could it give life? Impossible. Why? Because man could not fulfil its holy requirements. “If there had been a law given which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have been by the law.” But no; the law was a ministration of death and condemnation. (See 2 Cor. iii.) The only effect of the law, to any one who is under it, is the pressure of death

upon the soul, and of guilt and condemnation upon the conscience. It cannot possibly be otherwise with an honest soul under the law.

What, then, is needed? Simply this, the knowledge of the love of God, and of the precious gift which that love has bestowed. This is the eternal groundwork of all. Love and the gift of love. For, be it observed and ever remembered, that God's love could never have reached us but through the medium of that gift. God is holy, and we are sinful. How could we come near Him? How could we dwell in His holy presence? How could sin and holiness ever abide in company? Impossible. Justice demands the condemnation of sin; and if love will save the sinner, it must do so at no less a cost than the gift of the only begotten Son.

Darius loved Daniel, and laboured hard to save him from the lions' den; but his love was powerless because of the unbending law of the Medes and Persians. He spent the night in sorrow and fasting. He could weep at the mouth of the den; but he could not save his friend. His love was not "mighty to save." If he had offered himself to the lions instead of his friend, it would have been morally glorious; but he did not. His love told itself forth in unavailing tears and lamentations. The law of the Persian kingdom was more powerful than the love of the Persian king. The law, in its stern majesty, triumphed over an impotent love which had nothing but fruitless tears to bestow upon its object.

But the love of God is not like this; eternal and universal praise to His Name! His love is "mighty to save." It reigns through righteousness. How is this? Because "God so loved the world.

that He gave His only begotten Son." The law had declared, in words of awful solemnity, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Was this law less stern, less majestic, less stringent, than the law of the Medes and Persians? Surely not. How, then, was it to be disposed of? It was to magnified, and made honourable; vindicated and established. Not one jot or tittle of the law could ever be set aside. How, then, was the difficulty to be solved? Three things had to be done: the law had to magnified; sin condemned; the sinner saved. How could these grand results be reached? We have the answer in two bold and vivid lines from one of our own poets,

"On Jesus' cross this record's graved,
Let sin be damned, and sinners saved."

Precious record! May many an anxious sinner read and believe it! Such was the amazing love of God that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. His love cost Him nothing less than the Son of His bosom. When it was a question of creating worlds, it cost Him but the word of His mouth; but when it was a question of loving a world of sinners, it cost His only begotten Son. The love of God is a holy love, a righteous love, a love acting in harmony with all the attributes of His nature, and the claims of His throne. Grace *reigns* through *righteousness*, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. The soul can never be set at liberty till this truth is fully laid hold of. There may be a certain vague hope in the mercy of God, and a measure of confidence in the atoning work of

Christ, which is all true and real so far as it goes ; but true liberty of heart cannot possibly be enjoyed until we see and understand that God has glorified Himself in the manner of His love toward us. Conscience could never be tranquillized, nor Satan silenced, if sin had not been perfectly judged and put away. But " God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It may here be needful to meet a difficulty which often occurs to anxious souls in reference to the question of appropriation. Thousands have been harassed and perplexed by this question, at some stage or other of their spiritual history ; and it is not improbable that many who shall read these pages may be glad of a few words on the subject. Many may feel disposed to ask, " How am I to know that this love, and the gift of love, are intended for *me*? What warrant have I for believing that ' everlasting life ' is for *me*? I know the plan of salvation ; I believe in the all-sufficiency of the atonement of Christ for the forgiveness and justification of all who truly believe. I am convinced of the truth of all that the Bible declares. I believe we are all sinners, and, moreover, that we can do nothing to save ourselves, that we need to be washed in the blood of Jesus, and to be taught and led by the Holy Ghost, before we can please God here, and dwell with Him hereafter. All this I fully believe, and yet I have no assurance that I am saved, and I want to know on what authority I am to believe that my sins are forgiven, and that I have everlasting life."

If the foregoing is in any measure the language

of the reader, if it is at all the expression of his difficulty, we would in the first place call his attention to two words which occur in our precious text, namely, "world" and "whosoever." It seems utterly impossible for anyone to refuse the application of these two words. For what, let us ask, is the meaning of the term "*world*"? What does it embrace? or, rather, What does it not embrace? When our Lord declares that "God so loved the world," on what ground can the reader exclude himself from the range, scope, and application of this divine love? On no ground whatever, unless he can show that he alone belongs not to the world, but to some other sphere of being. If it were declared that "the world" is hopelessly condemned, could any one making a part of that world avoid the application of the sentence? Could he exclude himself from it? Impossible. How then can he, why should he, exclude himself, when it is a question of God's free love, and of salvation by Christ Jesus?

But, further, we would ask, what is the meaning, what the force of the familiar word, "whosoever"? Assuredly, it means anybody; and if anybody, why not the reader? It is infinitely better, infinitely surer, and more satisfactory to find the word "whosoever" in the gospel than to find my own name there, inasmuch as there may be a thousand persons in the world of the same name; but "whosoever" applies to me as distinctly as though I were the only sinner on the face of the earth.

Thus, then, the very words of the gospel message, the very terms used to set forth the glad tidings, are such as leave no possible ground for a difficulty as to their application. If we listen

to our Lord, in the days of His flesh, we hear such words as these, "God so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Again, if we listen to Him after His resurrection, we hear these words, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*." (Mark xvi.) And, lastly, if we listen to the voice of the Holy Ghost sent from a risen, ascended, and glorified Lord, we hear such words as these, "The same Lord over all is rich unto *all* that call upon Him. For *whosoever* shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 12, 13.)

In all the above cited passages, we have two terms used, one general, the other particular, and both together so presenting the message of salvation, as to leave no room whatever for any one to refuse its application.

May you, dear reader, believe this message in all its fulness and freeness.

The guilty murderers of the Son of God were the very first to hear the sweet tale of pardoning love, so that all men might see in them a pattern of what the grace of God and the blood of Christ can do. Truly the grace that could pardon "Jerusalem sinners" can pardon any one. The blood that could cleanse "the betrayers and murderers" of the Christ of God can cleanse any sinner outside the confines of hell.

Vol. X. No. 113. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.

GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

"BROUGHT OUT OF DARKNESS."

IT was in 18—, and I, a young man of twenty years of age, was wandering up that lonely valley in Cornwall, cast upon this selfish world without a single friend.

My mother was worse than a widow, for the one who should have been her support was carelessly and wildly spending his days in a foreign land.

Onwards I wandered, with a heart full of sorrow; come to my last resource in this world. God intended it for my blessing. He never intended aught else for His rebellious creature man, though man has hard thoughts of His ways.

I felt my position, and fell down under that railway arch, and not a single eye but God's saw me. Thus was God working to reduce my rebellious heart. But I still resisted, had hard thoughts of God's dealings with men, and re-

lapsed once more into the routine of the "class-meeting." Religious darkness came upon me.

The Lord in mercy supplied my need, till, having married, I resolved to try my luck in a foreign land, and secured enough to defray the voyage in that dark land of Mexico. Arriving there I had "spent all," and again groaned beneath severe want and trial; but God in mercy raised up help.

Being once again delivered from pressing want, I settled down, gave up all thoughts of God; indeed, turned a thorough infidel in things appertaining to God and eternity.

Many sorrows came upon me in Mexico. God took away some dear to me. A dear brother I sent for died, and I could not point him to the Saviour, not knowing Him myself. The land was infested with banditti, so much so that we (English) "carried our lives in our hands," as people say. The turning-point came as to removing from that dark land. I will relate it.

About four thousand banditti were banded together to rob and plunder the English settlement. The Government of the country sent out fifteen hundred troops to disperse them.

The chiefs of the robbers, finding they had to fight, and to incite their men, promised them that if they won, and beat back the troops, they should sack the place. We knew this meant death to the foreigners, and prepared for flight to the mountains.

The battle raged for four hours, and finally the disciplined troops charged with the steel, and dispersed the banditti, to our salvation. The scene that followed was heart-rending, some in the agonies of death crying "Santissima

Maria,” or “ Holy Virgin Mary,” and I was not able to direct them to the alone Saviour.

I resolved not to remain in Mexico longer, but to return, if haply I might find what I did not then possess, for God in mercy again troubled my conscience, and gave me to know all was not right by what happened to a young man who had sent home to England for the young person whom he was just about to marry ; while standing by my side, a native shot him through the head.

I thought to myself, “ Suppose that I were shot, where would my soul be? ”

Having remained in Mexico about five years, I left for England. I had many narrow escapes travelling through the country toward the coast, Vera Cruz being the port for taking boat for the old country. The robbers fired into the *diligencia*, or mail-coach, killing one and wounding two; but I was yet spared to be brought out of darkness into God’s marvellous light. Why was I spared? “ Oh ! ” I exclaim often, as I look back over my short but eventful life, “ it was God’s pure mercy.”

I arrived in England in October, 18—, got a situation in London, and while residing at T—, in the northern suburbs of that great city, my wife and I resolved to seek “ a place of worship.” She was converted when fifteen years of age, under the godly care of a pious schoolmistress. I knew she had something I had not. There was an aching void in my soul that none but Christ could fill.

We wandered to this church and to that chapel, to hear this eloquent preacher and that renowned orator, but all in vain. Finally we heard of a Mr. H— at a very simple preaching-room.

I resolved to go; I went; I listened. His words reached my heart, "Take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

I longed for this "water of life." I had been called upon to pray in class-meetings, had been teaching in schools, reading the prayers and burial service over dear men killed and dying in Mexico; and with all this religiousness, mixed with unbelief, I had never tasted "this water of life." I longed for it.

Sunday came round. I was on that bench once more, listening to the same story of grace and love. God was working in my soul, a work that was to have its results in my soul's salvation to His glory and the praise of His grace by Christ Jesus.

There was no rest for my soul. The world seemed dark to me. My sins were heavier than I could bear. I had been priding myself upon my morality and religion. But, oh! if examined in His presence, and by the light of His Word, what was it? All dross.

The next day my wife and I were walking out, when suddenly Mr. H—— accosted us, and asked us where we lived. Giving him the address, we parted. It was the preacher who had the "something" I longed for. I hoped to see him again; and while pondering over my sad life, Mr. H—— was introduced to me at my house.

His first question was, as if he knew that "repentance unto life" was going on in my soul, "Do you know the Lord?"

This was the question.

My wife replied, hesitatingly, "Yes."

We were accustomed to "Do you meet in

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class? ” “ What denomination do you belong to? ” or, “ Are you a member of a society? ” Never were we asked such a word as “ Do you know the Lord? ”

“ Very personal,” says one.

Yes, and I bless God for this faithful question to me. Oh! how Satan tried to keep up a “ religious vein,” to keep out the person of Christ, the *alone* way to God.

I shall never forget that visit of this faithful servant of the Lord. He seemed to know his man and his work, and went straight at it, and God was glorified; for after he left, I went to my room, cast myself down to the floor, and in an agony of soul cried out, “ Lord, I deserve hell, but Christ has died ”; and in an instant I had heaven; yes, Christ was seen by faith as my Saviour.

Instead of hell, I got Christ, and God’s love shed abroad in my heart by His Holy Spirit; and, blessed be God, I have had heaven in my soul ever since; peace, too, amidst many trials and conflicts which have surrounded my pathway here below. It is now a wilderness world to me, though once I had no hope beyond it. (Rom. v. 1-6.)

That night my soul was made glad, and all heaven resounded at the salvation of the lost; and on my pillow I could not help shedding tears, not of sorrow as before, but of joy and gladness and praise to God for His wondrous love to me.

The next morning by “ break of day ” I got my pen, and wrote a line to the dear servant of God, apprising him of my salvation; for salvation it was, and nothing less, and confession made

to His praise and to the magnifying of Him who loved me, and gave Himself for me. (Gal. ii. 20.)

Dear reader, are you saved? Are you dwelling in darkness or in the light? It must be in one or the other. Or is Satan telling you, "It is all a myth; there is no eternal woe or joy to come?" This is his old tale to me. Don't you believe all came by chance, and that the world always was and ever will be as it is now. Don't believe the fallacy of the wicked one, who tells men that no God would create a wicked world, groaning and full of sin and death as this is. Not so, my friend; such thoughts are trash. *Man* sinned, but this now groaning world, this once fair creation of God, will yet bear the stamp of His glory, and righteousness and truth and peace shall cover its surface. (Isa. xi., xxxii.)

Where will you be then? I shall, with millions besides, be with God's Christ, viewing His never-to-be-told-out glory, and blessing His name for ever. All may look fair for the present moment, but the purifying storm of judgment must very soon pass over this blighted world, for the day will yet be when it shall be fit for God himself to dwell in. (Zeph. iii. 8.)

May this humble little narrative of God's ways with me stir up His servants to more earnestness for the salvation of souls, and in His rich mercy may He deign to use it in making others look back over their eventful lives, and see God's mercy in sparing them to be brought out of darkness into His marvellous light, to His eternal praise and their everlasting blessing!

C. M. H.

THE WAY TO BE CURED.

MATTHEW IX. 1-8.

EVERY tender heart must mourn at the amount of suffering and disease which surrounds us in the world. Wherever we turn some fresh form of affliction meets the eye.

Now, there are two things which we should remember when we see all this misery. First, that all the diseases under which men suffer are the consequences of sin; and secondly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one through whom these diseases can be effectually healed. Jesus is the only Saviour and the only Physician.

And He abundantly proved this during His life on earth. It mattered not what the disorder was, nor how bad the case, nor how many physicians had before failed to cure it, Jesus cured it in a moment, by a word or by a touch. For "He healed all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people." (Matt. iv. 23.)

What a change must have been produced in a village or a town by a visit from Jesus! How many hearts were comforted; how many anxieties soothed, by the gracious cures He wrought! What a proof, too, did all this supply of God's gracious love towards His ruined creatures. For these mercies were as free as they were abundant. They were "without money and without price." These works of Jesus told out the blessed truth that He had come forth from God freely to heal and save the miserable and the lost.

In the portion of Scripture to which the reference is given above, we read that a man afflicted with the palsy was brought to the Lord Jesus. This man and his friends believed that Christ was

both able and willing to cure him; and their confidence in Jesus was richly rewarded.

But though they got the blessing they came for, they did not get it in the way they expected. For Jesus, fixing His eyes on the palsied man, said to him, "*Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.*" They had come to have the palsy cured, and they were expecting to see the sick man arise and walk. They were thinking of the body, and looking for its cure. They must have been amazed, therefore, when the Lord spoke thus to the sick man, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

But was the palsy the worst evil that afflicted that poor man? No, he was a sinner, an unpardoned sinner. And is not unpardoned sin an infinitely more grievous thing than bodily disease? Surely it is. And this the Lord Jesus knew. And as He "had power on earth to forgive sins," He most graciously put forth that power on behalf of this poor man who trusted in Him.

That was the way in which the Lord Jesus rewarded their confidence in Him. They came to Him for a small benefit, and He gave them the greatest.

And this is always the result of faith in Jesus. The soul that trusts in Him always get far more than it expects to get; what He looks to is whether there is real confidence, real trust, in Himself. If there is, He will give largely indeed, far beyond all we ask or think. When Jesus is trusted in, an opportunity is given Him of proving the truth of that word, "*Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord.*" (Jer. vii. 7.) A man who trusts in Jesus may have very poor, confused, narrow thoughts of Him, may know a very, very,

small part of His excellencies; but that man will be blessed, not according to his notions about Jesus, but according to the love and power of Him in whom he trusts.

It is exceedingly important to know and to remember this. It shows us the difference between faith and understanding. I repeat, therefore, that a person with true saving faith in Christ Jesus may really know very little about Him, and very little about what God has made Him to be to those who trust in Him. Nevertheless, he is blessed, not according to his *understanding*, but according to his *faith*. For the man that believes in Jesus is one whom God *can* bless, and *has* blessed, according to the greatness and the fulness of His own love.

So it was here. There was faith in Jesus; simple, confident faith. And Jesus honoured that faith. He at once treated this palsied man as a vessel into which He could pour blessing just as He pleased. And it pleased Him to say, "*Thy sins be forgiven thee.*"

And this must have astonished all who heard it. But it was done. Love and power had done it. His sins were forgiven. The sick man's limbs still shook and trembled; his disease still held him prisoner; those who stood around saw no change in him; but there was a change. His heart was comforted, his soul set free, for his sins and iniquities were forgiven. He had passed from death unto life. There was from that moment peace within, though yet for awhile his palsy might cleave to him.

Jesus had seen deeper need in him than his kindest friends had seen. Jesus knew that he was a sinner, and that he was therefore in danger of

eternal pain; and He proved Himself to be his best friend; for He met his necessities at their root.

Thus it is now with all who believe on Jesus. Their troubles and sicknesses may remain, but their sins are for ever forgiven. They may be a palsied, or an afflicted, or a harassed people still; but they are a people who have passed from death unto life, and who shall never come into condemnation. (John v. 24.) Amid their sorrows and their pains they have inward and heavenly peace. They still share with other men those sad afflictions to which sin has made men subject and they have their own peculiar sorrows also; but, through faith in Jesus, they have peace with God, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v. 1.)

“Happy people; happy, though despised and poor.”

But will believers always continue in their bodies of weakness and evil? Will not their bodies, as well as their souls, be freed from the bondage of corruption? Yes. For they look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven, who shall *change* their vile body, *that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body*, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

And this is sweetly taught us in the instance before us. For He who had said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” also said, “Arise, take up thy bed, and walk.” He who had already forgiven the sins, afterwards banished the palsy!

And a day is coming when this same power will be put forth, though in a far more perfect and glorious way, on behalf of all who believe in

Jesus. The day is coming when they shall "ARISE," every one clothed in an incorruptible body; in a body on which disease and death can have no power. Jesus will come again, and then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, will all who have believed on Him be changed into His likeness. (1 Cor. xv.) From the depths of the sea, and from the bowels of the earth, will those of them who have fallen asleep start forth; while at that same moment shall all of them who are alive be changed. And then they will ascend, in the clouds, those chariots of heavenly majesty, to meet their Saviour in the air. (1 Thess. iv. 17.)

Do you ask, "How may I be among that glorious company?"

