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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.

A RAILWAY INCIDENT.

TRAVELLING one afternoon by train to a suburban district, I had scarcely taken my seat when a lady passenger offered me a printed leaflet, as also to the five or six other persons who were in the same compartment.

The contents of the leaflet consisted of simple passages of Scripture, one of which was the well-known verse, "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.)

As I silently read the leaflet, a gentleman seated near the door turned to the lady who have given it and said, "I hate such bigotry!" Then, in language which it would not be for the profit of the reader to reproduce, commenced to denounce the giver of the leaflet.

Seeing that it was now a question of Christ and His truth, and remembering His words, "He that is not with me is against me," I interposed and said, "It is not bigotry to distribute the word of God."

This statement called forth a torrent of abuse, revealing only too plainly that the speaker was an avowed atheist.

Knowing that it was useless to argue with one in such a state of mind, I contented myself with warning him of his danger, and of the awful position he was taking in refusing the word of God; adding, "When God speaks, it is for man to hear."

Thereupon the train drew up at our first stopping place, and the atheist leaped out of the carriage.

As soon as he was gone, another gentleman spoke, and said, "I am glad you defended the Bible. I have no sympathy with such remarks as were made. Still," he added, "I have my difficulties."

"Indeed; and what are they?"

"Well, I cannot understand the justice of dooming any to everlasting destruction."

"Who has done this?"

"Why," he said, "it says somewhere that God has chosen some to salvation and doomed others to destruction."

"Where have you read this?"

"Somewhere in the Romans."

"No," I replied, "you have not read it there, nor indeed anywhere in the Scriptures; and this is only a sample of the way in which the Bible is often treated."

I then pointed out what was exactly said in

A RAILWAY INCIDENT.

3

Romans ix., and explained that while the salvation of any was of pure and sovereign grace, God had in His mercy offered grace to all; and that the last message to sinners in the word of God was, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) All therefore would be without excuse, for the precious blood of Christ would avail for every one that believeth in Him. And together with this, I pressed upon him a present and eternal salvation through faith in Christ.

Almost before I had ended, a third gentleman, a young man, spoke, and said, "I *am* a Christian, but I cannot go with all you have said."

"To what do you object?"

"Well," he replied, "I believe in Christ; but I think it is presumption to say that you know that you are saved. I hope I *shall* be saved, but I cannot know this now."

"But is not the word of God the ground of our faith and the warranty of our assurance? Now this is what we read, 'These things have I written unto you . . . that ye may know that ye have eternal life' (1 John v. 13). It is plain, therefore, that God desires us to know that we are saved, and it cannot be presumption to rest with implicit confidence in His own word."

I then proceeded once again to point out the value of the precious blood of Christ in cleansing us from all sin (1 John i. 7), and in cleansing us for ever.

As soon as these words had passed my lips, the lady who had given me the leaflet spoke, and said, to my great surprise, "I cannot agree with you in that. I feel that I need the cleansing of the blood every day of my life."

In answer to this, I explained the truth of

Hebrews x., where we have a threefold testimony to the everlasting putting away of the sins of believers by the sacrifice of Christ. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." I also explained the gracious provision that God has made, through the washing of water by the word, in connection with the advocacy of Christ, for the sins of believers (1 John ii. 1); showing at the same time that when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross He bore all our sins, past, present, and future, and that therefore all His people could rejoice in the knowledge that they were gone for ever; and that the proof of this was found in the place which the Lord Jesus now occupied at the right hand of God. For if He had our sins upon Him on the cross, it is clear that they must be for ever gone if He is now in the glory of God.

Just as the train drew up at my destination, the last occupant of the carriage remarked, "I am so thankful you have spoken in this way."

So far as I know, no effect followed our conversation; but the remarkable thing was that every heart in that carriage was brought into the light by the simple action of the word of God.

Surely this was a foreshadowing of that time when *all* persons will be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let me, then, ask my reader, with all solemnity, and yet with all tenderness, Are you prepared for this?

Meet Him you must, sooner or later. Now, you may meet Him as your Saviour; for Him God has set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood. (Rom. iii. 25.) Coming, then, on the ground of the efficacy of His death and sacrifice, you will be saved eternally. Refusing or *neglecting* thus

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

5

to come, there remains the great white throne before which you must appear, but, alas! only for eternal judgment. (Rev. xx. 11, 12). What force and power, then, are in these words proclaimed to-day: “*Now* is the accepted time, behold, and *now* is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

E. D.

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?”

“What must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts xvi. 30, 31.)

IN considering these verses, I shall notice:

1. The jailor's awakening.
2. The gospel preached to him.
3. The result.

1. THE AWAKENING.

With regard to the Philippian jailor, we know but little of his former history. From the few materials we have, we may gather that he was diligent in his calling, and that he took no more interest in the apostles of the Lord Jesus than in the worshippers of the great goddess Diana.

It is very likely that he had heard something of Paul's ways, if he had not of the conversion and baptism of Lydia and others, mentioned in the same chapter of Acts. He knew also why Paul and Silas were imprisoned, and appears not only to have acquiesced in the propriety of punishing and restraining such men, but also of preventing, as far as possible, a recurrence of their preaching.

When, therefore, they were brought to the prison, with a charge that the jailor should “keep

them safely," "he thrust them into the inner prison," we are told, "and made their feet fast in the stocks."

This is enough to show us the condition of his heart, and that the Lord's servants found no favour in his eyes. He knew not, felt not, God's love; therefore his heart was destitute of that love to the brethren which always marks those who are born of God.

Like a thorough man of the world, he appears to have retired to bed that night with as much unconcern as on any other occasion. All that he heard and saw of the servants of the Lord Jesus was insufficient to awaken his dark mind, and exercise his conscience.

But God had a purpose of blessing in store for this heathen jailor. God's eye was upon him for good. God's good pleasure was to glorify His own name in making the wrath of man to praise Him, and in hiding pride from man. (Job xxiii. 17.) The holy, godly testimony of the faithful ambassadors of Christ had not impressed his heart, so other means must be used to arouse his benighted soul. He who had so cruelly thrust them into the dungeon, and chained them to the stocks, must yet be brought to fall down before them, and acknowledge them as the servants of the living God.