I reply, Believe in Jesus *now*, sinner though you are. Trust Him, as this poor palsied man trusted Him. He will not fail you, any more than He failed him. For if you believe in Him your sins *will be instantly forgiven, and you will wait, in peace and confidence, for the resurrection to life.* (John v. 29.) And then present trouble and pain will sit lightly on you. Not that you will be without trouble. You may have more than ever; but you will find streams of heavenly joy and refreshment flowing into your spirit, sustaining and cheering you amidst your troubles, and lifting you above them. And hope will shed its light also on your path, the hope of that glorious day when God shall display you among the vessels of mercy, to the praise of the glory of His grace! (Rom. ix. 23; Eph. i. 6.)

But most persons are far more anxious that their bodily ailments should be cured than that their sins should be forgiven. Pain troubles them more than guilt. But what folly, what madness,

is this? For suppose I could make your body free from disease, and preserve you in that state all the while you live on earth, how short-lived would this benefit be! And would hell be less horrible if you were plunged into it from amidst health and ease? Or would bodily strength and vigour give your soul peace and hope? Are all who are hearty and strong at peace with God? Are all such persons happy? Go and ask them. And if their consciences might answer you, instead of their lips, I know what answer you would get.

Now God looks at the *heart*. He sees its evil. He hears its groan. He knows its doom. And this touches His heart. And therefore He gave Jesus to be the Saviour; Jesus who *thoroughly* saves; Jesus who says *now* to all who trust in Him, "Your sins be forgiven," and who will soon say also to them, "Arise."

One word more; and I address this to the careless. Would you like to keep your palsy for ever? Would you like to dwell in your afflicted, diseased, corrupt body to all eternity? Would you like to have it raised again from the dust, in all its wretchedness, to be your home for ever?

You shudder at the thought. But this must be so, if you do not, through faith in Jesus, become a changed person. Except you believe in Him you must keep both your corruption and your sins for ever.

It is true that your body may be laid in the grave, and may rot and moulder to dust. It is also true that your soul, during all that time, may be suffering alone in the pit of destruction.

But resurrection will come. For there is a *resurrection to damnation*, as well as a resurrec-

tion to life. (John v. 28, 29.) And at that resurrection the wicked dead must again receive their corrupt and sin-worn bodies. God has fixed an hour for the host of the unbelieving to "ARISE." The voice of the Son of God, at that hour, will call them up from the great bed of death. (Rev. xx. 12, 13.) But what a mournful host will they appear! Unchanged! They never trusted in the Saviour. They refused to welcome His salvation, and therefore, on that solemn day, they must stand forth in their own guiltiness and misery and shame.

What a woeful contrast will this risen host be to those who had part in "the first resurrection"! "Blessed and holy is he which hath part in the *first* resurrection." (Rev. xx. 6.)

Remember, therefore, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of *the unjust*." (Acts xxiv. 15.) And perhaps one of the most awful scenes we can contemplate is "the resurrection to damnation." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.)

I say therefore to you, "Believe and live." Jesus saves, not only from sin, but from all its consequences also. All blessing is in Him. Life and holiness and glory are His. What He is, and what He has, shall be yours, if you trust Him. And be assured the hour will come, when the most careless will awake to the blessedness of Him whom now they so lightly esteem. The beauty and glory of Jesus will one day burst irresistibly upon our view. But, oh! how awful will it be to see His glory only when He comes forth to execute wrath, to carry down into the pit the

harrowing conviction that Jesus, whom they have for ever rejected, is indeed the Saviour.

Such was the horrible end of Judas Iscariot. The torment of his soul is expressed in those words, "I have betrayed the *innocent* blood." (Matt. xxvii. 4.) His perception of the value of the blood of Jesus became his torment. What a view of the blood of Jesus is this!

How blessed it is to turn to that company before the throne of everlasting glory, who with one heart and with one voice will worship the Lamb that was slain, and will sing, "Thou art worthy, for . . . Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." (Rev. v.)

THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

(MARK V. 25-34; LUKE VIII. 43-48.)

WHO is that One amid the throng,
Who so benignly walks along,
Love beaming in His face?
'Tis Christ the Lord who hastens by,
For one, in yonder house, doth lie,
Who needs His healing grace.

One, too, there is amid that crowd,
Beneath the weight of suffering bowed,
Unknown to all beside.
For twelve long years she bore her pain,
Gave all she had, could nothing gain,
Till JESUS she espied.

But when she sees HIM drawing near,
How bounds her heart with hope and cheer,
Resolved the crowd to brave!

THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

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“ If I but touch His garment’s hem,”
 She thinks, “ I shall lack nothing then ” :
 That touch of faith she gave.

Immediately her pains depart.
 What joy, what comfort fills her heart !
 She would not have it known.
 She little dreamt that feeble touch
 Had *cheered* her Saviour’s heart as much
 As it had healed her own.

He felt the virtue flowing o’er,
 That HE was trusted, which was more
 Than aught she else could do.
 And could He let the *healed* one go,
 Without a word, a look, to show
 That He had loved her too?

He does not heed the callous press;
 He longs to hear her lips confess
How HE had made her whole.
 And thus He gives her sweet release :
 “ Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”
 He now has *saved her soul*.

And is not Jesus now the same
 As when that lowly woman came
 To have her pain removed?
 Since He ascended to His throne
 How many a touch, unseen, unknown,
 His healing power has proved !

Yes, still the streams of virtue flow,
 To cleanse the sin, to cure the woe,
 It needs not but to *touch*.
 And now, as then, the sufferer feels
 How truly, perfectly, *it* heals;
 And Christ is cheered as much.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—How does the death of Christ affect the relations of a man with God? G. R.

ANSWER.—Supposing the very worst of sinners becomes convinced of his sins, and draws near to God under a sense of their greatness and number; it may be with fear and trembling, and little wonder. Still, he comes in faith, believing that Christ died for sinners, and that His blood is all sufficient to wash his sins away. He might not be able to state these things just as they are now written, but substantially they are in his mind. Well, and how is he met, how is he received? So far as we understand God's ways in grace with the sinner, we should say that he is met, received, owned, honoured, and blessed, according to that which is due to Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Nay, more, he is received as Christ Himself, "accepted in the Beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) The word "sin" is never mentioned. Were God to raise this question with the sinner, he could not answer Him for one of a thousand; he would be utterly condemned. But, blessed be the God of all grace, the Father of our Lord, the prodigal is welcomed with open arms, and embraced with the kiss of perfect peace. (Luke xv.) Evidently, the work of Christ is the ground, and the riches of divine grace the standard of His blessings. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7.) Were the sinner to receive what is due to himself, it would be immediate, unmitigated judgment. God would be just in condemning the sinner, but on the ground of the work of Christ, "He is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 19-26.) C. H. M.

Vol. X. No. 114. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo. Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post. JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

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GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

"DO YOU MEAN H-A-T-E, HATE?"

ONE Saturday evening in autumn I was travelling to W——.

When the train stopped at K—— all the passengers left the carriage, and a very respectable, intelligent man, of middle age, got in, sat down opposite me, and said, "I wish my journey was over!"

"Have you far to go?" I asked.

"Yes, to Penzance; but this is not the worst of it; I expect to find the only one I love, except two children, dead."

It was his wife, poor man. His anxiety was intense, he having that afternoon received a telegram about her illness, and could not possibly reach her before two o'clock on Sunday morning.

After a little while I said, "Is she sheltered under the precious blood of Christ?"

"No, sir!"

"Are you?"

"No, sir! I will be honest with you; I believe if I were to die this moment I should go straight to hell!"

I then spoke much to him of God's love to sinners, quoting John iii. 16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and other passages.

He replied, "You can't tell me anything I don't know about the Bible, but I can't feel it here," smiting his breast.

"Oh! my friend," I said, "you never would feel it there, if you lived a thousand years!"

With surprise he answered, "God grant I never may, then!"

I showed him that he was looking within for some miraculous change, or certain kind of feelings, instead of resting calmly, in simple faith, on the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that "he that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life." (John iii. 36.)

He told me he was a Wesleyan, a Sunday-school teacher and preacher, but for thirty years this thought had haunted him, that one day he should wake up in hell, adding, "Only last night I dreamt I was in hell, and saw several I knew there!"

Never shall I forget his intense anxiety and eager look when, with the tears rolling down his face, he said, "Oh! I would give all I possess to enjoy that peace which you seem to have!"

"But it is without money and without price," I answered. "Christ hath made peace through the blood of His cross. 'The blood of Jesus Christ,

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God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' ” (1 John i. 7.)

After a long conversation I felt sure he was a believer, but that the enemy of souls had tormented him in this way. I looked him full in the face, and asked, “Do you hate the Lord Jesus Christ?”

“Hate Him, sir! hate Him, sir! Do you mean h-a-t-e, hate?”

“That's exactly what I do mean,” I said.

“Ah! no,” with tears filling his eyes, he replied, “why, He is everything to me, and has done everything for me!”

“Well, then, my friend,” I continued, “while you are travelling to Penzance, through the silent hours of to-night, think of Him ‘who bore our sins in His own body on the tree,’ but who is now at God's right hand in heavenly glory, and think how you have grieved His heart with all your wretched unbelief.”

As the train was nearing W—— I took his hand, while he firmly grasped mine, and said, “Good-bye; perhaps I may never meet you again.”

But he answered, with a faltering voice, and tears filling his eyes, “I shall meet you above.”

I reminded him that a little while ago he had told me that he should be in hell, and I added, “By the grace of God I shall never be there.”

“Oh!” he said, “I do believe, I do believe”; and, “I shall meet you above.”

So we parted; but I do expect to meet my fellow-traveller one day in my Father's house above.

Dear reader, are you saved? Are you sheltered under the precious blood of Christ? If not, an everlasting hell must be your portion. But should

a doubting, trembling heart read this, then let me assure you that "He came to seek and to save that which is lost." Read Luke xv., and see how God delights to bless a lost sinner.

His word, too, must ever be the sure resting-place for the soul. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.)

G. W.

THE VALUE OF TO-DAY.

A CHRISTIAN gentleman, in the south of England, once posted up the following notice outside his gate :

"WHOSOEVER WILL CALL UP AT MY HOUSE TO-DAY,
SHALL RECEIVE A TEN POUND NOTE."

Many passers-by read this notice; and, as we may well imagine, many and various were the observations made upon it. Some, perhaps looked upon it as a sham or a hoax. Others, doubtless, pronounced the writer a fool or a madman. Very few could bring themselves to believe that there was any reality or truth in the matter. They could hardly imagine that anyone would be fool enough to offer to throw away his money after such an absurd fashion.

However, there was the announcement, plain enough for anyone who could read it. People might speculate, and reason as much as they would; they might raise all sorts of questions and difficulties; but there was the notice, as plain as possible, "Whosoever will call up at my house to-day, shall receive a ten pound note."

It certainly seemed very strange. Such a novel

announcement, we may surely conclude, had never before appeared on a gentleman's gate. Surely he would never be able to make it good. He would be inundated with applicants for his ten pound notes. How could he possibly meet them all? He would need all the treasure lodged in the Bank of England to make good his offer. He must either come to bankruptcy or be proved a liar. It was impossible to take the statement in. It lay far beyond the bounds of credibility. Who could believe such an absurd offer? Surely the writer must be a fool, or he means to make fools of his neighbours.

Not at all. The writer of the extraordinary notice was not a fool or a madman. Neither had he a thought of making fools of others. He merely desired to illustrate a great truth, and to prove, in this novel and striking manner, the slowness of the human heart to believe good news, or to confide in disinterested kindness.

It might, at first sight, seem a dangerous experiment; but evidently the gentleman knew what he was about. He was one who understood something of the heart of man; something, too, of the heart of God; and he knew that his announcement and its results could, in the sequel, be turned to profitable account.

He was not disappointed. Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that out of the number who read that notice, and reasoned and speculated upon it, there was but one who really resolved to put it to the test. Whether he really believed that he should get the ten pound note, we cannot say. At all events, he would try; and so up he went, and knocked at the hall-door, and asked to see the master.

He told him he had come up on the strength of a notice at the gate, promising that, "Whosoever will call up at my house to-day, shall receive a ten pound note." Did he really mean to make that promise good?

Most certainly he did; and to prove that he did, he handed the man the promised ten pound note.

Great was the astonishment of the fortunate man as he went off with his treasure. Very soon, too, the news spread like wild-fire, that the extraordinary notice was really true, and here was a man who could actually speak from experience of the truth of it, and who was in his own person an unanswerable demonstration of the fact that the gentleman meant what he said, and said what he meant. Here was one who had believed the report, or at least had tested its truth, and he was now rejoicing in the practical results. He was the actual happy possessor of the proffered ten pounds.

The whole neighbourhood was roused to interest. The notice which before was regarded as a sham, or the production of a fool or a madman, now began to assume the aspect of solid reality. Here was a *bonâ fide* witness of its truth. Here was one whose eyes had seen and whose hands had handled the fruit of the promise. He had believed the report, and was now in the full enjoyment of the results.

By the close of the day, the fact was well noised abroad, that one man had actually got the ten pound note. There was no mistake about it. He had the money. Men might argue and reason; they might sneer, and shrug their shoulders; they might say what they listed about the announcement and the writer of it; but one thing he knew,

that he himself was in full possession of the ten pound note. That was all he had to say.

Well, as might be expected, this one living example had a powerful effect in leading others to believe the report. There was no getting over the palpable fact. It was, as we say, a grand reality. The consequence was that, the following morning, numbers flocked to the good gentleman's gate; but alas! the notice was gone.

They called at the house to inquire if there were any more ten pound notes to be had.

"No," said the gentleman, "there are no ten pound notes for you. Do you not remember the terms of my notice? And specially have you forgotten the pointed word, 'TO-DAY'? 'Whosoever will call up at my house TO-DAY, shall receive a ten pound note.' Had you come at any time yesterday, even up to the last moment of the eleventh hour, you should, most certainly, have got the proffered ten pound note; but now it is *too late*; the time is past and gone. It may be that many of you sneered at my offer; some may have regarded it as the merest sham; some may have thought me a fool or a madman; but you all see now your mistake. The notice was plain, and simple, and true; there was no mist, no vagueness, no uncertainty about it; but you did not and would not believe it, until you saw with your eyes a man actually in possession of the money; and now you all come flocking to me; but it is too late, *too late*; there is no ten pound note for you. Had you believed the testimony yesterday, you would now be in the full enjoyment of the fruit; but the opportunity is gone for ever. I have nothing more to say."

Now, there is a two-fold lesson to be learnt from

the above novel and striking incident. In the first place, it speaks to the heart of the unconverted reader, and tells him, in its own simple fashion, of the great danger of delay. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." There is no such thing in the word of God as a promise of salvation to-morrow. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iv. 7.) It is a fatal mistake for anyone to put off, for a single hour, the great question of his soul's salvation. No one can tell the moment in which—so far as he is concerned—the day of salvation and the acceptable year of the Lord may close for ever.

If we turn to the prophet Isaiah, chapter lxii. 2, we find the "day of vengeance" separated by a single comma from "the acceptable year." True it is that this comma indicates a period which has already extended over eighteen long centuries; but how is this? Why has the time been lengthened out? Because "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation," "not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9, 15.)

Precious words! words breathing forth the deep and tender love of a Saviour-God who does not (blessed be His name) wish a single soul to perish. It is not possible that a God of love, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Giver of His only begotten Son, could will the condemnation of any poor sinner. Such is the love of His heart, such the wide aspect of His grace, such the activity of His nature, that "He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4.)

Such are the distinct and oft-repeated declara-

tions of Holy Scripture, such its unqualified statements which must not be gainsaid. We must ever distinguish between the aspect of God's righteousness which is "UNTO all," and its final result, which is "UPON all them that believe." (Rom. iii. 22.) The gospel of God proclaims a free, present, and everlasting salvation to every creature under heaven. Not one who hears that glorious gospel is excluded. All are welcome: "WHOSOEVER will, let him take the water of life FREELY." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

These are the true and the gracious sayings of God. Let no man dare to tamper with them. Let no one presume, with his theological scissors, to clip or mutilate those lovely statements of divine grace in order to make them fit into any human system of divinity. It must not be done. There is no system under the sun which can embody, in its narrow compass, the decrees, the counsels, and the purposes of God's government, together with the loving activities, the tender yearnings, the gracious outgoings of His heart and of His nature. You must not attempt to shut up the divine nature and character within the contemptible limits of a human system. The gospel is "UNTO ALL." It bears with it salvation "UNTO ALL." All who hear are responsible. All who perish shall have none but themselves to blame. But let the reader remember the terms, let him deeply ponder that solemn and weighty word, "TO-DAY."

But there is a lesson for the Christian reader also, in our little incident of the ten pound note. Hundreds may have read the notice, and treated it with cold indifference or positive contempt; but the very moment that a case presented itself of a man who had actually received the money, the aspect

of the matter was entirely changed. People might despise, or ridicule, or reject the announcement; but they could not get over the living, palpable fact. Here was a *bonâ fide* witness to the truth. Nothing could shake his testimony. He had proved, in his own person, the reality of the proffered ten pound note. Who could deny it?

Now this told upon the people. There was an irresistible, moral force in the fact of actual possession. This man did not need to say a word. He had but to show the ten pound note. This spoke for itself.

And is it not just the same in reference to the gospel of God? Is there not immense power in the testimony of one who can plainly declare, in his life and ways, that he actually *has* eternal life, that he *is* saved, that his sins *are* forgiven?

Unquestionably there is. And, on the other hand, it is a serious damage to the cause of Christ when professing Christians go on in a doubting, wavering, undecided state of soul, from day to day, and year to year, "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. iii. 7.)

There is real power in the testimony of one who can say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us" (1 John iv. 16); of one who exhibits in his spirit and deportment the practical results of what he is talking about. A bright, happy, holy, consistent, devoted Christian is an unanswerable evidence of the truth of the gospel. The apostle Peter speaks of Christian wives winning their husbands "without the word," winning them by the simple power of "a chaste conversation." (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2.)

May we remember these things. May our whole

bearing prove to those around us that we, at least, whatever men may say, have found out and sweetly experienced the truth of the glorious gospel of the grace of God, and felt its power to satisfy the heart, and brighten our daily path through this world of sin.

THE REJECTED LIFE-BOAT.

FOR several days the sky had been threatening a storm, and vessels of all sizes had retreated into harbour in anticipation of what sailors call "foul weather."

Those anticipations proved correct, and as night closed in the wind rose to a hurricane, the waves lifted their storm-capped crests, and fell in foam upon the beach, or leaped furiously over the seawall, as if in mockery of man's puny attempts to say to them, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job xxxix. 11.)

No ship was in the offing, but the life-boat had been got into readiness in case of need; the coast-guard kept a sharp look-out through the murky night for any unfortunate vessel which might be driven landward; and a few spectators, muffled in their storm-cloaks, stood together on the shore.

Hour after hour passed away. The crew of the life-boat stood by their little craft, ready at a moment's notice to launch her in the face of the tempest.

The old church clock of a neighbouring seaport town struck twelve. As the last stroke of the bell mingled with the howling of the blast and the

incessant thunder of the waves upon the strand, another and a different sound broke upon the ear.

What was it?

The boom of a heavy gun; the ominous and too well-known signal of some ship's deep peril; a signal never made by British sailors till all other hope is gone; an appeal to fellow-men for aid, which tells that everything that experience, skill, and courage could effect has failed to save, and that now, abandoned to winds and waves, the ship and her crew are hurrying to destruction, and **MUST PERISH** unless *help from without*, help outside, beyond, independent of themselves, can be *brought to them* by those who hear the despairing appeal.

Has the reader yet discovered that this exactly depicts his condition by nature? That no efforts of his own, however well meant and carefully conducted, can deliver him out of the ruin he is in, or save him from that eternal destruction towards which time, with resistless force, is hurrying him? Oh solemn thought! Every hour, like a heavy wave against which no skill of yours can avail, is forcing you onward to the hidden shoal, the unseen moment when body and soul shall part asunder, and when, if still in your sins, you *must* make eternal shipwreck! For "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.)

Be intreated to consider your position. Was it for *this* you were born into the world, and had a parent's love and care and guidance? Was it for this you grew up to man's or woman's estate? To be **ETERNALLY WRECKED AT LAST!**

God forbid that such an end should be yours. Consider *all* that it involves, and may God give

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you repentance unto life before it be too late.
(Acts xi. 18.)

The decisive moment may be nearer than you think. Cease, then, *at once*, your vain efforts at self-deliverance. Own to the ruin you are in, like the publican in the temple, who cried, "God be merciful to me a *sinner*." (Luke xviii. 13.) For the grace of God, which brings salvation for all men, hath appeared. (Titus ii. 10.) Why, then, should you be wrecked for ever?

The signal-gun, as if with electric force, started into activity the silent, stationary groups upon the beach. Every hand was put forth to launch the life-boat, her gallant crew sprang in, and, with might and main, they struggled on through the driving surf towards the sinking ship.

Again and again the heavy gun was heard in solemn cadence with the thundering storm, as though to hasten the bold deliverers in their dangerous task; and bravely they responded, as with desperate energy they drove their boat against the furious blast. Now on the crest of a mountainous wave,

"They mount up to the heaven";
and anon in the watery abyss,

"They go down again to the depths";
but at last their courage and prowess are rewarded, and they reach the wreck.

A crowd of terror-stricken women and children, and worn, pale, hopeless men throng the deck. The ship is breaking fast, and wave after wave beats pitilessly against her groaning timbers. But despair turns to hope as the life-boat dashes up alongside, and all are about to rush towards her, when the captain, *maddened by drink*, suddenly places himself before them, and, in a voice of

thunder, swears to shoot the first person who shall attempt to leave the ship !

Consternation seized on all who heard the threat, and for the moment none knew what to do. But no time was to be lost, and in the desperate emergency one man bolder than the rest on board, at the risk of his own life, approached the maniac, and resolutely told him that if he dared discharge his revolver he should instantly be made a prisoner; and as this proved a momentary check upon him, no time was lost in getting the women and children off the doomed vessel.

Not until the life-boat had made some three or four journeys from the ship to the shore was the final rescue of the crew and passengers effected.

But the captain still remained. In vain did the brave deliverers urge him to escape. In vain they reasoned with and besought him, while the ship yet held together, to come into the life-boat. In vain they pointed out the shattered condition of the wreck he was upon, while the rushing tempest threatened every moment to engulf both it and him. He would not listen; but, madly pointing his revolver at them, swore with terrible oaths to shoot the first man who approached him. Four times in succession these devoted men returned to attempt his rescue, but in vain. *He would not be saved!*

Reader, are you like him? "As though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, *be reconciled to God.*" The LIFE-BOAT is at hand. (2 Cor. v. 20.) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.) Life through His death may be yours even now, if you do but believe in His name. His blood

cleanseth from ALL sin. (1 John i. 7.) He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) Why should you perish?

The crew of the life-boat, exhausted by their strenuous labours, were at last forbidden by their commanding officer to make any further effort to save the wretched man; but rockets, with ropes attached, were sent off to the ship, in the faint hope that when the peril grew nearer he would repent of his mad resolve. *Twice with his own hand the maddened man cut the line that formed the only link between himself and life and safety;* and while the wondering spectators on shore yet watched in mingled awe and pity, a larger wave than usual seemed to strike the wreck.

A moment more, and the dark object that had so intensely attracted every eye suddenly fell to pieces. At the same instant a loud, piercing, and most bitter cry of unutterable agony and horror rose above the roar of the storm from the lips of the now doomed man, and, SELF-DESTROYED, he sank headlong into the dark abyss of waters.

Too late he saw the fearful consequences of his madness as the shattered vessel fell away beneath his feet. Too late! He had flung away body and soul; and could he have had his will he would not have been alone in the destruction he brought upon himself.

It is seldom that such an instance as the above comes under our notice; but if the reader is yet out of Christ, if he is yet in the shattered wreck of the old Adam nature and standing, his peril is as great, though it may not be so apparent, as was that of the poor drunken captain of the foundered vessel. And if, after having heard the gospel

of the grace of God again and again, salvation brought nigh time after time, you are still a rejecter, your folly is as extreme, and your doom as certain. Persist not till too late in your mad rejection of the only Life-boat! Who shall tell what the lost spirit experiences as it parts from the body on the death bed, when, too late, all the horrors of its real situation rush like a torrent upon it? No cry is heard, but in voiceless agony more terrible far than the frenzied wail of the doomed captain, it hurries to that place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark ix. 48.) Who shall depict, or even conceive the horrors of its situation? Is there no hope there? None for ever and ever!

Reader, *can* you continue a REJECTER OF CHRIST, to be hereafter, and for ever, numbered among the self-destroyed?

Oh! do not let the word depart,
 And close thine eyes against the light!
 Poor sinner, harden not thy heart:
 Thou would'st be saved? why not to-night?
 To-morrow's sun may never rise
 Upon thy long-deluded sight:
 This is the time, oh! then, be wise!
 Thou would'st be saved? why not to-night?
 Our God in pity lingers still,
 And wilt thou thus His love requite?
 Renounce at once thy stubborn will;
 Thou would'st be saved? why not to-night?
 The world has nothing thee to give,
 It has no new, no pure delight:
 Come now to Jesus Christ, and live!
 Thou would'st be saved? why not to-night?

Vol. X. No. 115. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.

GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

"YOU WANT CHRIST."

HE was a soldier whom I met a few months since. I said to him, "Do you preach Christ?"

"No," he replied, "I am not a preacher, but a button-holer."

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Oh, I get hold of them by the button-hole, and just show them what God says."

"Well, that's good. Tell me how you were brought to Christ."

He then told me his little history. "I and another comrade were nearly the worst men in the regiment. He was converted. I tried by every means to get him back to old ways, and would have moved hell to do so; but he was hard and fast, which distressed me. I had lost my chance. I was well up in the Scriptures, had received a

good education, and had been brought up in a good position in society, but it profited me nothing. I enlisted, and went on from bad to worse.

“ Well, one day a missionary came into the barrack-room. He seemed a nice man, and I thought, ‘ Well, I will soon start you.’ I had always done so before, and had no doubt but that I should do so now. He listened to me, and when I had done, said, ‘ My friend, *you want Christ!*’ He fixed his eye upon me and said again, ‘ *You want Christ.*’

“ Instantly I looked for the ‘ pontoons ’ for a way of escape, and soon went and lay upon my bed, sick and weary at heart. But he followed me there, saying, ‘ Friend, you want Christ, you want Christ,’ which distressed me much. He would not leave me till he had extracted a promise from me that I would go to a preaching he was to hold that night. I promised, and went, in spite of every effort of Satan and man to prevent; and God sent me home *saved*.

“ It was through His own words, contained in the third chapter of John’s Gospel, ver. 16, ‘ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,’ and chapter v., ver. 24, ‘ 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.’ ”

He then told me his besetting sins, but “ God *saved* me and *keeps* me. I said when I came to Christ, ‘ Blessed Lord, Thou knowest what I am! If *Thou savest*, *Thou must keep* me ’; and so He

has in the past, and I trust Him to keep me in the future. Every morning I just tell Him that He knows what I am, and that I cannot keep myself; and every night I just thank Him that He has kept me. I have nothing to boast in but *Himself.*"

Perhaps the reader's case finds no parallel in that of this poor soldier, inasmuch as you are not openly profane or irreligious; but if you have not CHRIST, you are as far from happiness and heaven as he was before he found Him. Are you rich in this world? Alas, how poor if you have not CHRIST! Are you learned? In Him ONLY are found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Are you toiling to add house to house and field to field? "Thou fool" (it may be), "this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Are you seeking to drown the thought of a judgment to come in the giddy maze of pleasure, or in the wearisome round of fashionable frivolity? You cannot do it. Beneath a gay exterior you carry a *burdened heart!* You are an *immortal being!* You have cravings that none but Christ can satisfy! I say to you, my unsaved reader, YOU WANT CHRIST! You are beguiled by Satan into believing a LIE. Come to Him who is the TRUTH. You are wandering far from God. Come to Christ; He is "the way" to God. You are *dead* in trespasses and sins. Come to Him, and He will give you *life*, for He is "the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment!" Are you prepared to face these stern realities? Not if your soul is unsaved, your sins unforgiven. In Christ you may have salvation and pardon, but without

Him you must perish everlastingly, for "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." **YOU WANT CHRIST.** Reader, accept this blessed gift of God, His only begotten Son! Flee to this haven of rest; for He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Lay hold on this eternal life, anchor your tempest-tossed soul on this Rock of Ages, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) "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.)

HAVE YOU A TITLE TO GLORY?

NOT long ago, I was called to the bedside of a young woman who was dying of consumption. For many months an old Christian had been taking her tracts, and speaking to her of the Saviour, but she had not made any profession as to salvation, and her relatives were most anxious as to her soul, though not saved themselves.

A glance showed how near the end she was. She did not seem to notice anyone.

Going over to the bed, I remarked, "You are feeling very poorly to-day, are you not?"

There was no answer.

Again I spoke, but she did not seem to hear. Then bending down close to her ear, I said, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The dying eyes opened, and looked up at me. Struggling for breath she gasped out, "I believe it. I'm trusting to it. I'm waiting to go."

The next day I heard she had gone; and I knew where. She had a "title to glory." It was the blood of Christ; nothing else. Indeed, there is no other title, though so many are trying to make one by their works, their good lives, even their own faith. But it will not do. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

This dear woman had a title by simply trusting the Lord Jesus. It makes one sad to find so few who have "The Blood," as their title; and yet nothing else will do for God. Reader, if you have not trusted the same blessed Saviour as this woman did, if you have not a "title to glory," just close your eyes for five minutes, and think, "Where shall I spend Eternity?" This life is so short; but Eternity is for ever and ever. Do not try to do something to gain God's favour by yourself. First own yourself absolutely unfit, and that there is no good in you, then take what God offers you to-day, salvation through the finished work of the Lord Jesus on the cross (John xix. 30).

Trust the blessed Saviour, and prove to be true for yourself that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin," and rejoice that you have a "title to glory," which no one can take away from you.

"Our title to glory
We read in Thy blood."

F.C.C.

THE HEAD PEW-OPENER.

A WOMAN who had been "head pew-opener" in a church in London for forty years, was remarkable for her Pharisaism. She had never missed "church" during all that lengthy period. On saint-days and Sundays she was regularly at her post. The vestments, the wine, the bread, the alms-boxes were all under her care and supervision, nor would she, for the world, allow things so "holy" to be touched by other hands if she could help it.

The cleaning, sweeping, lighting were done by others; her charge was the "holy things;" to cut the bread into cubes of equal size, to decant the wine into the chalice, to see that the vestments were properly prepared, and conveniently hung, for the incumbent, on one hook, and for the curate, on the other, in the vestry; to usher the "better class" of pew-holders into their seats, and those only; to supervise the operations of the other pew-openers, and scold the old beadle occasionally, were her duties, and privileges too.

Always there, and joining in all the prayers and responses, listening to the reading of the Bible, and to some thousands of sermons, exact in all her duties, moral in her life, and without a stain upon her character, surely *she* was fit, if ever woman was, for heaven, "when it should please God that her time was come." Do not you think so, my reader? Forty years of regular attendance on public worship, week-days, saint-days, and Sundays: think of that!

Well, she *did* think of it, and it gave her profound satisfaction. If it is true that

" 'Tis religion that must give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die,"

she had enough "religion" for half a dozen ordinary people; and it would seem she thought so. As to the Bible, she had heard it read so often in church, that she knew it pretty well by heart, and the Prayer-book too, of course.

Besides attendance at the regular religious services called public worship, she, as "head pew-opener," was always present at baptisms, marriages, and funerals, and had attended them so often, that she was an authority on the whole subject to every new curate just from college, and could have gone through all the ceremonies without any book at all.

In short, she was a living, moving, breathing epitome of *religiousness*, and her very manner savoured of a full consciousness of the fact. No Pharisee that ever lived, no devotee, nun, monk, friar, or hermit could possibly lay claim to more of it than she had, and if religiousness *could* save anyone, she was entitled to be saved out-and-out.

But one day trouble came upon her, and sorely disturbed "the even tenor of her way," as it will do even with the most religious; and a Christian visitor, on calling upon her one morning, as he had occasionally done before to little purpose, found her in considerable distress of mind. She was a widow; her grown-up children were scattered here and there, some in one place, and some in another, and she had that morning heard of something, as to one of her sons, which gave her much concern. What it was, the writer now forgets; but he well remembers how greatly her Pharisaical heart was softened by the calamity that had come upon her so unexpectedly, and how much more ready than ever before she seemed to be to listen to what he had to say.

In course of conversation she remarked, with tears in her eyes, "We must expect these things, you know, sir, as a punishment for our sins."

Now, the visitor must confess that he was at first quite taken aback to hear so *excellent* a woman (in her own judgment) acknowledge to any "sins" at all. Had she not been cleared *every* Sunday morning, for forty years, when the "Absolution" was read, and "declared and pronounced" forgiven? Had she not been as regular in her "attendance on divine service" as the two clergymen put together? Could any one of her ungodly neighbours (with whom she had as little association as a clean surplice with a sweep's frock) point the finger at her?

Ah! but, my reader, *God* had come in, and, for the first time since she was born, she had begun to consider her position *before Him*. Have *you* ever done so? You will have to do with God at some time or other; it *must* come to that, either before the grave, or after it. Why not *now*? "As I live, saith the Lord, EVERY knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue confess to God." Better *now* than before the great white throne; for, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation": *then* will be "the day of judgment," and *no* Saviour for the lost! (Rom. xiv. 11; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Matt. xi. 20-24).

Recovering from his momentary surprise, the visitor remarked, "God does not punish sin in that way, and if He did, it could not put sin away. Moreover, the sinner could not bear the judgment due to *one* sin, much less to all he has committed. Nothing less than everlasting wrath is the due reward of sin."

"Very true, sir," said the pew-opener, who, after forty years of regular attendance at church, of course knew, or affected to know, all about these things. "Very true, sir; still, God chastens His children!"

"Those that are His children, yes; but not to put away their sins. The blood of Jesus Christ,

His Son, can alone do that, and *it* 'cleanseth us from all sin,' so that there are none left to punish us for."

So saying, the visitor took his departure, little supposing that remarks so few and simple would have any more effect than many that had been made before in vain. No; it is not in the force or wisdom of man's words, much less in that religious excitement which is now all but universal, that "the power of God unto salvation" is found. It is neither in the wind, the earthquake, nor the fire, that the Lord is known, but in "the still small voice." (Rom. i. 16; 1 Kings xix. 11, 12).

Have you, my reader, ever heard that voice? Has *God* ever spoken to you in His word? If not, you are yet in your sins, however frequently you may have heard or read the Bible, repeated prayers, or attended on religious ordinances.

This woman was yet in her sins; but God was pleased, in His infinite grace and love, to speak to her conscience in that short sentence, "Nothing less than everlasting wrath is the due reward of sin"; and, in a moment, forty years of Pharisaism and self-righteousness were swept away for ever. Convicted of sin before God, she saw that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"; like Bartimæus of old, she "cast away her garment, and rose" out of the condition of *religious apathy* in which she had so long been, "and came to Jesus." (Isa. lxiv. 6; Mark x. 50).

Often had she heard, and long had she known, that word, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7). She knew it was in the Bible, and in the Prayer-book too, and to count the number of times it had been repeated in her hearing, would have been almost as difficult as to count the number of the stars. Her very familiarity with the phrase, as a phrase, had

deprived it of all point and meaning to her conscience.

How is it with my reader? Let him ask his own soul the question, for, as some waters are said to petrify wood to stone, so a religious familiarity with Scripture phraseology, if it be not received as *God speaking* to the soul of the hearer or reader, only encrusts the heart with a coating more impenetrable than the stoutest plates of steel on an English ironclad.

But God had stripped off the adamantine veil from this woman's heart and conscience, that it was "naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom she had to do;" she had, as I have said, fled to Jesus, who declares, "Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out." (John vi. 37). There, in His presence, she learned the full and blessed import of words so often heard before, "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and, believing them *as spoken to her of God Himself*, she got peace at once.

If the visitor was surprised to hear *her* acknowledge to "sins," in the last interview, his surprise was great indeed when, on calling again, he witnessed the change which grace had wrought in some two or three short weeks. She was so altered, that, except in features, she was hardly the same woman, and even over them had passed an indescribable something that spoke of a complete revolution within. Yes, she was verily "a new creature in Christ Jesus."