Paul and Silas, who now appeared to be interrupted in the faithful discharge of their gospel ministry, were also to prove that, like their Master, each step of cruelty and oppression turned out for the furtherance of God's purposes of grace, and only led them forward in the path of true service, and not out of it. Their midnight prayer and praise, too, seem to indicate that they

“WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?” 7

were in the lively attitude of faith, and in full expectation of the blessing of the Lord.

But there is something very solemn at this moment of the jailor's history; for it seems to tell us that, if men reject the quiet, holy testimony of the servants of Christ, God has other means of bringing down man's lofty looks. God's power is unlimited, both in mercy and judgment. In this case it was to be made known in grace. He who smote Saul of Tarsus with blindness, and brought him to the Saviour's feet, could also bring the jailor there. That all-powerful arm might justly have been lifted up with the sword of vengeance, and, piercing the heart of that man who had dared to chain the feet of His dear servants, at once have hurled him to the pit of eternal destruction. But mercy rejoiced against judgment. (James ii. 13.) In the darkness and stillness of midnight, without any warning whatever, a tremendous convulsion threatened to rase the whole building to the ground, and to bury every inmate in its ruins. It is recorded that “suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and every one's bands were loosed.”

This was God's way of showing that He is greater than man. This was mercy's way of bringing salvation to the jailor's house, and of honouring the Lord's faithful, suffering servants. It was the very means that would alarm the hard and unfeeling jailor. He awoke out of sleep. His conscience owned it as God's dispensation. His first feeling was despair and self-destruction. Seeing the prison doors open, and supposing the prisoners had all fled, he drew his sword, and would have killed himself.

"But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here."

This was the sweet and heavenly way that Paul took with his jailor. It was returning good for evil, and kindness to one who had treated him so cruelly.

But more than this. The man's conscience is awakened, a crowd of solemn thoughts press upon his mind. The convulsion of an earthquake might have consigned him at once to a dark eternity; another shock, and he may be called to give an account of himself to God.

He is assured that Paul and Silas have that peace and joy to which he is a stranger, and that they are the servants of God. He feels now that he is an unsaved man; that if he should die, he must go where hope and mercy never can come. His case is urgent, his danger imminent, his position most perilous; for he now knows that he had been sleeping on the edge of a fearful precipice.

Not a moment then can be lost. "A light! a light!" he cries. His very joints are loose, and every fibre of his body seems to quiver. "Salvation, salvation," is the longing of his whole soul. He springs at once into the inner prison, and falling down before these servants of the Lord Jesus, cries out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Here I would pause, and kindly ask the reader, What profit has the sweet voice of God's redeeming love been to you? You read of Jesus in this book; you have often seen His servants, and heard them testify of forgiveness of sins through His blood. But has it aroused you? Will you, by your indifference, compel God to visit you with some painful affliction, some distressing dispensation, before you consider your state before Him?

Must He snatch away from your eyes the dearest object of your life? Must He lay you prostrate on a bed of languishing? Must He make the earth to tremble, before you turn to Him for salvation?

It seems to me that these bitter ways are sometimes necessary, to alarm the sinner, and incline him to come to Jesus. Oh, my reader! do consider how matters stand between you and God, and turn to Him at once for the salvation of your soul, lest, instead of an earthquake being sent to alarm your conscience and bring you to the Saviour, a messenger be despatched in judgment to hurl you into an eternity of blackness and despair!

2. THE GOSPEL PREACHED.

It was salvation that occupied the jailor's whole soul, nothing less than salvation; not religious ceremonies, but salvation. “ What must I do to be saved? ” is his question. This, too, is the anxious inquiry of every truly enlightened soul; and we need not go to commentators or learned doctors for a correct answer to the question, for the Scriptures plainly tell us. The apostolic reply was, “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

The gospel, then, preached to this awakened sinner of the Gentiles was salvation by faith. The jailor's thought, like many others, was that salvation was by works: “ What must I *do*? ” But Paul and Silas assured him that he could be saved only in the way of faith. They presented the Lord Jesus Christ to him as the object of faith; and His finished work, and God's acceptance of it, as the ground of salvation, and warrant for perfect peace: “ Thou shalt be saved.”

This is very simple, and commends itself to the confidence of an anxious inquirer. The gospel really excludes all idea of creature-doing for salvation, because it testifies that Jesus, the Son of God, has so completely finished the work of our redemption, so thoroughly made propitiation for sins, that He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, the rightful Lord of heaven and earth; and now all who believe on Him have at once an eternal interest in that blessed work.

The Lord Jesus having magnified the law by bearing its curse, put away sin, abolished death, burst the bars of the grave, and triumphed over Satan, hell, and the grave, has entered into heaven itself with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us; the resurrection and glorification of Christ being God's public testimony of His acceptance of the Saviour's all-sufficient work.

What, then, is to be done for salvation?

Nothing; all is done already, and we have the warrant of God's word to receive and enjoy it by faith: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" Faith reads the lessons of redeeming love in the death of the Son of God upon the cross; and those who can say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us" have peace; they see that God's love has brought salvation to them, even when sinners, in the cross of His Son, and knowing He is now risen from the dead, they approach God with confidence; they know that He declares them saved by grace, through faith. (Eph. ii. 8.)

What, I would ask, can exceed this boundless love? What else could have really met us in our low estate? What could so redound to the glory

of God? And who so thoroughly reject the gospel, display self-ignorance, and despise the unsearchable riches of Divine love, as those who talk of *doing* for salvation? “Where is boasting?” said the apostle. “It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. iii. 27, 28.) Blessed gospel for a sin-convicted, heavy-laden sinner!

3. THE RESULT.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and when received into the heart it brings forth fruit. It is God’s means of begetting new creatures. “Of His own will,” says James, “begat He us with the word of truth.” (James i. 18.) It also gives liberty and peace. “The truth shall make you free.” (John viii. 32.) All this we should expect, when a sinner is brought to know that he is saved. Who so grateful, so dutiful, so happy, so free!

Some hear the truth of the gospel, and the only apparent effect is that it hardens them. This was not the case with Lydia, for her heart was opened, and she attended to the word ministered by Paul. And so the jailor, for his whole soul was filled with anxiety; he, therefore, received the truth at once in the love of it, and its effects were most manifest. What could be so sweet to such a one as the story of the Saviour’s love?

With what intense interest the trembling jailor must have listened to those servants of the Lord while declaring to him the way of salvation! And what grateful surprise must have filled his heart at hearing that the way was so simple, so free, so full of blessing, and so suited to a lost, helpless

sinner! It at once engaged his attention, and made him long to hear more about such glorious tidings; and soon all his household were brought together, though at midnight, and were attentive listeners to Paul and Silas, while they further opened up to them the riches of divine grace.

The energetic, determined jailor, who only a few hours before had so rudely thrust them into the inner prison, regardless of their lacerated backs, now sat like a little child as an anxious inquirer at their feet, and gathered others to partake also of the blessings of the gospel. "They spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

Among the first effects, then, of the jailor's reception of the gospel of Christ, we may notice his love for the truth, a child-like inquiring mind, and concern for the spiritual welfare of others. The good news of salvation by Christ had been so applied to his conscience by the Holy Spirit that it came to him "as cold waters to a thirsty soul," and he was immediately like a dead man raised to life. (Prov. xxv. 25.) He was "born again" of the incorruptible seed of the word; he was a "new creation," old things had passed away, and all things were become new; he therefore had an ear to hear, a mind to understand, a heart to receive and love, and to desire more and more the sincere milk of the word, and such a sense of its value, that he wished others to receive the same blessed gospel. (1 Pet. i. 23; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 Pet. ii. 2.)

The next thing we may notice among the fruits of faith is his love to the Lord's servants. He is begotten by the word of truth, and is thoroughly changed in his ways. He has passed from death

to life, therefore he loves the brethren. (1 John iii. 14.) A few hours before, he saw nothing more in Paul and Silas to call forth affection and sympathy than in the other prisoners; but now he views every thing with new eyes. Having received the word of truth, the gospel of the grace of God, he loves not only Him that begat, but them also that are begotten of Him. It is not surprising, then, that "he took Paul and Silas the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes . . . and brought them into his house, and set meat before them."

This was blessed indeed; a fine example of the fruit of the Spirit. It proved the sincerity of his profession; for it was not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 John iii. 18.) Love is a vital point. Religious profession, without a loving heart toward Christ and His members, is like "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." (1 Cor. xiii. 1.) The apostle John declares that, whatever any man may profess, "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (1 John iii. 14.) But in the jailor's case the entrance of God's word had given light; it had given understanding to the simple; it had by the Spirit quickened him when dead in sins. He thus had divine life; therefore there was divine love, fruit in season, self-denial for the sake of Christ's servants.

But more than this, he carried out the mind of the Lord. "He was baptised." This Paul and Silas had doubtless set before him, and it came with authority to his conscience, because the love of Christ constrained him. His heart was full. His whole soul was influenced with the atoning death of Christ, and the power of His resurrection. He knew that he was saved by the Lord

Jesus Christ, that he had redemption in Christ through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace; it was therefore not arduous, but a sweet privilege to attend to an ordinance in which he would realise so personally what it was to be buried with Christ.

Faith does not argue; it simply believes and acts on God's word. Nor was the jailor alone in this; the whole congregation, even all his household who had heard the preaching, had no doubt received the gospel too, were happy in the Saviour's love, and were also baptised. Hence we see that there was not merely a confession of faith, but the obedience of faith; not only an attentive ear to listen to the word of the Lord, but a grateful response in doing the will of the Lord.

And yet further. There was not only love and peace now animating the jailor's soul, there was joy also. He "rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." This seems to complete the picture.

There was now nothing wanting to show forth the true workmanship of the Spirit in this new-born soul. It was indeed bringing forth good fruit. He could clearly see that there was only a short space of time between him and pleasures for evermore, so that he could rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v. 1.)

Thus, in the narrative of the Philippian jailor we have traced the various workings of the Holy Spirit in awakening one dead in trespasses and sins, giving peace through the gospel of Christ, and its blessed power in giving life and salvation, and bringing forth fruit to God.

But the thought crosses my mind that perhaps my reader is unconverted, still dead in sins, still

A SAVIOUR IN HEAVEN.

15

seeking ease and satisfaction apart from God and Christ. Is it so?

Is it possible that you are going on to eternal ruin without desiring salvation, without once anxiously crying out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Is it true that you hear of salvation by Christ, and heed it not? that the glorious sound, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," rings in your ears, and you put it far from you?

Oh, my friend! beware, lest the Saviour have to say to you as to them of old, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." (John v. 40; viii. 24.)

H. H. S.

A SAVIOUR IN HEAVEN.

THE Lord Jesus Christ was once upon earth. When here, it was ever His delight to minister to the necessities of those around Him, both in relation to the body, with its present sufferings, and the soul, with its eternal need.

You are doubtless aware of the solemn fact, that men in that day refused Him a place here. They could not endure the light of His presence, for there was that in the presence of Christ which continually discovered the true moral condition of those near to Him.

Where this was owned and confessed it was His unceasing delight to minister forgiveness and eternal blessing.

The multitude, however, in that day, loved the

darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil; and that they might continue in their perverse course they shut out from their souls the light that would have revealed not only their actual condition, but the blessed reality that a Saviour was in their midst.

As far as man is concerned, the cross of Calvary was the open declaration that they would not have Him. They "crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

They "killed the prince of life." (Acts iii. 15.) But God "raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 20, 21.)

I ask you, my reader, to remember that what the Lord Jesus Christ was as a Saviour upon earth that He is now as a Saviour in heaven. There, in those realms of light; there, in the very centre of the glory of God, He is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." There, He is a Saviour for you; there, He waits upon you in this blessed character: "Mighty to save." (1 Pet. iii. 22; Heb. xiii. 8; Isa. lxiii. 1.)

To have despised Him on earth was surely for those who did so to expose themselves to judgment in that day. But what if you now despise Him in heaven? The greater the presentation of grace on God's side, the more terrible will be the judgment if you despise it. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iii. 7, 8.)

E. P. C.

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"THE WHOLE WORLD IS CHANGED TO ME."

IT was one autumn day that I was desired by a friend to visit Madame Z.

He told me she was a stranger in E—, being a Frenchwoman; that she was the widow of an officer who had been killed in battle; and that she was in delicate health. All this made him much interested in her, but having to leave the locality himself, he could not again see her.