"What you said, sir, as to the judgment due to sin, and that God does not punish us for it in this world, set me thinking. Sin seemed an awful thing to me, for it is against *God*, and not against our neighbour. 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done evil in THY sight.' (Ps. li. 4). But, thank God, His blessed Son bore the judgment which we

could never have borne, and His blood 'cleanseth us from all sin.' "

She had sought to be justified on the ground of religious *works*; she now found herself justified on the ground of *faith*, which is simply taking God at His word; and hence she had "peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1). The consciousness of this shed a halo of life and peace around her, so that all who had so long known her in the church she attended, marked and commented on the humble, happy, altered deportment she unconsciously manifested.

She has, doubtless, long since gone home. The old church bell will never more summon her to duties she had once prized as a part of her religious life: the formal services, the organ's peal, the solemn chant, the pulpit orations, all once trusted in as forming together a part of her justification before God, are gone for ever, and in their stead the glory of God, the ceaseless harmony of the golden harps, the hallelujahs of the redeemed, "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," now surround her; she gazes, with undimmed eyes, upon that face, once "so marred" for us, and knows, as she could not know it here, the wondrous depths of the love that snatched her from the very brink of the abyss on which she had stood so unconsciously for forty years, blinded by the false peace of "religious exercises," in the room of Christ. (Rev. i. 5, 6; Isa. liii.).

J. L. K.

"THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9).

READER, I know not if this grace to thee
Has ever been revealed, or if it be (Matt. xvi. 17.)
That o'er thy heart the veil may yet remain,
And nature's darkness still within thee reign;
Or if "the light of life," come from above,
Has yet been shown thee in the Saviour's love;
Or if thy heart has yet been made to feel
Those wounds which naught but Jesus' blood can
heal.

I know not whether, by the Spirit led,
Thou to the hope before us yet hast fled, (Heb.
vi. 18.)

And found a refuge there; or whether still
Thou'rt captive led by Satan at his will; (Eph.
ii. 26.)

For such, alas! the fearful state of those
Who the great mass of human kind compose.
Their heart is hardened, and their eyes are blind,
(2 Cor. iv. 4).

The way of safety few there are that find.
Yet most profess to seek the road to heaven,
And hope their sins may some way be forgiven.

Some think by works to gain the glorious height,
And say, Do this, and that; all will be right (Rom.
viii. 8.)

Some think the *name* of Christian which they bear
Enough to waft them to those regions fair. (Rev.
iii. 1.)

While others think, because they hear the Word,
They must indeed be children of the Lord.
Another says, If I from *this* abstain,

And if from *that* loved pleasure I refrain,
 Heaven must be mine, because I do no sin,
 And surely I have *right* to enter in!
 Another of his honesty will boast,
 And thinks that one so upright can't be lost.
 Another says, as "charity ne'er fails,"
 I give much alms, and that with God prevails;
 My deeds of kindness will not be forgot,
 Therefore eternal life must be my lot. (1 Cor. xiii. 3.)

But he who would be saved because he's good
 Rejects the Saviour, tramples on His blood,
 Denies the truth of God, thinks light of sin,
 And seeks not by "the Door" to enter in. (John x. 9.)
 There are who trust, with vague and groundless
 hope,

That God, in mercy to their souls, will ope
 The door of life, forgetting all the past,
 And so receive them to Himself at last.
 But such forget (though mercy dwells with God)
 That justice, too, with Him has her abode.

And yet another class is brought to view,
 Who count on Jesus as their Saviour too.
 If by a righteous life they may obtain
 His grace and favour, so salvation gain,
 They seek to mix His merits with their own,
 Who, if He save at all, will save alone. (Rom.
 iii. 28.)

Thus men are blindly led at Satan's will,
 Whose one great aim's to keep them blinded still,
 And thus prevent them feeling their great need
 Of that shed blood by which they may be freed
 (Heb. ix. 22.)

From the just sentence once pronounced on man
 When Adam sinned, and so the curse began.

But hold! too far I may perhaps have gone;
 The reader may not relish such a tone:
 And Satan whispers, too, "It may offend."

It may ; but should I act the part of friend
 If, having once in danger been from these,
 I others left unwarily at ease,
 Nor sought to warn them of the various ways
 By which the enemy of souls betrays ?
 Or, knowing somewhat of my Saviour's love,
 I neither hand, nor lips, nor tongue would move
 Some sense of it to others to convey,
 But silence kept, nor named it when I may ?
 Could it be truly said to fill my heart,
 If I refused its knowledge to impart ?
 Or shall I ever be ashamed of Him (1 Peter i.
 18, 19.)

Who died my soul from judgment to redeem ?
 Far be the thought ! and may I more proclaim
 His grace, and triumph in His glorious name.

Then, reader, thy attention give, I pray,
 While I attempt a suited word to say
 Of that transcendent grace which ever shone
 In the blest Saviour ; chiefly when alone
 He bore the wrath of God, to sinners due,
 " Made sin for us," though sin He never knew.
 (2 Cor. v. 21.)

Consider Him, high on the throne of God,
 The Father's equal, the Almighty Word.
 Now view Him in the lowly manger laid,
 A holy infant, e'en a new-born babe,
 Possessed of nought on earth, though His by right
 All earth and heaven, yea, all power and might ;
 Self-emptied now of all His glory, see
 Him Who was God from all eternity.
 Then pause awhile, and ask what this can mean.
 Could man have saved himself, would this have
 been ?

And now, omitting all that lies between,
 Let us behold the almost final scene
 Of His blest life. For this, repair with me
 And see Him prostrate in Gethsemane.

There, in the prospect of the wrath of God,
Behold His sweat, as 'twere great drops of blood.
Now hear what ardent fervour marks His prayer;
What sighs, what tears, what groans were mingled
there!

Think of the bitter agony He felt,
What awful dread o'erwhelmed Him, as He knelt,
And prayed His Father that He might be spared,
If possible, the cup for Him prepared.
Then mark the grace that in His answer shone:
"Not mine, O Father, but Thy will be done."

And now I ask thee to consider why
That blest One should endure such agony.
Why that strong crying, why those bitter tears,
That supplication, and those earnest prayers,
If any way, save God's could have been found
For man's escape, by sin and Satan bound?

Now let us further still His grace pursue,
And see what fresh displays are brought to view.
Turn, then, thine eyes, and see the Lord of all
A patient prisoner in the judgment-hall;
There see Him stand, forsaken and alone, (Matt.
xxvi. 56.)

Deserted by those friends He called His own;
Looking for comforters, but none were there;
For pity too, yet no one seemed to care.
The Lord of glory, Who the worlds had made,
Accused, condemned, insulted, and betrayed!

Take one step more, and what a sight we see!
Him nailed a Victim to the accursed tree. (1 Peter
ii. 24.)

Think of the anguish He endured within,
To ransom sinners from the curse of sin. (Isa. liii.
10-13.)

Think of the horror felt in that dread hour,

When wounded, crushed, and bruised by Satan's
 power,
 That bitter cry He uttered on the tree,
 "Why, O My God, hast Thou forsaken Me?"
 And think again who 'twas that, bleeding there,
 Endured God's wrath to save thee from despair;
 The Lord of glory come down from on high
 To dwell with sinners, and for sinners die.

Such was the grace of Jesus, and so great,
 So full of pity for our lost estate, (Luke xix. 10.)
 That not e'en death's worst form could Him
 prevent
 From carrying to the full His kind intent,
 Of saving us from ruin and despair,
 That we at last might His bright glory share.

There sinners saved by grace rejoice to dwell
 On that rich grace that saved their souls from hell;
 There in that glory bright, the blood-bought throng
 Adoring sing the everlasting song;
 And aye the burden of their song shall be,
 "All glory, blessing, Lamb of God, to Thee; (Rev.
 v. 9.)
 For Thou wast slain, hast washed us in Thy blood,
 And Thou hast made us kings and priests to God."
 With Thee, Lord Jesus, we shall for ever reign,
 For ever bless and praise Thy glorious name.

G.G.

VOL. X. No. 116. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4 Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT

GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5.

1 John iv. 8, 16.

1 John iv. 9.

"Compel them to come in."

(Read Luke xiv. 15-24.)

The grace of God may be compared to a stream gushing from the mountain side; which, though frequently meeting with opposition, flows on. The force of the current manifests the fulness of the fountain. It has many obstacles to overcome; but the stream being fed by an exhaustless spring, it acquires strength in its progress; and rushing past or over every hindrance, it runs on, refreshing the region of its course, until it reaches the meeting-place of kindred streams.

But oh! with what opposition, from all quarters, has this grace had to contend! How often, for a moment, has its course been interrupted, and violently forced into another chan-

nel! The nature of God's grace is entirely contrary to man's selfishness. He is angry with God, and hates his brother, because the highest favours of heaven are bestowed on the most unworthy of the children of men. Hence Cain was angry, and killed Abel; and the elder brother was angry, and would not go into the house where grace reigned. (Gen. iv.; Luke xv.) It has ever been so. Naturally, man dislikes it, speaks against it, seeks to turn it aside and get rid of it altogether, like Israel at Sinai, or, failing in this, he seeks to pollute the pure stream of heaven, by mingling with it the fancied worthiness of his own feelings and doings. In all ages of the world, from every human heart, grace has met with determined opposition; but such is the depth, fulness, and energy of the love of God, the native source of all grace, that nothing can effectually stay its course, or even hinder its progress. The fountain can never fail, the channel can never be choked, and grace, *free grace*, in spite of every obstacle, must flow on through this desert world, until it has visited, refreshed, and blessed its most distant nations.

These thoughts have been suggested in reading Luke xiv. 15-24. Here, our Lord points out the onward course of the pure grace of God, and the spring from whence it flows. In reply to the one who said, while he sat at meat with Him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," the Lord immediately assured him that the supper was ready, that grace had provided and prepared everything, and that he had a free invitation to come and

eat of that heavenly bread. "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servants at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready." They had been previously invited, but now they are intreated to come, for it was "supper-time" and all things were ready. But, alas! "they all with one consent began to make excuse." None of them said, in plain terms, "I will not come," but they were full of excuses. How like the reception that the full, free, and hearty invitations of grace still meet with from many! Few will say plainly, I shall have nothing to do with Christ or His salvation; yet how often are both neglected, nay, despised, for a worldly pleasure, a self-gratification, a shadow, a nothing.

From the beginning God had acted in grace, and saved them that believed His word. But the full expression of His grace was reserved until Christ came. He was "full of grace and truth." (John i. 14, 16, 17.) "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) Grace reigned. None, observe, were unfit or unwelcome guests for the feast on account of their sins. God was not imputing their trespasses unto them. He was acting in grace—pure grace—grace without rebuke. So that there was full forgiveness to the chief of sinners, according to the riches of grace. The guest that was cast out, according to the account given by Matthew (chap. xxii.), was condemned by the king, not on account of what he had done, but on account of what he had

refused. Grace had provided everything. But he despised the robe that was suited to the feast. He was a rejecter of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment. And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Here, observe, nothing is said to the man about what we may call his sins in general, but simply that of having come hither without the wedding garment; and having refused the grace of God, which alone could meet his need, all his other sins, of heart and life, remained, and sank with him into the place of outer darkness. This is deeply solemn. Every remembrance of the ground of condemnation must prove an awful pang in the depths of woe.

Christ alone is the sinner's salvation. He alone meets all our need.

" My strength, my shield, my safe abode,
My robe before the throne of God."

We have all in Him. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." (1 John v. 10, 11.) Until Christ is received, nothing is received. The sinner remains in all his guilt, and under the awful weight of his unpardoned sins. Oh! how marvellous that any should be found refusing to be saved, refusing to be clothed in the king's raiment, decked with the king's jewels, and made happy

for ever in the king's royal favour. Oh, then, destitute sinner, come! Christless, graceless, homeless sinner, come! Thy God calleth thee, the Saviour inviteth thee, the Holy Spirit entreateth thee, "for all things are *now* ready." A home, a robe, a welcome, a royal feast, all await thee. Why not come? Why not come now? Remember, oh, remember, that ere long, it must either be the king's banqueting house, or the deep, dark pit of eternal despair.

Our blessed Lord, in the parable before us, refers to three classes in connection with the stream of grace.

1. To those who were much engaged with their own earthly interests, and so had little relish for a heavenly feast. A piece of ground, five yoke of oxen, domestic duties, were more to them than the rich provisions of grace. These things, though right and lawful in themselves, so filled their hearts, as to lead them to slight and neglect heavenly things, and thereby proved their eternal ruin. The king at last most solemnly declares of all such, "that none of those men who were bidden shall taste of my supper." They were not condemned, observe, for having, or for attending to these things, but because they were satisfied with them, cared nothing for the provisions of grace, and so refused the invitation to the "great supper." But grace, though disregarded by such, flows on to others.

2. The second class, to whom the Master sent the invitation, were those who were poor and helpless, in the streets and lanes of the city; the right class to value kindness from others.

When brought to see and feel our need, and our utter helplessness, such as are here pictured before us, the kindness that offers to meet all our need will be welcomed and appreciated. And what a picture the Lord here draws of man's spiritual condition! Poor, maimed, halt, blind. In poverty, and without hands to work, or feet to walk, or eyes to see. Oh, what a condition! What but the pure grace of God in the gospel of His Son can meet such a state of things? It is not enough merely to open a place in a locality, and announce that there will be preaching. If grace be at work, it will do much more, knowing the soul's deep necessities. The neighbourhood must be visited, the streets and the lanes searched, that the spiritually destitute may be found out, an invitation given with beseeching earnestness, and, if possible, brought, it may be, in the first place, to where the gospel is preached, but with the one object of their being brought to Christ, that they may, ere long, fill the house of the Lord, and dwell with Him for ever. "Go out *quickly* into the streets and lanes of the city," is the Master's own most urgent command.

3. The third class are found in the extreme outer circles, "the highways and hedges." The nations of the Gentiles, which, when compared with the city of Jerusalem, God's earthly centre, are the distant places of the earth. But grace flows on, its energy and power manifestly increasing notwithstanding the world-wide circle of its course, and the opposition it has had to overcome in every inch of its progress. Its source is in the living God.

Two things seem to characterise the scene of gospel labour before the banqueting-house is filled, and the door closed.

1. The Master's long suffering, and patient perseverance in grace. To the first class, he "sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, *Come: for all things are now ready.*" To the second class, he says, "GO OUT QUICKLY AND BRING IN HITHER THE POOR," etc. But to the third, He says, "GO OUT AND COMPEL THEM TO COME IN." Evangelists should be like the press-gang of heaven.

2. The energy of the servant, as one who has caught his Master's spirit. He can return from his preaching mission and say, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Blessed is that servant who can give in such an account, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded," and still be as fresh for work as ever. "Yet there is room;" as if he had said, May I go out again, and find some more to fill up that room? Oh, what a happy state of things, in any sphere of worthy service, when the servant enters into the Master's spirit, but surely, most of all, in such a sphere as this!

"I think I see the meaning of that text, now, 'Compel them to come in,'" said an earnest preacher to the writer a few days ago, and gave in substance the following explanation. "If I meet a friend in the street that I am anxious to see in my own house, I do not merely say to him, The door is open, come in, we shall be glad to see you. No; I entreat him, I urge him, I take him by the hand, and so cause him to

feel the earnestness of my heart, that he is compelled to come in. Well, so should we cause unconverted sinners to feel assured of our love for their precious souls, as to compel them to come to Him who loves them infinitely more than we do. I was so convinced that this is the spirit of that text, that last Lord's day evening I was constrained to adopt a new line of action. I felt great earnestness for the conversion of souls in preaching. At the close of the discourse I stated to the people that I should be happy to remain for prayer and conversation, as the Lord might lead, after the usual service was over. I gave a hearty invitation to all, but especially to those who were anxious. Very few left. And, for the first time in my life, in place of remaining near to my desk until the people had removed, I went straight in amongst them. Some of the brothers prayed most earnestly. I began to speak to some who were in deep concern; others followed my example; so that in a short time we had quite a scene of deep interest, and rich blessing; indeed, such as we have never had before on any occasion. Several were brought into peace, others were passing through deep exercise of soul. One man was so pressed in spirit that he stood up, and in a few simple words, declared what God had done for his soul. The effect was most blessed. We have had special meetings for prayer, that the work may go on. The brethren are all stirred up."

Thus the stream of God's rich, full, unwearyed, persevering grace flows on, and thus it must flow on, ever deepening, widening, and

extending, until it has reached the utmost limits of God's purposes of love, and gathered from the nations of the earth as many precious souls as shall fill the house, which is as large as the heart of God.

May the Lord, the heavenly Master, so teach, guide, and lead all His dear servants now in the gospel-field, fully to carry out the true meaning of the text, in the divine power of the Holy Spirit, so that many around us may be morally compelled to come in, and that His house may soon be filled.

" I want an even, strong desire,
 I want a calmly fervent zeal,
 To pull poor souls out of the fire,
 So snatch them from the verge of hell,
 And turn them to a pardoning God,
 And quench the brands in Jesu's blood."

The Bad Half-Crown.

A few months ago, while waiting for my ticket in a country railway office, I observed a half-crown nailed to the counter. The young man who was giving out the tickets, also attracted my attention. He seemed a sharp youth, and had an air of importance about him, becoming the responsibilities of his office. With his hand raised to the ticket department, and the finger ready to pounce upon the right one, he shouted, "First or second, sir?"

Being the last one that was then waiting, I thought I should like to have a few words with our young friend about the half-crown, so I

said to him as I was picking up my change, "What is this you have got nailed to the counter, my boy?"

"A half-crown, sir."

"But why have you it nailed to the counter?"

"Because it is a bad one, sir."

"So you were determined it should go no further. But now, tell me, does it remind you of anything very serious?"

"I don't know," (looking very straight at me and paying great attention).

"Well, I'll tell you, my boy, what it has brought to my mind: that will be the end of all hypocrites, they will at last be nailed down under the awful judgment of God. And they will never be able to get away from it. Now, *you* look at that half-crown. A nail driven through it—fixed to the one spot, and exposed to public condemnation. Every one sees that it is a detected hypocrite, and exhibited there as a warning to others.