I took an early opportunity to pay her my first visit. She received me very kindly, and I found her a most refined and attractive person. She spoke English so well that you could scarcely have discovered she was French. She spoke several other languages also, as I learnt later. She had travelled a great deal, and was generally so well informed that I could not summon up

courage to speak to her upon the one most important subject that it was the purpose of my visit to introduce to her notice.

I waited about a week before calling upon her again. This time, however, I was determined that, come what would, I would speak to her plainly.

Accordingly, after inquiring kindly about her health, I at once began, and spoke to her of the new birth, and the necessity of knowing our true state before God.

I no sooner touched the subject than the Lord gave me the most perfect liberty in speaking to her, while at the same time all reserve was taken away from Madame Z——, and she poured out her whole heart to me.

There had been a wall, as it were, between us; but now the barrier was taken away, and what a lesson does it not teach? How many may be longing and yearning after the "living water," and we shrink in our unfaithfulness from showing the way to the fountain (John iv. 10).

She told me about her past life, how earth's streams had been embittered and dried up for her. She had known and tasted of the pleasures of the world as few had done, but had found earth's cisterns to be truly broken cisterns, which would hold no water. (Jer. ii. 13.)

She thirsted now for "the water of life" (Rev. xxii. 17.) As she herself expressed it, "I have gone from place to place, and from church to chapel; I have conversed with clergymen and others in many parts of Europe with regard to the salvation of my soul; but I don't know yet what it means to be 'born again.'" (John iii. 3.) One clergyman to whom I spoke advised me to

“ THE WHOLE WORLD IS CHANGED TO ME.” 19

take the sacrament; but it did me no good. I was as far from peace as ever.”

She had prayed for pardon, and prayed for mercy; she had read her Bible; but still she could not say she was reconciled to God. (Rom. v. 10.)

I opened the Bible with her, and we read the following verses:—

“ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Cor. v. 18-21.)

I showed her from these verses that while she had been praying for mercy, and praying for pardon, God was by His servants beseeching her to receive it.

“ Now,” I continued, “these are not my words. I have God's authority for beseeching you to be reconciled. He hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. The Lord Jesus, though not here in person now, sends His servants with His own word to you. This is the glad tidings. Instead of your having to plead with God, He is now beseeching you to be reconciled, and He can reconcile you righteously. As we see in verse 21, ‘For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.’ You tell me that you have been seeking to be at peace with God for years: and all the while God, by His ambassadors, has been beseeching you to be reconciled.”

I then read the first two verses of the following chapter :—

“ We, then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

“ Now how could you receive the grace of God in vain?” I asked. “ When a thing is offered to you, and you do not accept it, you receive the offer in vain. And when is God beseeching you to be reconciled? It is now, this present moment. There is not a promise for to-morrow. In five minutes you might be in eternity. Let us turn now to 1 John v. and you will see something further :—‘ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.’ (v. 1.)

“ Now,” I said, “ you may have some difficulty to know whether you have the right kind of belief.”

She said this was a difficulty with her. She thought the faith that saved people was some peculiar kind of faith. She had been more occupied with her faith than with the object upon which her faith was to rely.

I then read on at verse 9 : “ ‘ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son.’

“ This shows that you are to believe the witness of God in the very same way that you receive the witness of men; with this difference, that you keep in mind that man’s word may fail, but God’s word NEVER can.”

I read on : “ ‘ He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believ-

“ THE WHOLE WORLD IS CHANGED TO ME.” 21

eth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.’

“ Now,” I said, “ do you believe all those scriptures I have been reading with you; those in 2 Corinthians v. about pardon and reconciliation, and those in 1 John v. with regard to eternal life?”

“ I do,” she replied; but, she added, “ I have always expected to feel some great change in my heart.”

“ That is, you have been looking within you for an evidence that you were born again, and all the while passing over the testimony of God in His Word, the reception of which would have filled you with joy. Suppose you were in great difficulties, and someone told you that a large estate had just been left to you, you would not rejoice over it until you believed it to be true. It is the same with the gospel. These scriptures are my title deeds for my eternal inheritance. There may be flaws in earthly title deeds, but in these NEVER. If you were to tell me that you knew you were saved because you were happy, I should think you were building upon a very bad foundation. Happy feelings are as changeable as the wind. We may be happy to-day and unhappy to-morrow; but God’s Word never changes. ‘ Heaven and earth shall pass away,’ said Jesus, ‘ but MY WORDS shall not pass away.’ ” (Mark xiii.)

I sought to meet every difficulty by the written word, and again calling her attention to 1 John v. 10 : “ He that believeth not God hath made Him

a liar," I asked her if she were going to continue doing this by not believing His testimony.

"No," she said, "I will do so no more. I do believe His Word."

"You will not wait till you feel something."

"No; I will trust Him now."

"And what do you receive by doing so?"

"Pardon and eternal life."

She seemed to take it in with trembling, and I left her for the Lord to perfect His own work. And truly He did; for when we met again she was filled with joy and gladness. (Rom. xv. 13.)

"Oh!" she said, "I know now what it is to be 'born again.' The whole world is changed to me. I am just like a child beginning to live. My whole past life has been wasted; but henceforth I want to live only for Christ."

It was, indeed, a passing from death to life. Old things had passed away, ALL had become new. (2 Cor. v. 17.) Her only sorrow was that she had not known Him sooner, and her cry was like one of old who said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.)

Her delight in the Scriptures was refreshing to witness. Every word seemed to come with such power, and was so real to her, that it made it all come with new power to my own soul. The knowledge of what she had got in Christ, and how she was quickened together, raised together, and seated together in heavenly places in Him, filled her with praise and thanksgiving. (Eph. ii., 5, 6.) And her joy literally overflowed as, with all the vivacity of her people, she spoke of the things of God.

One day she said to me, "I had such a striking dream the other night. I thought I was

“ THE WHOLE WORLD IS CHANGED TO ME.” 23

walking on a road which was covered with all manner of rubbish. As I walked, it gradually became more and more difficult to walk on, so rough and rugged. Then someone came, and taking hold of my hand, led me over the rough road into a beautiful garden. I thought I was just a little child, and he brought me to a number of others, each of whom held in the hand a bit of bread. They were all clothed in pure white. All around there flowed fountains of clear water. The One who led me there placed in my hand a bit of bread, saying, ‘ Now I must leave you, but in a little while I shall come again.’ At this I felt so sorry, and in the distress of seeing him leave me I awoke.