"Now, mark, such will be the end of all who make a profession of religion, but who have not Christ in their hearts. Like that half-crown, they may deceive many for a time, but they cannot deceive God. Can they? Oh no! that half-crown may have passed through a good many hands before it was detected, but at last it fell into the hands of a judge who knew that it was not real, and so condemned it, and would let it go no further. And now, *you* remember this, God will, at last, ring, as it were, every professor on His counter, His judgment-seat; and every one that is counterfeit, not real, will then be detected, condemned, and nailed

to the place of judgment for ever; so that every time you throw down a ticket, and look on this bad half-crown, you are reminded of the awful end of those who are not right in heart with God."

This last sentence was evidently more than our young friend could comfortably bear, for he immediately exclaimed, with his usual sharpness, "I'LL HAVE IT TAKEN UP." After a few words as to the certainty of coming judgment, we parted.

Finding we had to wait a little for the train, a friend who was with me, and who had listened to the conversation, returned to the office for a platform ticket; and without saying a word to the lad, he merely gave him a playful look, pointing to the half-crown, when the youth again said in a very determined tone, "I'll have it taken up."

How like, thought I, to the natural heart. "I'll have it taken up." It had been nailed there for the purpose of warning others against passing bad money, lest they might be detected and brought to judgment. But as soon as it was made to bear as a warning for his own conscience before God, he immediately declared that he would have it removed. Rather than be reminded of the fearful end of those who have not Christ as their righteousness, he would silence the testimony by removing the witness. But ah! what a poor, self-deceiving way this is of getting rid of a present difficulty. The future trouble remains. Yet, alas! how constantly this is done, both by young and old.

The natural mind soon manifests its dislike

to the most affectionate warnings of truest friendship. The witness, if not removed, will be unheeded or avoided. How often the lips of wisdom are silent, while the heart burns with the most yearning anxiety to say a faithful word in sweetest, tenderest love, to the object of its deep solicitude. But in vain. Guessing at what is coming, the warning voice is rudely hushed, by a heartless, "I have heard all that before, many a time; what's the good of always coming out with the same thing? I know it quite as well as you can tell me." Under such circumstances the heart must seek relief in pouring out its burning, pent-up love into the bosom of God. The icy indifference of the deceived, perishing sinner, forms a wonderful contrast to the genial sustaining presence of God. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." "Let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Psalm lv. 22; Philippians iv. 6-9.)

Most in our day, and perhaps all who read this paper, know, that no man can stand approved before God in his own righteousness. He may have been, touching the outward letter of the law, blameless, but when tried by God's standard, he will surely be found deficient, disapproved, and rejected. "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant," said David, "for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." "All our righteousnesses," says Isaiah, "are as filthy rags." (Ps. cxliii. 2; Isa. lxiv. 6.) These truths are absolute. We have not to

wait till we reach the judgment-seat to know God's estimate of man's righteousness.

It is something peculiarly offensive to Him. Not only is it as "rags," compared with a perfect garment, but as "filthy rags," compared with the robe of spotless white. Such a condition of soul is most loathsome to the holiness of God, and must be judged by His righteousness. *Woe, woe, eternal woe, must be the sinner's portion who appears before the judgment-seat in such a state.*

Had the scripture said, "All our *wickednesses* are as filthy rags," there might have been some hope for the righteousnesses, but when it says, "All our *righteousnesses* are as filthy rags," all hope is cut off. The best things we have, or can produce, are totally rejected as utterly unfit for God, and for the place of His holiness. Fair appearances there may be, and that which will pass among men as genuine enough for any one. But God looks on the heart. He has but one standard. He looks for Christ. He tests the heart's estimate of Him. If that dear name be found graven on its tablets as its all in all, it will surely pass as the genuine, current coin of the realm of heaven.

But oh! where Christ is not the stamp of the heart, all is utterly worthless to God. If He fills it not, it must be empty indeed, whatever else may be in it. If there be no Christ in the heart, there can be no pardon, no peace, no salvation, no eternal life. Sin remains, and all its direful and never-ending consequences. What will, what can, God say to a Christless soul at the judgment-seat?

"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared (not for you, but) for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

This must be the fearful and inevitable doom of all who live and die without a personal interest in Christ, whatever their appearances or professions may have been in this world. Nothing but the blood of Christ can save a soul from the lake of fire. Nothing but the preciousness of Christ can stamp a soul for the rank of heaven. His precious blood alone cleanseth from all sin, and He, *Himself*, is the *righteousness of God to every one that believeth*. (Ephesians i. 7; Romans x. 1-13.)

I observed that the bad half-crown had a shining face like the good ones, and, outwardly, it had the same stamp upon it. But at heart it was bad, there was no silver there. Only base metal. It was a hypocrite, a mere professor. It pretended to be what it was not. It had a fair outward appearance, but no reality in heart. I observed, further, that the nail of judgment pierced both the head and the heart. Mournful illustration of the seat of the thoughts, the understanding, the will, the desires, the affections and passions, being penetrated with the iron rod of God's sore displeasure. Oh! is such, in very deed, the end of the mere formalist? Unquestionably; and of all Christless, graceless, souls. The righteousness of God must judge evil.

But I also further thought, will the wicked at last be fixed to one place? The doomed

half-crown could not move a hair's breadth. How monotonous! how ignominious! Affixed to one spot, a public spectacle. Labelled, "A once shining professor, but now a detected, dishonoured, doomed, deceiver." But oh! thought I, shall it be thus at last with all who have no true interest in Christ, professors or not professors? Most assuredly. The word of truth has gone forth from the lips of Him who cannot change. It stands recorded in the statute book of heaven. And thus it runs, and may my reader mark it well. "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. 26.)

My mind now turned to a case in point, to one who made a great profession. I mean the man who had not on the wedding garment. (Matt. xxii.) It does not appear from the parable that any of the guests thought that he was different from themselves, so thoroughly had the reality been imitated. And so it is now. Immense numbers in the present day make a profession of religion, of whom no man on earth could feel quite certain as to whether they were real or merely formal Christians. Their lives are strictly moral, they regularly attend some place of worship, they give of their money for church, mission, and benevolent purposes; they sing psalms and hymns as sweetly as any one. They read the scriptures, pray and preach, it may be, in public, and yet when the unmistakable signs of divine life in the soul

are looked for, the search is in vain. We have to leave such cases, thankful that we are not their judges, until the Lord come.

Such seems to have been the case in the parable. He may have occupied a high place amongst professors. But there was no cleaving of the heart to Christ, and trusting in Him alone. Oh, no! for the full promise of God is sure to all who trust in Jesus. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." (Ps. ii. 12.) He was a stranger to the love and grace of God in Christ Jesus. He was a rejecter of grace; and man is saved by grace alone, through faith, without works of law.

When the sinner draws near to God *now*, in the faith of his own worthlessness, and the worthiness of Christ, he is accepted. "Accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 6.) And Christ is ready to receive all that come to Him. He casts out none. Oh! then, unpardoned, unsaved sinners, whether you have made a profession or not, at once, with your whole heart, turn to Jesus, in the full assurance of His pardoning love. Be assured that He is waiting, ready to receive you. Oh! doubt Him not, believe Him, trust Him. He is able, He is willing, to save the chief of sinners. Oh! at once, without delay, flee to the arms of Jesus. Flee from your evil habits, and from the awful doom of outer darkness. As a lost sinner, take refuge in Him who was *nailed* to the cross for sinners, for you, and yet, as another has said,

"Sins they were, not *nails*, which held Him,
Sinner, there He died for thee."

Vol. X. No. 117. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo. Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post. JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

AN ASSASSIN'S RETROSPECT.

BOOOTH, who shot Mr. Lincoln, the President of the United States, fled into Caroline County, where, at a place called Bowling Green, he was hunted down by a party of cavalry, and brought to bay in a barn.

The place being surrounded by the soldiers, he was called upon to surrender; but on his refusing to do so, the barn was set on fire, and Booth was seen, rifle in hand, prepared to resist to death. A soldier fired, and he fell mortally wounded.

Shortly before he breathed his last, he said to those around him, "Tell mother I died for my country. I THOUGHT I did for the best."

Then, as the fever of political excitement died away before the dread calm of death, and the last great act of a misspent life rose before him in its true aspect, the poor young man saw that he had destroyed a valued life, together with his own,

to no purpose, or any good result whatever. Murder committed; life-long sorrow entailed on the victim's survivors; his own mother's heart broken; hope, reputation, life itself, all sacrificed; and all for *what?*

As the terrible conviction flashed across his mind, although still impenitent towards God, he threw up his hands, and cried with his last breath, "Useless; useless!" then sank red-handed into eternity!

Dear reader, these two little words speak volumes. They form a dying man's comment, even from his own point of view, on a life full of opportunity and consequent responsibility, but whose aims and associations, restricted to "the world and the things in the world," ended at last in the sacrifice of body, soul, and spirit, and all for worse than NOTHING!

How forcibly these dying words, coming from the burning barn in the Far West, remind us of the Lord's solemn warning to all who make this world and its short-lived advantages their sole object and aim: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

What indeed! "Useless"? Ay, how unspeakably worse than "useless," even were there no judgment after death, no lake of fire by-and-by. Does not that remorseful cry tell how the soul pronounces judgment on *itself*, when the world is slipping from the grasp of the dying hand, and the heart's shattered idol turns to utter bitterness? For the heart had its idol once; and now, broken, cast out, and "useless; useless"! What *must* fill its place? Undying, intolerable *remorse*! "Useless; useless!" the deliberate verdict of a

dying man's own unaided reason on a wasted life; a verdict never to be reversed throughout eternity!

I say, then, that even were there no judgment after death, no lake of fire, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

But the Word of God declares a scene yet future which may well make the sinner tremble: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

Brought face to face with Him who was not in all their thoughts, whose grace they had contemned, whose precious Son they had utterly scorned, while admitting, as a matter of historical fact, that He died for them!

"And the books were opened, . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12.)

Reader, *your* "works" may not be so bad as his whose tragic end I have narrated, but even *you* would not like to see ALL your "works" of hand and foot, thought, heart, and tongue, written legibly on fair white paper, and posted up in public, with your own signature attached. And if you would and do shrink from the judgment of man, how will you bear the judgment of God?

Yet to that it *must* come, unless you take refuge in Him who has borne that judgment already for all who can truthfully say, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. i. 24.) Can you say it by faith in *Him*? I do not ask whether you have been taught it as a matter of "Christian education"; but do you believe it, *because* GOD says it? If not, be persuaded, before it is too late. "As though God

did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.) "I am the door," said the Lord Jesus Christ; "by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John x. 9.) Flee to *that* refuge from an accusing conscience, from eternal remorse, from "the wrath to come." (Matt. iii. 7; 1 Thess. i. 10.)

Think of poor Booth dying a deserved death of violence; his last thought of a mother he could never hope to see again; his last word the deliberate judgment of his own conscience on a life worse than wasted; worse, it may be, morally, than your own, yet in worldliness of character the same. "Useless; useless"! J.L.K.

"ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?"

(SEE LUKE XIII. 23-30.)

THE question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" seems to have been a merely curious or idle question, on the part of the one who asked it; such as unconverted men will sometimes ask about the doctrine of election. But, the Lord Jesus, in His usual way, so answered it as to turn it into a serious one. He replied so as to meet, not the question, but the real state of the man's soul. As if the Lord said, Few or many, do *you* "strive to enter in at the strait gate." That is your personal, all-important matter. "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say

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unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”

Surely this is a solemn and searching reply, and well fitted to turn the *curious* into an *anxious* inquirer. The Lord, in His rich mercy, grant that it may do so in the case of all into whose hands this paper may come. There are many who are still merely *curious* inquirers, whom we desire to see deeply *anxious* and *earnest* ones. Surely the salvation of the soul is of all others the most personal matter possible. The door is still open; the invitation is to all: “Come, for all things are now ready.” Enter while there is room. The Master is patiently waiting; oh, delay not! “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.”

The connection and strict interpretation of this passage refer to the Jews. Christ was speaking to Jews, and of their then present privileges and future miseries, because they were rejecting Him. He plainly showed them that although their privileges had been great, such as eating and drinking in His presence, and hearing Him preach the gospel in their streets, still there was no salvation for them, and no entering the kingdom, while they refused to own Himself, to receive Him as the true Messiah, and the only Saviour of sinners. He would at last say, “I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”

Observe, He does not deny that they enjoyed great privileges; but He repeats this awfully solemn truth, “I know you not whence ye are.” They had never made themselves known to Him. They had never come to Himself, individually, as sinners to a Saviour. They knew their privileges, and boasted in them, but they refused Christ. Hear His lament:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children to gether, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not.*" (Matt. xxiii., 37).

Christ Himself was rejected. Israel would have none of Him. Therefore they were left desolate, like chickens without the sheltering wing, and the "fox" in the midst of them. Oh, what a picture of utter helplessness and certain destruction!

But although this portion of Scripture, strictly speaking, refers to the Jews, it has, nevertheless, a most solemn voice to us. And, morally, it strikingly illustrates our own present position, we can only enter in at the strait gate by faith in Him who died and rose again. It is too strait for self in any form.

Let us now look at the subject in its application to our own time.

When Christ had finished the great work of redemption on the cross, He ascended up on high, and sat down at the right hand of God in heaven. His work being finished, He sat down. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) The sacrifice for sinners was offered and accepted, by which their souls' need was fully met. God was glorified. The rights of His throne were vindicated by the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on the mercy-seat. All the perfections of His character were displayed in their full glory, and the principles of His moral government maintained.

All that God required being done, perfectly, and for ever done, the door of mercy is thrown wide open to the chief of sinners. The way into the holiest of all is made manifest. (Heb. x. 19.) And the voice of gracious invitation goes forth into all

the world, to every creature, Whosoever will, let him come and drink at the fountain of the water of life freely, *gratis*. (Rev. xxii. 17.) God is free to receive to Himself, and pardon with overflowing love, all who come to Him by faith in the finished work of His dear Son. Thus we have, glory be to God, at the present moment, A SEATED CHRIST AND AN OPEN DOOR.

And whosoever will may come to Him, in the full confidence of the Father's perfect love to them, and of the Son's finished work *for them*. The everlasting gates that were thrown wide open for "the King of glory," still stand open for the chief of sinners, and the blood by which He entered is their title to approach and the ground of their acceptance. (Ps. xxiv. 7; 1 Tim. 1-15; Heb. x. 22.)

There need be no doubts, no fears, no trembling. To enter the open door in the faith of Christ, simply trusting to the work which He has accomplished for us, is to enter heaven.—How? In what condition, think you? Oh, wondrous truth! It is to enter heaven in the full credit of Christ Himself. It is to cross the threshold, pass through the pearly gates, walk up the golden street, right to to the throne of God; and stand in the pure light of that throne, in all the perfectness and acceptableness of Christ Himself.

To find fault with the believing sinner there, would be to find fault with Him who sits upon the throne. He stands there, not in his own right or title, but in the rights and titles of Christ. "To-day," said the dying Jesus to the believing thief, "shalt thou be *with me* in paradise." Not only, observe, in paradise, but "with me."

Oh, that precious, "with me"! It defines so sweetly where the departed spirit is, where heaven is, and what heaven is. It is just to be *with Christ*. Now, we are by faith "in Christ Jesus"; by-and-

by we shall be personally "with Him." In our bodies of glory we shall be for ever *with the Lord*. (1 Thessalonians iv. 17.)

But as to the immediate results, the present condition of all who believe in Jesus, the following passage is clear and decided: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) This is the gospel of the grace of God. There is no missing link in this gospel. The believer, in virtue of the sufferings and death of Christ, is brought to God in Him. Not only to the cross, but to the throne. Not merely into a place, but unto a Person. He can never get better, he can never get higher, than this. Oh, wondrous truth! Brought to God in the condition of Christ; in the condition of His life, righteousness, peace, preciousness, perfectness, and glory! "Because *as* He is, *so* are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.)

And is it, my reader may ask, to all this blessedness that the open door leads? Yes, dear reader, to all this wondrous, present blessedness! And while Christ is seated at God's right hand, the door stands wide open night and day. Entering in by the *strait gate* simply means coming in faith to Jesus; it means conversion, reconciliation to God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh then, enter now! To-morrow may be too late. The Master may be risen up, and the door shut against you for ever.

Alas! that any should prefer present things to coming to Jesus! that any should need to be entreated to come to Him! What can be more encouraging, more inviting, than A SEATED CHRIST, AND AN OPEN DOOR? The present *position* of Christ assures the sinner that the work is finished. There is no ground for perplexity. The work required by God, and needed by the sinner, is

done, perfectly done, and accepted by God *for the sinner*. The divine proof of this is A SEATED CHRIST AND AN OPEN DOOR.

There, the blessed Jesus waits in patient love to receive to Himself all who come by faith. And this glorious word, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out,” He has sent forth into all the ends of the earth, that every doubt may be dispelled. (John vi. 37). Oh! then, tell me, ye trembling, troubled, doubting, unhappy ones, where is there the smallest ground for all your fears as to your acceptance?

Certainly, it is not in the love of God, the work of Christ, the witness of the Holy Ghost, the open door, or, in the patient, waiting One. It can only be in the *unbelief* of your own hearts. For surely the work of Christ is finished. God is satisfied, and well pleased in Him; sin has been put away, the power of Satan destroyed, death vanquished, the grave spoiled, and Christ, the mighty Victor is seated in triumph on the right hand of heaven’s Majesty, waiting for sinners to be gathered to Him, that they may adorn His crown, and reflect His glory, throughout the countless ages of eternity.

We will now glance, very briefly, at the second part of our subject, namely, A RISEN CHRIST AND A SHUT DOOR.

The Lord solemnly assures us that the moment His position is changed, the door is shut; and that there would be no hope for those who were outside, who had refused to enter by “the strait gate.” The position of the door depends entirely upon the position of the Master. While He is seated, the door is open; but when He is risen up, the door is shut. “When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand *without*, and to knock at the door, saying,

Lord, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."

It was those who had enjoyed the greatest privileges, such as eating and drinking in the Lord's presence, and hearing Him teach, that were hopelessly shut out. They might *seek* to get in at the shut door, but there was no admittance for them. "For many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

The *seeking* here, and the not being able to enter, do not refer to the *strait gate*, but entirely to the *shut door*. So it may have been in the days of Noah. Those who refused to enter the ark through the preaching of Noah, could not get in after the door was shut. They might seek, and seek earnestly, pleadingly, and touchingly, as they saw the waters rising on the earth, but it was too late, God had shut the door, and none could open it. They had despised the day of His long-suffering grace, although He had waited a hundred and twenty years for them. But a day of solemn reckoning came at last, and there was no escaping. They might see the ark of God's salvation rising securely on the swelling deep, but there was no refuge for them. Some might flee from one summit to another, but the raging billows pursued after them, until the highest summit was reached, and every mountain swept by the dark waters of judgment.

Surely, dear reader, there is something peculiarly and especially solemn in the truth here stated by the Lord. Does it not plainly teach us, that the doom of all would be sealed for ever, who have refused to come to Him by the open door, were He, at this moment, to change His position? Assuredly it does. "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." All depends upon this.

How solemn! Were He to rise to-day, where

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would you be? on which side of the door? The question is not, “I am young, in good health, and may live many years.” Oh, no! but in a moment when we think not, the Master may rise up, shut the door, and what then? If outside the door, amongst those who have deliberately refused to come in, all hope is lost. He is the “Master of the house”; “He openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.” (Rev. iii. 7.)

And now, in conclusion, let me faithfully and affectionately warn my dear reader not to rest in privileges. Privileges, however great, are not Christ. *These* can never save the soul. *He* only can. Have you, oh, have you, come to Him? Have you ever spoken to Him about your condition as a sinner, and His grace and love as the Saviour, in dying for you? Oh! let me again ask you, have you come to Him? Have you had to do with Him in the secret of His own presence?

Your precious opportunities may be near an end. Who can tell how soon the Master may rise up? Is He not now gathering souls in great numbers, and filling His house rapidly? May it not be nearly full? Oh, delay not! While the door is open, enter in, and be at rest. “The Master calleth thee” and every poor blinded sinner. Why refuse? “Come unto me,” are His own words of gracious invitation, and His sure promise is, “I will give you rest” (Matt. xi. 28). Do, then, oh! do, come to Jesus. “Strive” to break away from everything that would hinder thee coming. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” Oh, let nothing hinder thee. Come to Jesus. He is worth more to thy soul than the whole world a thousand times over. Only think, then, of the precious Jesus. Oh! how precious He is! come at once to Him. The companionship of Jesus, the fellowship of the holy, the bright glories of heaven, on the one hand, and the

unutterable torments of hell on the other, are set before thee. Oh! which is it to be? Canst thou hesitate for a moment? Choose, oh! choose at once, as the portion of thy heart, that blessed One who has waited so long, and so patiently *for thee*. Rest on His finished work *for thee*. Let Him have thy whole heart, and thou shalt be eternally happy in His changeless love.

CONFLICTING OPINIONS.

IN visiting, a short time since, in a town in the north of England, I had occasion to call to see a person in a back street in a district with which I was not familiar.

Not being sure of my way, I addressed a boy whom I saw standing with a basket of clothes, and asked him if he would kindly tell me the way to "James Street."

"The second turn on your left," said he.

I thanked him and moved on. But when I came to the second turn on my left, I found it was not James Street at all.

"How strange!" thought I, "that one who seemed to know the locality so well, should set me astray; and yet he spoke with such decision as though he were perfectly sure of the truth of what he was saying."

I paused, and seeing an intelligent looking man coming toward me, I said to myself, "Perhaps he will be able to guide me." "Pray, sir, can you tell me the way to James Street?"

"Oh!" said he, "you are in the wrong direction altogether. You must go back again, and

when you have passed three or four streets on your right, you will see James Street up on the corner of the house right before you."

This seemed satisfactory, so I at once retraced my steps, looking out eagerly for the promised notice. But alas! there was no such street to be found, and I was again brought to a pause, feeling it not a little tiresome to be thus driven up and down by the conflicting opinions of blind guides. I certainly did long for "competent authority" to direct my wandering footsteps into the right way; but I almost despaired of finding it.

At length, not liking to be baffled in my search after the true way, I accosted another quiet, sober, intelligent-looking man, and, I suppose with a certain tone of weariness, said, "Please, sir, can you tell me the way to James Street?"

"Why," said he, "you are turning your back upon it."

"Oh, dear," said I, "how dreadfully tiresome! You are the third person from whom I have sought guidance. The first told me to go yonder, and turn to the left. The second told me to go right back, and turn to the right; and now you tell me I am all wrong, and must retrace my steps. Whatever is a poor ignorant stranger to do in the face of such conflicting opinions? I cannot, for the life of me, understand how men *will* undertake, and with such cool confidence, too, to give guidance when it is manifest they are wholly incompetent. If I were asked the way to any place with which I was not thoroughly acquainted, I should, unhesitatingly and frankly, own my ignorance, and tell the inquirer to seek out a competent authority. But for men who are wholly ignorant to undertake to guide their fellows is, in my judg-

ment, not only most silly, but positively unkind."

"Well," said my intelligent-looking friend, "I am actually going to James Street, and I shall be happy to show you the way."

"Ah," thought I, "this is something like the thing. It does seem as though I had at last found out a competent authority. Here is a man who is actually in the way himself, and surely he must know it."

His manner, too, was assuring. There was nothing of the flippancy of self-confidence about him; but the calm, quiet dignity of one who seemed thoroughly and practically acquainted with what he was saying.

Having already been set astray by two blind guides, I confess I felt considerable diffidence in committing myself to this new authority, lest he should prove not a whit more competent than those who had gone before him. Still, as he said that he himself was actually in the way, I thought I might cautiously commit myself to his guidance. I thought of the words in Hebrews xiii., "Obey those guiding you . . . considering the end of their conversation"; and I followed my new guide.

I then observed, with much interest, that the boy to whom I spoke first of all had set me astray not exactly by positive error, but by misplaced truth and defective information. "The second turn to the left" was right enough so far as it went; but he ought to have added, "and then the first to the right."

"Just so," mused I, "there is the way in which people are constantly misled. They get partial views of truth, in place of the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And not only are they mis-

led themselves, but they mislead all who are foolish enough to listen to them. Here am I, tossed about and driven hither and thither by ignorant guides; and I have been thrown just as much out of the true way by partial truth as by palpable error."

Well, at length my new guide conducted me to the very *source* from whence he had derived his authority. He conducted me *to* it, and put me in personal connection *with* it. He showed me, as it were, the written word, the grand authority for all. No more error now; no more partial truth now, no more human testimony now. I was at the source, I read for myself, I got the truth; and all the blind guides and conflicting opinions in the world could not move me. I now knew for myself where JAMES STREET was, and had no further need to look for human guidance.

The thoughtful reader will be at no loss to see the moral application of the foregoing simple narrative. It is of real importance at the present moment. Never was there more urgent need of keeping close to that one grand and paramount authority, *the voice of Holy Scripture*. No human language can possibly set forth in suited terms the value of the full, clear, competent, because divine, authority of the word of God. "It is written" is a sentence which every Christian man, woman, and child should seek to have engraven on the very tablets of the heart. We can move on with a firm step and a peaceful mind when we have that high authority for our position and our practice.

How few, comparatively, can be found who acknowledge the absolute authority of Scripture in everything. And yet we read that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profit-

able for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).

And not only so; but the same Scriptures can make a child wise unto salvation. The Written Word meets a little child, and makes him wise unto salvation. It meets a man of God, and furnishes him thoroughly to all good works.

The good Lord be praised for such a provision! What rest for the heart! What stability for the path! What perfect calmness for the spirit! What holy elevation above the thoughts and opinions of men! What full deliverance from human influence, and all the disturbing forces around us! There is nothing like it. A heart that bows down to the authority of Holy Scripture in all things, and that trusts its eternal stability, spite of everything, is a heart happily free from the bewildering effects of "conflicting opinions." May the reader prove this for himself.

C. H. M.

Every broken-hearted sinner that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation is *justified* before God. "By Him all that *believe* are *justified from all things*, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." They are justified by the blood of Christ. By His death Christ put away their sins, that they might be made the *righteousness of God in Him*. "Christ is the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that *believeth*." This is the true *grace* of God wherein we stand.

Vol. X. No. 118. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4, Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John vv. 9.

**CHRIST JESUS THE SAYIOUR IS
IN GLORY.**

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

BELoved READER,

God has visited this world, has manifested Himself in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Now this is a fact*, and is of immense importance to you, whether you feel interested in it or not.

He came down from glory, not to get God to love the sinner, *but to declare the love that already existed in God's heart toward the sinner.* It is, written: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 John iv. 9.)

I call your attention *to the fact*, that the Son of God has been into this world. He laid aside His glory and took upon Himself the form of a man, and was when here the most gracious and the most accessible of men.

He carried with Him that which lost man could get nowhere else, and was the only man that could ever stand upon this earth and say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.*" (Matt. xi. 28.) What an announcement was this to make in such a world of sin, sorrow, weariness, and want! But He had more to give than *rest*; for in Him was *life*. Yet the sorrowful testimony that He gave of those around Him was, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." (John v. 40.)

This blessed One was *hated without a cause*. He was "the light of the world." And this did not suit man; for "men loved darkness rather than light, because *their deeds were evil.*" Hence they did not rest until they had got rid of this Jesus, so that they might go on undisturbed in their own paths of iniquity. A robber was preferable to Jesus, the Son of God! (John xviii. 40.) Their cry was, "Away with Him! Crucify Him!"

But God, in His own wondrous grace, made this crowning act of man's hatred against Himself to be the only way of salvation; for where man made this blessed One the *martyr*, there, upon Calvary's cross, God gave Him to be the *victim*. Thus the death of the Lord Jesus Christ shows me on the one side the fullest expression of man's hatred against God (Acts iii. 13-15), while on the other side it shows me God's eternal hatred of sin and His wonderful love toward the sinner. (2 Cor. v. 21.)

It was *there*, upon the cross, "that mercy and truth met together"; and it was *there* that "righteousness and peace kissed each other." (Ps. lxxxv. 10.)

Thus, when I think of the death of Christ I am constrained to say, "Where sin abounded, *grace did much more abound.*" (Rom. v. 20.)

It was upon the cross that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring those who believe in Him *to God.* (1 Peter iii. 18.)

It was upon the cross that "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb. ix. 26.)

It was upon the cross that the Lord Jesus Christ endured God's wrath against sin, in order that the love which existed in God's heart, might *righteously* flow out towards those who were "UNGODLY," "SINNERS," and "ENEMIES." "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were *yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Rom. v. 8.)

Every barrier that hindered the outflow of the love of God to the world has been removed. The precious blood of Jesus has answered every claim. And *that same Jesus* who died upon the cross now sits upon the throne in heavenly glory. God raised Him from among the dead, and, having exalted Him, has declared that at the name of Jesus *every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess,* that Jesus Christ is *Lord,* to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii. 10, 11; Psalm lxxii.; 1 Cor. xv. 20-28; Rev. v. 5.)

My desire in now presenting you with this little book is to press home upon your soul the fact that the Saviour is to-day in glory!

My question to you is, *Do you know Him?* It

may be that you know a great deal *about* Him. But this is not what I mean. It is eternal life *to know Him*. It is written, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.)

Have to do with the Lord Jesus Christ *you must*; either now in saving grace, or presently in judgment!

The dying thief had to do with Him when He hung upon the cross.

Saul, His most determined enemy upon earth, had to do with Him when He was in heavenly glory—the *same Jesus*, but in different circumstances.

The thief turned to the Saviour on the cross, owned his sinful condition, and asked to be remembered in His coming kingdom. The Saviour's answer to his cry was, "Verily I say unto thee, *To-day* shalt thou be *with Me* in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.)

Saul, on the other hand, on his way to Damascus, endeavouring to wipe out the memory of Jesus from the earth, is met by the same Jesus in brightest glory!

How does the Lord meet this daring enemy, the chief of sinners?

With this simple inquiry:

"Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou *ME*?" (Acts ix.)

Could Saul tell Him *why*? No. But in the light of that glory, which was above the brightness of the sun, he fell to the ground, and exclaimed,

"Who art Thou, Lord?"

The answer was,

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Not one word of reproof fell from the Saviour's lips. What a reception was this for Saul!

His course on earth was changed. No longer the persecutor of the saints of God, but, henceforth to be an ambassador for that Saviour here, and a preacher of Him as glad tidings among the nations. (Gal. i. 16.) *He announced what that Saviour was in Himself as glad tidings to those around him.*

You see, on the one hand, how a dying malefactor was received, and, on the other hand, how the proud, self-righteous enemy of Jesus was received.

Care you then, dear reader, for Him, the living, loving Saviour in glory? Be assured of this: *He cares for you and desires your salvation.* (2 Peter iii, 9, 10.)

Gladly do I thus declare what He has done: for "He gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii.): *God has been satisfied and GLORIFIED* with the work that He accomplished on the cross; and has crowned Him in heaven with glory and honour. (John xvii.; Heb. ii.)

Let me also ask you, beloved reader, Do you want rest, peace, righteousness, eternal life? All are found in that living Saviour up there in glory! (Eph. ii. 14; 1 Cor. i. 30; Col. iii. 3.)

Be assured, He is the only refuge for your immortal soul, and you will spend eternity either with Him in glory, or with the lost in hell!

To turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven, and to refuse present grace is to ensure future judgment; for after death there is judgment. (Heb. ix. 27.) *And there will be no grace, no*

mercy, for the sinner when he stands before the "great white throne." (Rev. xx.)

When the Saviour was upon earth He 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), but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.)

Thus the believer in Christ Jesus is one who will never come into judgment, because the Lord Jesus Christ bore the judgment for him (2 Cor. v. 21); *and God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* (Rom. iii. 2.)

But, beloved reader, remember that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them *that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. i. 7-9.)

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, *but that all should come to repentance.* BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter iii. 9, 10.)

Reader, where will you be in that day?

E. P. C.

SELF OR CHRIST : A STRIKING CONTRAST.

SEE ACTS VIII. 5—40.

THIS passage of Scripture opens with a record of Philip the Evangelist's preaching in the city of Samaria. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did . . . and there was great joy in that city."

Thus it must ever be. When Christ is preached, and people give heed and receive the tidings, "great joy" must be the result. The business of the preacher is to "preach Christ"; the business of the people is to "give heed and believe." Nothing can be simpler.

But, alas! all this brightness was speedily overcast with the dark clouds which self-seeking is ever sure to produce. It was all simple and happy, fresh and bright, while Christ was exalted, and souls were blessed by the knowledge of salvation.

"But there was a certain man called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that *himself* was some *great one*."

Here, then, was something quite different, something which the inspired historian might well introduce with a "But." In place of the herald of salvation exalting Christ, it was a poor worm exalting himself; and instead of people made happy by the truth, it was a people bewitched with sorcery. Simon gave out that himself was some great one, and the popular voice was in favour of his pretensions.

"To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God."

It generally happens that those who put forth the loftiest claims are sure to get a high place in the thoughts of men. It does not matter how slender the basis of such claims may be; the multitude never think much about foundations, about what is beneath the surface or behind the scenes. Their thoughts are superficial. They are easily gulled by a pretentious style. The swaggering and boastful make way in the crowd; whereas the humble, the unpretending, the modest and retiring are consigned, by the men of this world, to obscurity and oblivion. Hence that Blessed One who emptied Himself and made Himself of no reputation, had not where to lay His head, was deliberately given up for a robber and a murderer, and nailed to an ignominious cross between two thieves.

But Simon, the magician, gave out that himself was some great one, and the pompous claims of this self-important individual were readily admitted by a credulous multitude: "To him they had regard."

Why? Was it because he sought to benefit them by the strenuous efforts of a large-hearted benevolence, or to elevate them by the resources of a commanding genius? Not at all. What then? "Because that of long time he had *bewitched* them with *sorceries*." Such is man; such is the world.

The tide was turned in Samaria, however, by the introduction of the gospel: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women. Then

Simon himself believed also : and when he was baptised he continued with Philip, and *wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.*"

Now be it noted here that we do not raise the question as to whether Simon was really a converted man, or only a hypocritical professor. We can learn a most practical and seasonable lesson from his history without ever touching that question. Simon was a self-seeker, from first to last. His object was to *exalt Simon*. At first, he made use of magic for the attainment of his end; and when the tide of Christian profession rose, and carried away the pedestal on which he had raised himself, he embraced the new thing. He placed himself on the bosom of the tide, not as one seeking rest for a broken heart and convicted conscience, but as one seeking to be something.

It is evident, from the inspired narrative, that Simon was more occupied with the wonders and signs by which the gospel was accompanied and confirmed, than by the consolations which that gospel was designed to impart. It was not, in his case, a heart filled with peace by the grace of the gospel, but a mind filled with wonder by the miracles that were done. "He wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." It was on these he fixed his wondering gaze. The things which were merely designed to call the attention of the heart to Christ were looked at by Simon as things whereby self might be exalted. In this way, Christianity might furnish materials for a more solid pedestal for *self* than even the magic and sorcery in which he had formerly traded.

All this comes more clearly out when the Holy

Ghost appears upon the scene. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet He was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give *me* also this power, that on whomsoever *I* lay hands he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the *gift of God* may be *purchased with money*. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee; for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

What a deeply solemn picture! What a holy lesson! Self-seeking must ever lead to bitterness. It matters not whether it be exemplified in the case of a converted or an unconverted person. Every one who seeks to exalt self, to be somebody, to figure before the eye of his fellow, must, sooner or later, reap bitterness and gall. It cannot be otherwise. We may set it down as a fixed principle that in proportion as self is our object will bitterness be the result. Had Simon found his object in the Christ whom Philip preached he never would have been called to hearken to Peter's appalling words. His heart would then have been

“right in the sight of God.” It is only when Christ is really the object that the heart is right in the sight of God. But so thoroughly wrong was Simon, so completely away from God, and from Christ, and from the Holy Ghost, that when exhorted by the apostle to pray God if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven, “He answered and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.”

Instead of confessing his sin, he asks others to pray that he might not be called to suffer its consequences. Here the curtain drops upon Simon. May the lesson conveyed in his history be engraved on our hearts! May the Lord, in His great mercy, give us full deliverance from self-seeking, and fill our hearts with the love of His name!