“ That road covered with rubbish is the world with all its pride and vanity,” she went on to say; “ then it became more rugged, through trials and sorrows which followed. But the Lord came, and led me out of it all, and brought me to a place of rest and safety; gave me ‘ the bread of life ’ upon which I am to feed in His absence, as I walk by faith down here, not by sight. ‘ He that eateth this bread shall live for ever.’ ” (John vi. 35, 58.)

She had only intended to be in E—— for a few months, but one day she said to me, “ Although France is the land of my birth, this has been the land where I have been ‘ born again,’ and now I shall not leave it. I have few friends there, and none of them have been to me what you have been.”

I was very glad when she told me this, as I was deeply attached to her, but far more than that, there was the deeper “ fellowship of the Spirit,” which made a stronger bond than any earthly tie could have done. (Phil. ii. 1.)

It was her desire to spend the rest of her life for the glory of God, and she had a path of service for Christ in view, but the Lord had planned it otherwise.

Her health had been delicate for some time, though after her conversion had seemed to improve. But as autumn began to pass away, and the cold damp of winter set in, she grew worse.

The little while she was left down here soon passed; but as it passed, her godly walk, her kind, thoughtful care of any whom she could in any way help, shone out more and more, until the day she went to be for ever with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.)

Amongst her last words to the one who waited upon her, as she wished her to take a little wine, were these: "No, no, nothing more of earth," gently pushing aside the hand that held it to her, "I am just feeding upon the blood of Christ." (John vi. 53, 54.)

Reader, do you know what it is to "eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man"?

Many of old said, "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" And "many also went back, and walked no more with Him." (John vi. 60, 66.)

Professor, do you know anything of this?

Jesus says: "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him."

J.D.

THE WORD "READY" IN SCRIPTURE.

"READY TO PERISH."

A SINNER needs a Saviour. All have sinned, and therefore all need a Saviour.

No sinner can save himself; therefore needs to be saved by another. No fellow-man of Adam's race can save him, because all others are sinners too.

Who then can save? Christ Jesus only.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save* sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

"The Son of man is come to seek and to *save* that which was lost." (Luke xix. 10.)

"This is indeed the Christ, the *Saviour* of the world." (John iv. 42.)

And when is the time for a sinner to be saved?

Now! (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

But how many have never felt their need of this precious Saviour!

Why is this?

Because they have never bowed to and believed God's word as to their condition as sinners, in danger of perishing everlastingly (Rom. iii. 23; Matt. xxv. 41). In Deuteronomy xxvi. 5, we read of the language to be used by a Jew when he brought his basket of first-fruits to the priest to offer to the Lord; he was to say before the Lord his God, "A Syrian *ready to perish* was my father."

He owned that he was of a race descended from one who was "ready to perish." This describes most fitly the natural condition of all men; we belong to a race of sinners who are *ready to*

perish. God is infinitely holy (Isaiah lvii. 15), and cannot suffer sin in His presence : all have sinned, and are liable at any moment to suffer the penalty of sin, *death*; and all who die in their sins perish everlastingly. (Rev. xx. 15.)

Thus, my reader, if you are still unconverted, you are a sinner "ready to perish." Do you believe that this is indeed true?

If you do, how precious to read of God, who is

"READY TO PARDON,"

"gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (Neh. ix. 17), "good, and *ready to forgive.*" (Psalm lxxxvi. 5.) Yes, dear reader, although you are "ready to perish" on account of your sins, God is "ready to pardon," "ready to forgive," all your sins, that you should not perish, because His only begotten Son died as the sin-bearer on the cross (2 Cor. v. 21). And God is "ready to pardon" *now*; not at some future time; not when you have turned over a new leaf; not when you have wrought out a righteousness of your own; not at the day of judgment; but *now*, to-day, this moment, God is "ready to pardon" *you*. Are you *ready* to be pardoned? Not some of your sins, but all your sins, all your scarlet, crimson sins. God is "ready to forgive" all. "Through *this man* [Christ Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." (Acts xiii. 38.)

But you will say, "How am I to know my sins are forgiven?"

I reply, By simple faith, by believing. For "by Him *all that believe are* justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) "Their sins and iniquities will I remember *no more.*" (Heb. x. 17.) The Scripture says of all who believe, "Little

children, your *sins are forgiven* you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.)

And not only is God ready to pardon, but He is also

"READY TO SAVE";

ready to save you from your sins, ready to save you from the world; ready to save you from the power of Satan; ready to save you from judgment; ready to save you from perishing; ready to save you for His glory; ready to save you for ever and for ever. Are *you* ready to be saved?

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) Note the words of Hezekiah: "For the grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known Thy truth. The Lord was *ready to save me*." (Isaiah xxxviii. 18-20.) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts xvi. 31.) "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that 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. 8, 9.) And the power of God will keep you "through faith unto *salvation ready to be revealed* in the last time." (1 Peter i. 5.)

And, moreover, God does not stop here, for not only is He "ready to pardon," "ready to forgive," "ready to save" all who are "ready to perish," but, as we read in the parable of the marriage of the king's son in Matt. xxii.,

“ ALL THINGS ARE READY.”

Yes, dear reader, *all things are ready*; fullest provision made for the need of every poor sinner. The *wedding is ready*; the invitation has gone forth to the Jews, and they have made light of it, and gone *their ways*, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. The invitation comes now to the Gentiles, comes to all, comes to *you*; they that were bidden were not worthy; will you accept the invitation; will you come? “ *All things are ready: come.*” (Matt. xxii. 4-9.) Christ has died, and is risen again; the work is finished, God is glorified, and the feast is spread, a feast of “ *fat things*” and “ *wine on the lees.*” (Isaiah xxv. 6.) The *wedding is ready*; God bids *you*. Will *you* come? Or will you go *your way*; will you go to the farm or the merchandise, and despise the blessed invitations of the gospel? Think of the fearful consequences of such a course, for the same Saviour-God that is “ *ready to save,*” is also

“ *READY TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD,*”
 “ *who shall give account to Him.*” (1 Peter iv. 5.) “ *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*” (Heb. ii. 5.) To make light of the gladsome message of grace is to ensure judgment, is to treasure up “ *wrath against the day of wrath.*” (Rom. ii. 5.) Grace, boundless grace, is reigning triumphant now through righteousness (Rom. v. 20-21), but soon judgment will come, “ *For God hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.*” (Acts xvii. 31.)
 “ *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*” (Luke

xii. 40.) "The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days . . . he believeth not that he shall return out of darkness . . . he knoweth that the day of darkness is *ready at his hand*." (Job xv. 20-23.)