We shall now turn, and gaze upon a totally different picture.

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning; and, sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet.”

Here, the contrast strikes us at once. Instead of a sorcerer, on the strength of his magic and witchcraft, giving out that himself was some great one, we have a man of real authority, rank, weight, and dignity, looking away from himself and his position, to find the object of his worship and adoration. He was one of the great ones,

and had no need to give himself out as such; but instead of being occupied with himself or his greatness his soul was thirsting after something above and beyond himself and all around. He had gone from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning still evidently unsatisfied.

All this is intensely interesting. We are glad to get away from the self-seeking Simon, to be in company with the Christ-seeking eunuch. It is truly refreshing to look at that earnest, solitary man, poring over the prophetic page in search of an object for his heart. We may feel assured it was a sight in which heaven was interested. An angel was despatched to Samaria, in order to summon the evangelist from the stirring scenes of service there, and send him into the solitudes of the desert Gaza, to address himself to a single individual.

How remarkable that two such men as Simon and the eunuch should be placed in juxtaposition by the inspired penman! They form a contrast throughout. Philip found the one bewitching the people with sorcery, and giving out that himself was some great one. He found the other earnestly engaged in the study of the Word of God. He found the one amid all the bustle and throng of the city, figuring before the world, and endeavouring to make capital for himself out of anything and everything. He found the other in the solitude of the desert, returning from worshipping at Jerusalem to his proper sphere of duty in Ethiopia. Thus far they were perfect opposites.

But let us pursue the narrative of this interesting and highly favoured Ethiopian. It might seem strange to Philip to be called away from such a brilliant field of service in Samaria, where such

crowds flocked to hear, into a desert, where he could hardly expect to meet any one. To whom was he to preach there? Nature might reason thus; but Philip did as he was told, and he was not left long in ignorance as to his work: "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip *ran* thither."

How simple! How sweetly servant-like! It is all the same to a right-minded servant whether he is sent to a city or to a desert, to a crowd or to a single individual. The Master's will settles everything.

"Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

The Lord knows how and when to make the preacher and hearer cross each other's path, and when they meet, a link is formed which can never be broken. There were those in Jerusalem who could have poured the glad tidings into the eunuch's ear; but God had so ordered it that Philip was to enjoy the privilege of conducting this stranger to the feet of Jesus, and by His gracious providence they met amid the solitude of the desert of Gaza.

And only note the passage of Scripture on which the eunuch's eye was resting when Philip accosted him. "The place of the Scripture which he read was this: *He* was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened *He* not His mouth; in *His* humiliation *His* judgment was taken away: and who shall declare *His* generation? for *His* life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him JESUS."

Here was the profoundly interesting question. Who was this mysterious "He"? Blessed inquiry! The eunuch did not ask Philip to expound a text. Ah! no; he longed for something far deeper than this. He wanted to know something about this wondrous *Person* who was led as a sheep to the slaughter. This was all he asked. Who could this Person be? *It was Jesus!* Happy eunuch! He had, at length, reached his object. He had gazed on the precious page of inspiration and found there the record of "the Lamb of God" led to the cursed tree, and bruised under the righteous hand of a sin-hating God.

And for whom? Why for him; for any poor *burdened one who would only come and trust the shelter of His atoning blood*. Such was the glorious object presented to the eye and the heart of this earnest and interesting Ethiopian. The grand foundation truth of the gospel; the doctrine of the blood; of a sin-bearing Christ, broke with divineness and power upon his soul. There was no astounding miracle or sign; nothing outward to add authority to the truth proclaimed. There was no need. The word came with power. The ground was good and duly prepared for the precious seed. The eunuch's earnest seeking had issued in a joyful finding. The sinner and the Saviour had met; faith linked them together, and all was settled.

"And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptised? . . .

And he commanded the chariot to stand still : and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptised him. And when they were come up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more : and he went on his way rejoicing."

Now the beautiful and significant ordinance of baptism, when rightly understood, and obeyed from the heart, sets forth the burial of the old man. Looked at in this light, the eunuch's question is full of interest. "What doth hinder me to be baptised?" Surely nothing. He had *found Jesus*, and he might well *bury self*. How simple! "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation." It is not the old man made better, but put out of sight altogether, and Christ the one great object before the soul. When these things are understood; when self is lost sight of and Christ enjoyed, we can go on our way rejoicing. Thus it was with *the eunuch*. He came up out of the watery grave to pursue his journey along that holy, happy path which begins at the cross, and ends in that bright and blessed world above.

Thus, then, we see how that, from first to last, the eunuch of Ethiopia stands in most striking contrast with the magician of Samaria. And, no doubt, these two men represent two great classes, namely, those who are occupied with self and those who are occupied with Christ. Simon's object was *self*, and his end "*bitterness*." The eunuch's object was Jesus, and his end "*rejoicing*."

May the Lord engrave these lessons on our hearts! May we be delivered from the misery of self-occupation in all its phases and degrees, and be filled with Christ, so that we may go on our way rejoicing!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—Will you please say in a few words how you understand the statements of the apostle Paul in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans?

W. R. A.

ANSWER.—Romans vii. 7-24 describes the condition of a quickened soul under law. Some would teach us that it presents proper Christian experience. This is a mistake. Surely a Christian is not a "wretched man," crying out for deliverance; but a happy man, rejoicing in being delivered.

Again, can a Christian never do good? Must he always do evil? To say so is to falsify the whole Christian position. The Christian is one who is washed in the blood of Christ, delivered from the law, from sin, from the world, from Satan; sealed by the Holy Ghost, who is the spring of power to avoid what is wrong, and to do what is right. This, and nothing else, is the Christianity of the New Testament.

But, on the other hand, there are some who maintain that Romans vii. does not set forth the exercises of a quickened soul at all. This, too, is a mistake. Who but a quickened soul could say, "I delight in the law of God after the inner man"? What does the "inner man" mean but the new nature?

We believe this much misunderstood passage sets before us the experience of a quickened soul not delivered, not emancipated, not sealed. It most certainly was not Paul's experience when writing the epistle. He may have passed through it, as many of God's people have; but to say that it is the proper experience of a Christian, is simply to deny the whole teaching of the New Testament, and to rob the Christian of all his distinctive privileges and blessings as a member of the body of Christ.

C. H. M.

Vol. X. No. 119. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

“MOTHER, I’M CONVERTED!”

A WOMAN was recently having a conversation with a Christian man who had called on her while going his round of business.

She was very sad, having just lost a dearly loved daughter. After telling him of her loss, and speaking of her grief, she told him what a good child she had always been.

“One day,” she said, “my daughter came home from a meeting, and said, ‘Mother, I’m converted.’”

“‘Converted, my dear?’ I said; ‘why you don’t need to be converted. You’ve never been wicked; you’ve always been a good girl. Just fancy you talking about being converted.’”

The Christian man was able to point out what a mercy it was that the girl had come to the Saviour, for “All have sinned.”

The poor woman did not seem to understand.

Satan had deluded her into thinking it was all right for her child without that. Thank God! the girl had learned better.

Yet how many there are in this present day who think just the same. "No need of conversion," they say, "it is old fashioned now. People used to believe that, but they know better now."

So they go on just as Satan wants them to; go on to a Christless grave, an eternity spent with the one who has deceived them. Reader, if you have thought like this woman, I beseech you to wake up before it is too late. You are listening to the same one who in the Garden of Eden said, "Hath God said?" The same deceiver, almost the same words. One hears it on every hand; God's blessed word called in question.

God *has* said; He *has* spoken; and He is speaking to you now. And as the blessed Lord Jesus said when He was here to a man who wanted to be taught: "Ye must be born again." He could not teach the man until he had a new nature to be taught. However good you may think you are, you will not do for God like that. "You must be born again." You must have a new nature and a new life. Own yourself lost, helpless, undone without Christ, and accept all He has done to save you. The work is done by the blessed Son of God. "It is finished."

Souls are being saved, many of them, many who, twelve months ago, were going on heedlessly, have turned to the blessed Saviour, believed Him, trusted Him, rejoiced in Him. Don't be left outside.

"God's house is filling fast; yet there is room.

Some guest will be the last; yet there is room."

F.C.C.

CAN YOU REFUSE ?

AT the close of a Sunday evening religious service, some years ago, an invitation was given to those among the congregation who were anxious about their souls to stay behind for private conversation and prayer.

Among them was a young man, between nineteen and twenty years of age, who was evidently in much distress of mind. A Christian brother went up to him, and found him in tears. He spoke to him about his soul, prayed earnestly for the Lord to interfere, and make this young man His own.

That prayer was heard, and the tears of sorrow, on account of many great sins, were turned into tears of joy on account of so great salvation, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work.

The young man had a sad history to relate, the substance of which was as follows.

He was born in one of the large manufacturing towns of the midland counties, and, while young, was allowed a good deal of liberty by his parents. When he was fourteen years of age his father thought it was time for him to commence learning a trade, and apprenticed him to a tradesman for seven years.

Up to this time he had been taken occasionally by his friends to the theatre, and one or two music halls, and also had been allowed to go by himself. His visits to these places now became much more frequent, and most of his pocket-money was spent in this way. He imbibed a strong liking for the stage, and went as often as he could, not only to be entertained, but to learn the songs and manners of the performers. He had a pretty good voice,

and having a good memory, was not long in learning off some of the songs, which he would sing among his companions.

This soon led to bolder steps, and in a very little time he got an engagement to sing in public for a few nights a week. This, however, reached the ears of his master, who at once forbade him continuing his public singing, under the penalty of being sent to prison.

Now came the turning-point. Either he must obey his master or defiantly pursue his own course, and take the consequences.

He chose the latter. But to continue his singing in the same town was quite out of the question. Consequently, he wrote to a music hall manager in Liverpool, for an engagement as comic singer, under the assumed name of Harry Clifford. He succeeded in obtaining the appointment, and in a few days he was at the place.

What a step he had taken! He had left his home and his employment, and gone into a strange town, to live among strangers. He had entered upon a course of life the temptations and penalties of which only those who have passed through it can know fully. Most suitable would have been the advice of Solomon at this time, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall." (Prov. iv. 14, 15.)

He stayed at Liverpool seven or eight months, and in that time he altered much for the worse. Drinking, smoking, going home in the early hours of the morning, and sleeping in the day-

time, had their ill effects upon his constitution.

He then left Liverpool for other places. But we need not follow him from one place to another; suffice it to say, that, as he had entered upon a downward road, every step he took was a step lower still.

And how long was this to continue? Was he to go on in this way until, with shattered constitution, he fell into an early grave, and worse than all, into a burning hell? *Except for the mercy of God he would have done so. But through that great mercy he was stopped in time.*

In the autumn of 18— he caught a violent cold, which deprived him of the use of his voice. At first it was thought to be but a slight ailment, but it proved otherwise; for not only was his voice gone, but his lungs shared in the effects of the cold.

How altered his position now! Up to this time he had had plenty of money, and consequently plenty of friends; but his money was soon gone, and with it his friends also. It was quite impossible for him to fulfil his engagement as a comic singer, and he was quite at a loss to know what to do.

He resolved to go to London, and see if he could get employment at his old trade, or anything else that would turn up. When he got there he found it was not so easy a thing as he had imagined. Many a long day did he spend in search of employment. As his voice was getting better, he tried to get an engagement at a small music hall. In this, however, he did not succeed. His voice was not equal to it.

In this his extremity, he heard of a situation at Greenwich, which he thought would suit him. For this he made application, and was successful; but

had to tell a great many falsehoods, besides giving his false name, to make his case good.

His master was a Christian,¹ and at the end of the first week gave him a trifle more than he had agreed to do, and asked him if he would like to go on the following Sunday and hear a preacher of the gospel.

He went, to please his master, and because he thought it might be to his interest.

On the following Sunday he went again. He liked the preacher, and thought he was a very good speaker; he enjoyed the singing, and was very pleased with the way in which the people treated him, shaking hands with him, and lending him a Bible and hymn book. But as to what the preacher said, or what was the meaning of the words he sang, or heard read from the Bible, he was as ignorant and careless as any there. The only impression which the preaching had upon him was that one night he thought he ought to begin to pray, and for the future he meant to say "The Lord's Prayer" night and morning. By doing so, and going regularly to chapel, he thought he had done all that was necessary.

Sunday after Sunday found him on the same seat in the chapel. The members began to look upon him as a sincere young man. But they did not know him. I mean, none of them knew him as God did. His eye not only saw him in chapel on Sundays, but saw him during the week, saw how he spent his evenings, saw him with wicked companions in the public-house playing at cards, and singing songs for the amusement of the company.

But soon he was to be changed! Soon he was to be stripped of his hypocrisy, and become a

worshipper of God, in spirit and in truth! He knew it not, neither did such a thought enter his mind. But the time came at last.

On the Saturday night he had been with one of his companions to a public-house, where he stayed until time for closing; and having had too much to drink, could hardly stagger home.

When he got up on Sunday morning he had a severe headache, and had some slight feelings of remorse. As it was very late, he had scarcely time to dress and start off to chapel. However, go he must, or else whatever would the people think of him? But on his way he suddenly bethought himself that he had not said his prayers, either the previous night or that morning. This had such an effect upon him that he felt inclined to go back. What should he do? It seemed as if the only prop he had (namely, his prayers) was suddenly taken from under him.

He went to chapel. The minister preached, but the conscience-stricken sinner sat as though he heard him not. In the afternoon he went, as he usually did, to the Young Men's Christian Association. The friends spoke to him as before, but he only answered them with a "Yes" or "No."

At night he went to chapel again, and here his unhappiness of mind increased. He wondered if there was anyone there so bad and miserable as he was. His conscience was thoroughly awakened.

What followed has already been related. He made an open confession of his guilt, and how he had been deceiving his master.

The Christian brother who spoke to him offered to go and see his master for him, which he did. Of course, his master was very much surprised;

but, at the same time, glad at what had taken place, and sought to help his now converted servant all he could.

And so this young man was stopped by God, just as he was on the brink of eternal ruin, and made a possessor of eternal life, and an inheritor of eternal joys, through faith, and the gift of God.

What a contrast! Would any of those men, with whom he was spending the previous night, believe that that young man, who could play at almost every low game, was now bending low before God a penitent sinner? No; they would laugh at the idea.

And perhaps the reader may begin to doubt the truth of what has been said, and put it down as merely a made-up, or at least an exaggerated tale. If so, then let me say, dear reader, that it is quite true, and that young man is now living, a monument of God's mercy, and it is he who is now addressing you; praise be to the Lord!

And he would now address you personally. Are you a believer in Jesus, the sinner's Saviour? Have you been brought to own your guilt, and fled to Him for pardon and salvation? If not, oh! let me beseech you to come to Him at once.

You may not have gone to the same lengths of wickedness that I did, and may you never do so; but still you are a sinner by nature, and unless saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you must go to that dreadful place which I so narrowly escaped.

Oh! what infinite, boundless love, to pick up such a worthless sinner as me, and make me a child of God! And now from the word of God I know that Jesus is my Saviour, God is my Father, and heaven is my home.

“ Now I have found a Friend,
 Jesus is mine.
 His love can never end,
 Jesus is mine.
 Though earthly joys decrease,
 Though human friendships cease,
 Now I have lasting peace,
 Jesus is mine.”

And there is the same Saviour for you, the same love for you, the same pardon, peace, and eternal life for you, dear reader, whoever you are.

It is more than ten years since I first sketched this little history, and I can say to-day, Jesus is the best friend I ever had, “ A Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” I have had some very severe trials to pass through, the hardest to bear being those brought on by my own want of faithfulness, but through them all I have found that “ He abideth faithful,” and as I look back I can say from my heart,—

“ I’ll praise Him for all that is past,
 And trust Him for all that’s to come.”

In my unconverted days I was never so happy as when I was singing songs, but now I am never so happy as when I am speaking of the boundless love of Jesus to poor sinners. And oh, I do so wish that you might know Him too. It is with this desire that I send forth this little account of how I stopped in time, praying the Lord to bless it to some precious soul.

Again I ask you, dear reader, are you saved? Oh! do not think I mean someone else. If you are not certain that your sins are forgiven it is you I invite to come to Jesus at once. And more than that, He Himself invites you to come. Can

you refuse? He who died on the cross to save sinners invites you to come. *Can you refuse?* It is because He has died, and God has accepted His blood as an atonement, that you can now at once be saved. Again I ask you, CAN YOU REFUSE?

“ Oh ! what love of God to send Him from on high,
 Oh ! what love of Jesus thus to bleed and die,
 Oh ! what love we owe for pardon brought so nigh,
 Through faith in Jesus' blood.”

H. G. B.

THE ARK ; OR, “THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

Hebrew xi. 7.

THREE times the above quotation from Hab. ii. 4 occurs in the New Testament : in Rom. i. 17, and Gal. iii. 4, to show that believers are *justified* by faith, and by faith in contrast with law ; in Heb. x. 38, to show that it is by faith believers *live* from day to day ; as Paul says, in Gal. ii. 20, “ 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.” (Gal. ii. 20.)

Dear reader, are you aware that you can be justified solely “ by faith, without the deeds of the law ” ? Do you know that if you simply accredit God's testimony, that Jesus was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, you are accounted righteous before God, and you have peace with God ? (Rom. iv. 24 ; v. 1.)

“ Oh ! ” you say, “ does not every one believe that Jesus died for them ? ”

“ Yes,” I say, “ they do in a general or historical

sort of way; but the justified man does more than that. Not merely does he believe that Jesus died, but that Jesus died *for him*, and was raised again for *his* justification. Believing this, he knows his peace is made with God. *Faith personally applies to ourselves that of which we are historically convinced.*

Now let me say a little about Noah. In Genesis vi. 3, I find God's *counsels*; in verse 13, the *revelation* of those counsels to Noah. God had said to Himself, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

Man is ever the same, whatever way you look at him. In the Garden of Eden, under law; with Christ openly manifested to him; with the Holy Ghost likewise present; or, as in this instance, left to himself, man has ever displayed the same characteristics that were found in his seducer, Satan, at the very outset. Corrupt and violent Satan was, since the day iniquity was found in him (Ezek. xxviii. 15-17, John viii. 44); and corruption and violence characterize those who are under his sway. In Eve we find corruption; in Cain violence. In Noah's day "the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence (verse 11). Therefore God says, "I will destroy man."