But where will those be at that day who, as poor sinners "ready to perish," have come now to the blessed God who is "ready to save?" Ah! no judgment for them. God judged His own Son in their stead (John v. 24; 1 Thess. v. 2-5); and before that day of judgment upon the ungodly comes, the Saviour, the Lord Himself, the Bridegroom will come, come for His own, come to take them to everlasting glory. (1 Thess. iv. 15-18.) And what will He find at that moment? Thousands who profess His name; thousands with a lamp of profession, but no oil; but thousands more who have "oil in their vessels with their lamps," thousands who have truly believed, and have received the Holy Ghost, who have gone to God who is *ready to pardon and save, and are pardoned, and are saved*. (Matt. xxv. 1-13; Rom. iv. 7-8; Ephes. ii. 5.) And then oh! wondrous moment,

"THEY THAT WERE READY WENT IN"

with Him to the marriage, and the *door was shut*. "They that *were ready*." Mark that, dear reader; not they that were getting ready, but they that *were ready*, went in *with Him*. With whom? With *Him*; with Christ, the Saviour, the Lord Himself, Jesus; and the door was *shut*, shut close, shut fast, shut *for ever* on all who were *called* but who *refused*. (Prov. i. 24.) In vain shall many cry then, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." "I *know you not*," will be the awful reply; "I *know you not*." (Matt. xxv. 11-12.) "I *never knew*

you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 23.)

And what is the conduct that becomes all who have received pardon and salvation, as we pass along down in this sinful world, sheltered by the blood of Christ, and waiting for His coming again? "Put them in mind," says the apostle, to be

"READY TO EVERY GOOD WORK."

(Titus iii. 1.) And He that saith, "Behold, I come quickly," has also said, "And my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Rev. xxii. 12.)

"Watching and *ready* may we be
As those that wait their Lord to see."

E. H. C.

"IS THAT ALL?"

HOW often have we heard the question asked, when God's way of salvation has been set forth in the very language of holy Scripture, "Is that all?"

Little do those who ask such a question know what it sets forth. They know not that it involves a positive insult to God and His Christ, for is it not true that "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.) "That through *this Man* 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.) And that the divine message is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"? (Acts xvi. 31.)

Here we have God's blessed way of salvation set forth in all its divine and heavenly simplicity. Christ is God's salvation, God's gift; Christ bruised on the tree; Christ raised from the dead; Christ crowned on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. And yet man's legal heart can presume to ask, “ Is that all? ”

The Eternal Son of God laid aside His glory; emptied Himself, and made Himself of no reputation; came down into this dark and sinful world; took upon Him the form of a servant; went to the cross, and there endured the wrath of a sin-hating God, the wrath which else should have consumed us in the flames of an everlasting hell.

No created intelligence can ever conceive what it cost God to hide His face from His only begotten and well-beloved Son; or what it cost that blessed Son to undergo the awful judgment of God, to be made sin for us, and lose, for a moment, the light of that countenance in which He had found His home and His delight from all eternity. And yet the one for whom all this was done can presume to ask, “ Is that all? ”

“ Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God ” (1 Peter iii. 18.) “ It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief.” (Isaiah liii. 10.) “ He hath *made* Him to be sin for us, [He] who knew no sin; that we might *become* the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Cor. v. 21.) “ Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with *the precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” (1 Peter i. 18-20.)

Thus we have the eternal counsels of God, the precious blood of Christ, and the imperishable testimony of the Holy Spirit, in a word, we have the divine Three-in-One presented to us in the glad tidings of salvation. And yet, in the face of all this, we are met by the monstrous inquiry, "Is that all?"

Yes; with intense delight and holy triumph we reply, That is all. And we may lawfully inquire, What more would you have? You have the heart of God, to make you welcome; the blood of Christ, to make you fit; and the eternal record of the Holy Spirit, to make you sure.

Are not these enough? Is it possible you can still reiterate the audacious inquiry, "Is that all?" Do you want to throw into the scale your miserable doings, your prayers, your alms, your sacraments, your vows, promises, and resolutions; your self-improvement, your moral reform, your tears and sighs, your frames and feelings, in order to make Christ's person, work, and offices of full weight in the judgment of God?

Say, fellow-sinner, is this what you mean by the question on which we are now commenting? Do you imagine for a moment that you can add aught to the finished work of Christ? Do you think God wants anything more? Was not He satisfied when He raised Christ from the dead, set Him at His own right hand, and crowned Him with glory and honour?

And if He is satisfied, why not you? If He rests in Christ, why not you? If He has been eternally glorified about the great question of sin, why should not your heart and conscience find in the same glorious fact sweet and abiding repose?

C. H. M.

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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.

KNOWING FOR CERTAIN.

A NUMBER of decades ago, in one of the old continental cities, there was a garrison chaplain who for many years worked with much spiritual blessing among the often rough and hardened soldiery. Called by the grace of God, and manifestly one of His chosen instruments, he wielded the Word which, while living and effective, is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. iv. 12.) Many a man that might have thought himself invulnerable to the influence of revealed truth found this Word could penetrate him through and through.

Of an energetic temperament, and, by God's grace, without the fear of man, the chaplain, in

his daily intercourse, whether with those in high position or those in low, never flinched from testifying to all alike, "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts xx. 21.) To the hard-hearted and the light-minded he was a veritable son of thunder. (Mark iii. 17.)

One day he was sitting reading in his study, when he heard a knock at the door. Upon his "Come in," a richly liveried servant entered, and begged him to come to his master, who seemed to be nearing death.

"I will come directly," replied the chaplain.

A few minutes later he stood by the bedside of the invalid, who was a man of high birth, surrounded with the pomp and luxuries of this present evil world. He lay on a costly couch, but his countenance bore distinct traces of anxiety and unrest. He was a military officer, and had drunk of the cup of sin to the dregs. He had mocked God and eternity, spending his days in rioting and dissipation, and now, although only thirty-six years of age, was as a decrepit old man. No wonder therefore that at the chaplain's approach his eyes did not look up with joy.

He had always sought to delude himself with the idea that eternity was a fable, and the existence of God a dream, and that heaven and hell existed only in the illusioned imaginations of fanatics. While in the midst of the noisy current of this world's pleasures his conscience had been tolerably at ease; now, however, it seemed that his fine-spun arguments had left him in an inextricable difficulty. At least he had already for some days felt an undefinable unrest, and this unrest had induced him to allow the earnest military chaplain to be called to his bedside.

But he was not the only visitor. It appeared that the sick man feared to be alone when he received the Lord's message. Perhaps he still hoped that the preacher of the gospel, and the testimony to unseen things, could be overcome by the arguments of unbelief. He accordingly took care that one of his light-hearted boon companions, who, like himself, had for a long time rejected all faith in God and eternity, should be present during the chaplain's visit.

The sick man's friend was likewise a man of distinguished position, and dressed according to the rank of a staff-officer of the army.

The chaplain greeted him with the honour which was due to his position, but, without being further disturbed by his presence, he leaned over the dying man in a friendly manner, and commenced to speak to him of the love of the Saviour, inviting him to come to Him while it is called to-day. He also pictured before him the fearful loss of a soul passing into eternity without Christ.

He seemed, however, resolved not to listen to the words addressed to him. As he had one of his friends by him, he felt himself strong again, and was ashamed to confess in a godless companion's presence that his rest had left him, and that he was so fainthearted and cowardly as to be fearful about eternity.

As soon as the chaplain perceived that, he began in a still more serious tone to speak of hell, and of eternal perdition, to which every impenitent sinner was fast approaching. He spoke of the righteousness of God, which it is impossible to mock; and he pictured the terrible judgment of those who hardened their hearts and seared their consciences as with a hot iron.

The staff-officer listened to this for some moments in silence; and although he manifested discontent, yet he did not dare at once to interrupt the speaker. However, his patience was at length exhausted. "You would do better if you kept your words to yourself, and went off home," angrily said he to the chaplain. "I don't believe that my friend wants your help. He will perhaps die. What do you want to embitter his last moments for, and fill his mind with your illusions?"

"I shall do what God wishes from me," answered the chaplain, quietly. "He wishes to warn this sinner for the last time; therefore He has sent me here; and woe to me if I am silent! God grant that your friend may yet be truly aroused. It is better now to believe that there is a place of torment than to open the eyes in the midst of it, in the fire that never shall be quenched . . . It is better. . . ."

"Stop! stop!" cried the officer, in an angry tone; "go and display your wisdom where you please; go and make old women and children shudder with your tales. We have happily got rid of such follies long ago. All you have just said is a lot of nonsense and lies, not worth the thought of a sensible man. We live and we die, and that is all; there is *nothing after death*."

Now the chaplain, rising up in all his strength, quietly approached the officer, placed himself before him, and looking him straight in the face, said, in solemn and searching tones, "Do you KNOW THAT FOR CERTAIN?"

A thunderclap, coming suddenly from a cloudless sky on a sunny day, could not have produced more fright and astonishment than this unex-

pected question appeared to do in the heart of the startled officer. For a moment he stood as one petrified; then he turned, seized his hat and gloves, and hastened out of the chamber without saying another word.

The chaplain turned again to the sick man, and spoke afresh of repentance and conversion, announced to him forgiveness or eternal destruction, heaven or hell, and then returned home.

The dying man was again alone. And now all his hardihood was entirely gone. The question, "DO YOU KNOW THAT FOR CERTAIN?" rang incessantly in his ears, and all that was in him answered, "No!" He became more and more assured that he was a lost sinner; and with fear and trembling he thought of God's judgment-throne, the idea of which he had so often mocked at, and the existence of which he had denied.

Early next morning he sent again for the chaplain to come and visit him. He came, and found the invalid in the greatest distress of soul, and bordering upon despair.

"Oh! how I have longed for you to come," he cried, as the chaplain entered. "Pardon me that I should have treated you yesterday in so rude a manner! You are right; your way is better than mine. I am not certain; no, I am lost, lost! You have certainty. I see it in your countenance; I perceive it in your words. Oh! tell me, How can I obtain this assurance? where can I find rest?"

"By Jesus, and by Him alone," replied the chaplain, himself deeply agitated. "'He is the way, and the truth, and the life.' (John xiv. 6.) He assures you also of forgiveness and salvation through faith in His shed blood.'" (Eph. i. 6.)

And now the servant of the Lord began to announce to this soul, thirsting after peace, the glad tidings of salvation, the blessed news of an all-sufficient Saviour. (Acts iv. 12; xiii. 38, 39.) And God blessed His Word. The fortress was conquered, the hard heart was broken; and the same man who yesterday had still done his utmost to steel himself against every word of exhortation and warning, now called humbly upon God, and sought refuge in His mercy. (Titus iii. 4.)

He lingered only a short time after this, and then passed peacefully and joyfully away; "absent from the body," and "present with the Lord," who had loved him, and washed him from his sins in His own blood. (2 Cor. v. 8; Rev. i. 5.)

THAT HE KNEW FOR CERTAIN.

And how may we obtain this assurance? The Word of God itself shows us the way. The Lord Jesus says, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." (John vii. 16.) "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John vii. 17.) And the apostle John wrote: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; . . . and this is the witness, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John v. 10-12.) And in Rom. viii. 16 we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

On the other hand, whoever neglects God's "great salvation" is exposed to the terrible judgment of the "great white throne." (Heb. ii. 3; Rev. xx. 11-15.) "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." (Heb. ix.

27.) And, “ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb. x. 31.) Therefore haste that thy soul may be saved ! God is a reality ; eternity is a reality ; and judgment is a reality. Every mocker and despiser of the Name of Jesus will one day find it out to his eternal and immutable woe. They will be made to bow the knee before Him whom they have despised, and to confess that He “ *is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. ii. 11.) They, with all who have not obtained forgiveness and peace through the blood of Jesus, will find their place in the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41.) Hasten then to JESUS whilst it is called to-day ! He is ready to give the fullest certainty, to deliver you from all judgment, and to fill your heart with joy and peace in believing. (Rom. xv. 13.)