Are you aware, dear reader, that another judgment is coming upon this earth; not the judgment of water, but the judgment of fire? Scripture tells us that "all flesh shall not be cut off any more with the waters of a flood"; but it also tells us that there will be another judgment, and a far more terrible one, that of fire.

See Rev. xx. 11, where we read: "I saw a great

white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Mark these words: so terrible is the face of Jesus, then sitting as God upon His throne (for all judgment has been committed to Him, John v. 22) that actually the very heavens and earth flee from before Him. The *cause* of their departure we find here; the *manner* of it in 2 Peter iii. 7, where it speaks of "the heavens and the earth, which are now . . . reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men . . . for the day of the Lord" (to Him a thousand years are as one day) "will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Is the reader one of those who are making themselves comfortable in the world, planting, building, marrying, giving in marriage? Let me tell you that your plantations, your houses, your lands, will all be utterly consumed in the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Ask yourself, then, Have I perfect title to take my place in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness?

How solemn to think that God's testimony to you may close to-day, and that instead of dying comfortably on your bed, as you expect to do, you may in a moment be taken away for judgment to pass eternity in the lake of burning. The moment for the passing away of the present heavens and earth is the moment for the final condemnation of the wicked. The whole of the old

creation will pass away together. First the earth and heavens, the abode of Adam's race; and then that portion of the race that has died without God and without Christ. They receive their sentence, and they are damned. (Rev. xx. 12-15.)

How solemn to think that every one that does not receive the gospel here, that bows not to Jesus here, *must* bow to Him there. They despise Him as the Son of Man, the Saviour; they receive His sentence as the living God, their Judge.

Just as God revealed His counsels to Noah of the approaching doom of the earth, so are we not ignorant now of the coming demolition of both heavens and earth. And just as Noah saw that the end of all flesh had come, so do we know now that judgment is the end of Adam's race who die without faith.

Do not imagine, unbelieving reader, that the lake of fire will annihilate you. Oh no! you will pass eternity in the lake that "burneth with fire and brimstone," "where the worm *dieth not*, and the fire is *not quenched*"; there "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever*," which is the same expression as in Rev. x. 6, "God, who liveth *for ever and ever*." If the life of God is interminable (which I do not suppose you doubt) your punishment will be of equal duration, if you die an unbeliever.

Man's necessity, however, is God's opportunity. If judgment was revealed to Noah, so was the means of escape from it. It has ever been so. When the cities of the plain were destroyed, there was still a Zoar for Lot. When judgment hung over Egypt and Jericho, still there was a mode of escape for Israel and Rahab. And so here. The ark was the display of God's love to Noah,

at the moment of his greatest need. God's heart had planned it; God's care provided the materials; God's love unfolded it to Noah.

None but God would ever have thought of such an expedient. It was at once the place of Noah's perfect security and perfect delight. When once the Lord's hand had shut him in, not a doubt crossed his mind as to his perfect safety. One hundred and twenty years of careful labour had led him to know that his craft was perfectly weather-tight and sea-worthy. Had it not been so, he never would have entered it; but in perfect confidence he committed himself and all that was necessary for life, and sacrifice, and food, to it; and calmly gazed, through the window above, to the home where his God abode.

Is Christ the ark to you? Can you say, Christ is to me the One in whom I have perfect confidence and absolute satisfaction; His blood has purged my conscience, and His person occupies my heart?

Noah had turned his back upon the world. It was a judged, a doomed, thing to him. He had preached righteousness in it, and behaved in it as one that was manifestly dead to it. He had new hopes, new joys, new interests. His joys were centred in the ark; with delight his eye ranged around its spacious chambers, and surveyed the varied groups which occupied them. He had everything he wanted there, there was no necessity to go outside for anything.

Is Christ everything to you? Have you learned the true value of the water He gives (John iv.), so as never to thirst; to thirst for nothing; neither for things temporal nor for things spiritual; so that things temporal have no attractions for you

now, because you have a new life that delivers you from them, and now if you have food and raiment you can be content, and things spiritual you do not *thirst* for, because you *have* them. If you have Christ you thirst no more; you have got everything, "all things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.)

The circle of Noah's interests was the ark. The circle of the believer's is Christ.

If I go outside of Christ for anything, if I indulge myself in anything of the world beyond what the body actually requires, I am denying the fact that I have a life that never thirsts.

Noah entered the ark, and found perfect security and satisfaction. If you believe in Christ, you find rest for your troubled conscience, and peace for your weary heart.

But mark another point.

Noah and the ark were absolutely identified together. Together they passed through the waves of judgment; together they emerged from them; together they rested on Ararat's summit. I grant you that the type fails here; for Noah was unchanged throughout, Noah was the same person throughout. But still I learn from this that, believing on Christ, I am entitled to know that my old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; as Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ." He, blessed be His name, passed under the waves of judgment for me; as He says (Psa. xlii.), "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows have gone over me"; or again (Psa. lxxxviii.), "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, thou hast afflicted me with *all* thy waves."

What! I say, have all God's waves gone over

Him, my blessed Saviour? Then there is no condemnation for me. I see in Christ upon the cross the end of myself, the judicial end of my Adam nature, the end of my "old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." (Eph. iv. 22.) I reckon it dead, I believe what God says, that I am "dead." (Col. iii.)

But more than this. The ark bore Noah safely till it rested on mount Ararat, and there it sets its burden down. Where has Christ set me down? God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies. I was dead in trespasses and sins, but He has quickened me together with Him, raised me up together with Him, and made me sit together in Him in the heavenlies. (Eph. iii.)

What perfect rest this gives me. Noah was not sorry, I am sure, to exchange the rolling motion of the mighty ship for the firm standing of the mountain's top. I can bless and praise God that Christ has ascended up on high, and led me, long Satan's captive, His own captive, and given me a life that is hid with Himself in God His Father. I have already by faith my place in heavenly places; for I have my place in Christ, the Head of the new creation, the Head of all principality and power.

And now what is my occupation? Why, like Noah, to build my altar, and to joy in God, by whom I have received the reconciliation. while the bow in the cloud tells me there is now no condemnation for me, for Christ has borne it all. (Rom. viii.; Rom. v.)

Dear reader, can you say the same?

Vol. X. No. 120. Entered as Second-class Matter, 27th December, 1910, at the Post-Office at St. Louis, Mo.
Issued monthly, 1/- per dozen, net; Postal Subscription for Year, 1/6. Registered in London for Canadian Magazine Post.
JAMES CARTER, 13, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4. Bible Truth Depot, 1112, N. Taylor Av., St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

A TROPHY OF GRACE.

C. HAD been a soldier; one of those who went to fight at their country's call, not knowing when they would return. Many who went out with him were left behind on the other side of the Channel, their bodies resting in the fair land of France.

C. was a fine fellow over six feet in height, and made a brave soldier. After being in France some time, his company was called into action, and he was severely wounded.

For five days he lay on No Man's Land, without any help, keeping himself alive by feeding from the bags of his dead comrades, dragging himself along first to one, then to another. At last he dragged himself back to the British trenches, and got into hospital.

God's eye was upon him, but he did not think

of God; and yet God loved him. He was brought home to England and underwent several operations, his hip joint having to be removed.

After a time he was able to leave hospital and get about on crutches. Still no turning to God; no thanks to Him for saving his life. But God loved C. Oh, the wonderful love of God, that loves me in spite of the fact that there is nothing in me to love!

As he got stronger, he began to take up some studies, which would enable him to be self-supporting; and for this he came to a town where he had some Christian friends. He thought he would see if he could stay with them; and, finding he could, he came and settled down there.

At first all went well. He appreciated being in a comfortable home after his varied experience, and seemed to enjoy the quiet. He heard God spoken of, and the Lord Jesus and His finished work; but he wanted none of it for himself; it was the world and all its attractions that poor C. wanted. He began to speak about Christians he knew, and all the things they did which he thought they ought not to do.

How many do this! How often the writer hears words like these: "Well, I think I am quite as good as So-and-so"; "If I was a Christian I should do this and that." Indeed, some go as far as to seem to make a refuge of the evildoings of Christians. Reader, are you like one of these? If you are, you will find a day come when that refuge will be swept away, and you will find yourself before God, GUILTY.

C. was trying this. Thank God, he found out it was a false one before it was too late!

After a time, C. became ill again, and went to

some relatives. He got worse, and, indeed, was almost at death's door. Still no thought of God! But he was raised up, and after a time came back and resumed his studies.

The winter was passing on when C. was suddenly struck down with another illness, and for several days he lost his reason. When he became conscious those with him saw a change. He was troubled about his soul; troubled because he was a sinner. He did not doubt there was a God, and he knew he had sinned against Him.

One day a paper was brought to him, but he said, "Take it away. I've got to meet God, and that won't show me how to do it."

Another day a young man called and tried to interest him in a war memorial that it was proposed to erect. When he had gone he said, "I'm gone past war memorials; they will not help me now."

At last he was spoken to of a Christian man whom he had met at his friends' house, and asked if he would like to see him.

"Tell him I'd be delighted to see him," he said.

The message was taken and one evening he came. Those who were present will never forget that scene. There, stretched upon the bed, death stamped on his features, lay the once handsome C. His bodily illness sad indeed, but, oh! the soul agony on those features. Grasping both his visitor's hands, he said, "Oh; Mr. —, you have come to help me along the road, haven't you?" Then, crying aloud, almost in despair, "I want to get right with God; can you show me the way?"

What a scene! What a blessed scene! Reader, if you are unsaved, I would like to meet you just like this. When you are brought to see the empti-

ness of everything but Jesus, I could point you to the Risen Lord, and say, "Look! He's in heaven. He's been on the cross for sins once; He has suffered for them; He has died for them; but He's risen now, in Glory, without them. Look at Him!" Reader, we would soon rejoice together; and there would be joy in Heaven, too!

This is what happened in that room. The visitor took out his Bible and read these Scriptures:—

"And thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt. i. 21.)

"Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." (1 John iii. 5.)

"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Pet. ii. 24.)

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.)

"Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person . . . when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.)

C. drank in every word with eagerness.

"Well," said his friend, "what are you going to say to this? Are you going to take the Salvation which God offers you because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ?"

A TROPHY OF GRACE.

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C. remained silent in thought; then, after some seconds, he raised himself, and at last, looking up, he exclaimed, "I thank Thee, God : oh ! I thank Thee, God. Thou didst save my life three times to bring me to this. Oh ! I thank Thee, God."

Then turning to his friend, he grasped his hand, saying, "Oh ! it's all right now. I see He has done it all; borne all my sins. Jesus bore them on the Cross."

A look of intense joy came over his face, and his friend said, "Shall I pray? "

"Yes, do," said C.

"What shall I say? " said his friend.

"Oh ! thank Him for dying for me."

Together all in that little room knelt down and thanked God for His grace, His wonderful sovereign love, that had yearned over this poor wandering sheep and drawn him home.

At first it seemed as if the joy that filled C.'s whole being was going to help his poor body so much that he would be raised up. But it was not to be.

He had a great desire to serve the Lord down here and indeed did testify to the "grace that saves " to those who came to visit him. But after many weeks of suffering, during which he proved the truth of those words, "I will never leave Thee, nor forsake Thee," he was called home to be "for ever with the Lord." He will be among that vast throng who one day will say up there, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." What a blessed scene that will be ! Yes, C. will be there. Thank God, the writer will be there. Reader, will you?

F.C.C.

THE LINK OF LIVING FAITH.

(See Matt. ix.; Mark v.; Luke viii.)

CHRIST Himself is the only source of life and blessedness to the soul of man. "He that hath the Son hath life." (1 John v. 12.) Outside of Christ, apart from Him, there is no eternal life for the soul. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John v. 11.) He is the fountain, and faith refers to Him. There must be personal connection, by faith, between the dead sinner and the living Saviour. There is no life without it. It may be only the hem of His garment that is touched, but it must be touched in faith, and this touch of faith brings immediate eternal life to the soul.

The multitude thronged Jesus, and pressed Him; but no heavenly virtue flowed out from Him to them. There was no action of faith in the curious crowd. It was neither faith nor felt need that brought them there. But the moment that the finger of faith touched the border of His garment, "Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me. And when the woman saw that she could not be hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him, before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed IMMEDIATELY. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

This is the Lord's gracious and kindly way with every sinner that comes to Him. He *imme-*

diately and *perfectly* meets all their need. And this woman came in the right way, namely, the way of faith. She knew that her case was utterly hopeless, except in His hands. She "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." What a true picture of the sinner's bad condition! Thus she came to Jesus under a deep sense of her need, poverty, helplessness, and of the utter worthlessness of all human aid.

Every creature-resource had failed her, and every spring was dried up, except the everlasting fountain of redeeming love. And with all her unrelieved distress she came in faith to Jesus. "For she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment I shall be whole."

Precious faith! And she was not disappointed. But who ever was so, that came by faith to Him? Not one! "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

And now mark, dear reader, the wondrous grace that shines in His tender words to this troubled woman. He first calls her "daughter." As much as to say, We are now intimately connected; we are kindred; of one family; one Father; one hope, and one home. "For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Heb. ii. 11; Rom. viii. 35.)

Then He says to her, "Be of good comfort." Take, enjoy, all the comfort that springs from being made whole in body, and from being a child of God "by faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal. iii. 26.) Oh! what a source of comfort these words are,

as coming from the lips of Jesus! What a deep springing well of never-ending bliss!

He then adds, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Faith brings the soul to Christ, the true Physician. He only has the "balm of Gilead." He only can recover the health of the daughter of His people. (Jer. viii. 23.)

But how gracious of the Lord to say, "Thy *faith* hath made thee whole," when He Himself had done it all. Yes, but there is a deep practical truth in this. The healing virtue was in Him, but *faith* was the divine way of putting her in possession of it. "The unsearchable riches of Christ" are thrown open to faith; every spring of healing virtue in the Saviour opens to its touch. Faith unlocks the whole treasury of God. Christ has indeed done all the work. The great work of atonement, propitiation, redemption by blood, was assuredly accomplished on the cross, and finished there for ever. But a man is not *saved*, he does not possess *salvation*, until he believes in Christ. So the great doctrine of all Scripture on this point is that we are "*justified by faith*." "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.)

Faith receives Christ, and unites the soul with Him who is the fountain of all blessing. No blessing is received until He is received, by faith, through the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, by means of the truth of the gospel. The poor woman only "grew worse" until she came to Jesus. And so must every son and daughter of Adam *grow worse*. There is no spiritual life, health, or blessing, but in Christ Jesus. The soul must perish that has no connection with Him.

She was in the very circumstances of death when she stretched forth the hand of living faith. The connecting link between the sinner and the Saviour is *faith in Him*. Hence the unspeakable importance of the question, "DOST THOU BELIEVE ON THE SON OF GOD?" Forgiveness, justification, salvation, are received the moment we can answer in His presence, "Lord, I believe." (John ix. 35.)

He concludes with "Go in peace." All is settled now, and settled for ever. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.)

The fountain of her disease had been dried up. When God deals with sin, He deals with it root and branch. She had a solid ground of peace in the precious words of Jesus. Nothing more was required than His own words of sweetest grace. "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

Oh! how full, comprehensive, and pointed they are! Nothing seems to be left out that is needed to give a soul real joy, good comfort, perfect rest, and settled peace. All may be yours, dear reader, by believing in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.)

The trembling sinner feareth
That God can ne'er forget;
But one full payment cleareth
His memory of all debt.
When nought beside could ease us,
Or set our souls at large,
Thy holy work, Lord Jesus,
Secured a full discharge.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD.

HUMAN nature, however cultivated it may be, is dense and dark as to all that is spiritual. This is often realised by one born of God by the Spirit and the Word.

It is remarkable that the most simple, plain gospel truth becomes a matter of doubt and question to the man of the world. Take one who is accustomed to say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Ask him if his own sins are forgiven, and he knows not what to answer. He is filled with doubt; all is uncertainty. He believes there is one God, but never draws near to Him.

God has sent His own Word to us, but man heeds it not, and refuses to believe it. The gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," but man will not believe it, and continues on the broad road that leads to destruction.

Let us inquire what this gospel is, since it is "the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. i. 16.) It has not lost its power because it is refused. The soul that refuses it is lost, but the gospel abides in its power "unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Now let us seek to know it from God's own inspired Word. Man is a lost sinner, guilty before God—"None righteous; no, not one." (Rom. iii. 10). But God tells us that He is a just God and a Saviour, and the gospel makes known God as a Saviour and the salvation of God.

Now, this is all unfolded in the coming of Jesus, and in His finished work; in the atoning power of His blood, the efficacy of His sacrifice, His sacrifice, His offering Himself in death for sinners.

In view of His thus offering up Himself on the cross a sacrifice for us and our sins, He says in the Gospel of John (xii. 23), "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." God was glorified by His own Son in bearing our sins in the stead of us. Had we to bear our sins, it would be our eternal condemnation; but it does not say that God will be *glorified* thus. Yet when Christ bore them, so perfectly were they borne, yea, put away, by His sacrifice that God was glorified.

Now, this is something to triumph in; our sins put away to the glory of God by that shed blood, by that sacrifice and death on Calvary. Does any one inquire how he may have this forgiveness with certainty? The answer supplied from God's word is, "Be it known unto you, therefore, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Now, so completely is the sinner who believes justified that God's Word even says Christ was raised again for such a one's justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) Who can accuse when Christ risen is our justification? The One who bore my sins on the cross is risen, and in the presence of God is my justification. No wonder, then, that we read, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.)

But the Blood cleanses as well as justifies: "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) Christ washes and cleanses the sinner by the word of the gospel, too. We read, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Ps. li. 7.) Also, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

Our hearts are purified by faith. Further we read in Ephesians that "After ye believed ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Is not this a complete salvation? God giving His Holy Spirit to the believer in Jesus thus sealing him until the day of redemption.

Still there is more, for that grace of God which forgives and cleanses the sinner through faith in Christ also saves him from the slavery of sin and its power, by bringing him out of the state of fallen nature into new life and nature in Christ. We read: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin." (Rom. viii.) Now this is full, complete salvation.

And, further, it goes on to say, "If God be for us who can be against us? . . . Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

And still further, "Neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "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."

C.J.C.