“ I CREDIT IT ALL.”

IN these easy-going days of indifferentism, days marked by form without power, and routine without reality, it is blessed to see a soul downright in earnest to be saved ; and such a one it was my privilege to see and talk with a few days since.

He told me he was most anxious to be saved ; that he had been harassed by Satan and by doubts for some weeks ; that he was trying hard, but at present he could not say his feet were firmly planted on the rock Christ Jesus.

He confessed what a sinner he had been, and that his sins troubled him. Seeing he was a truly repentant soul, I took out my pocket Bible, and

read from Exodus xii. 13 : " The BLOOD shall be to you for a TOKEN . . . WHERE YE ARE ; and when I see the BLOOD, I will pass over you. "

I pressed upon him that *the blood of the Lamb and the word of God*, and nothing else, was what God put before him for salvation ; and that his faith was to be in the word of God about the blood of the Lamb, which cleanseth from all sin. (1 John i. 7.)

I then read from John iii. 33, " He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. "

I explained to him that Christ on the cross had paid the debts of those who believe in Him, paid to God with His own most precious blood ; that God, being perfectly satisfied, yea, glorified, with what Christ had done, had raised Him from the dead, and in that act had, as it were, receipted the bill ; and that now Christ was in the glory of God, like a paid and receipted bill in a safe place.

The dear man pushed down the bed-clothes, stretched his arm out of bed, and, holding out his right forefinger as if pressing it upon a seal, exclaimed most earnestly, with tears flowing down his face, " *I credit it all !* I CREDIT IT ALL ! Bless God, I am free ; I am delivered. My soul is saved. I am ready to go. JESUS has done it all, and He is in heaven waiting to welcome me. I credit it all ! "

At this point his wife came into the room, when, taking her hand, he exclaimed, " I am free from my burden, and I wish you were as free as I am. Oh, don't rest until you have the love of God shed abroad in your heart, as I have ! until you are ready to go, as I am. I am quite ready to go now ; JESUS has made me ready. He has done it

all. You have not to look this way or that way, but only to JESUS. I credit it all.”

I have seen this dear man several times since, and found him each time calmly looking to JESUS only, with simple faith in God's word about the person and work of Christ, and full of “all joy and peace in believing.” (Rom. xv. 13.)

Can you who are reading these few lines say, “I credit it all”? Do you credit, or believe, what God says about you as a death deserving, hell deserving, lake of fire deserving, eternal judgment deserving sinner? Do you credit all God says by His Spirit in His word about the peerless Person and precious blood of His own dear Son? Do you, in short, accept God's “token where ye are”? And can you from your heart say, with him about whom I have been writing, “I CREDIT IT ALL”? H. M. H.

OH! what rest, what happiness for the poor soul, when he sees he has to do with One who has conquered all enemies for him, and in whom He has treasured up all glory for him! Before he came to the consciousness of this, the book of his daily transgressions appeared to ascend up before God, and black with the catalogue of his offences, on every leaf of which was written *sin*, SIN, SIN; but now these blackened characters are effaced, and on each page is transcribed, in letters of blood, in the blood of God's spotless Lamb, *love*, LOVE, LOVE; all the dark stains are now obliterated, for He who is for us has triumphed; He took the load of sin from off us, and suffered the punishment due to the commission of it, and this silences all Satan's accusations. J. N. D.

WAITING FOR POWER TO BELIEVE.

I *LONG to believe, but I must wait for the power."*

Times without number have we been met with the foregoing form of speech, when seeking to press upon souls their solemn responsibility to believe the glorious tidings of God's salvation.

"You know," it is argued, "I cannot believe unless God gives me faith. It is His gift, and I must wait till He gives it to me."

In this way many an anxious soul is kept in doubt and darkness, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, by the same line of argument, careless souls seek to shelve the momentous question of their eternal salvation.

Now, there is a measure of truth in the above statements; but it is one-sided truth, and the one side is turned the wrong way. This is a very common wile of the enemy. It has often been remarked that the devil is never more to be dreaded than when he appears with the Bible in his hand, misquoting and misapplying texts of Scripture. Thus he perverts the precious truth of God, and casts dust in the eyes of men.

He does not openly deny the truth, but he hinders its application, and robs it of its force. He says to the anxious soul, "It is no use your worrying yourself. You cannot be sure that this gospel is for you. It is for the elect, and if you are not one of them it is not for you; if you are, you must get the power to believe, you must wait."

In this way precious souls are well nigh driven to despair.

Then, again, he says to the careless soul, "You need not trouble yourself about this question of

salvation. If you are to be saved, you will be saved; but you must wait God's time."

Thus the conscience is deadened, the heart hardened, the understanding darkened, and the soul, abandoning itself to its lusts and its pleasures, rushes headlong to eternal perdition.

To all these wily arguments of the devil the Word of God furnishes an answer, clear, distinct, and perfectly conclusive. It meets the soul with such a powerful array of most blessed evidence as to hush for ever the fears of the anxious, and sweep away every vestige of a foundation from beneath the feet of the caviller.

And, first of all, I would call the attention of the reader to five grand facts, five infallible proofs of God's love to the sinner, and His most gracious desire that "*all* should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," facts and proofs perfectly unanswerable.

1. "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.)

Mark the words, "world" and "whosoever." There is no limit, no barrier, no question. They are so full, so wide, so all-embracing, that not a sinner on the face of the earth can refuse their application. There is no preliminary question to be settled by the sinner; no condition to be fulfilled; nothing to wait for; no possible ground for saying, "I must wait till I get the power to believe." The glorious fact stands out before us, in all its mighty, moral power, placing every one who hears it under the most solemn responsibility to believe it. For any one (in view of such a magnificent demonstration of divine love) to say,

"I am waiting for the power to believe," is simply to make God a liar. (1 John v. 10.)

2. But not only did God give His only begotten Son, but we are told in Isaiah liii. "it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him." God forsook His beloved Son on the cross, hid His face from Him, caused all the billows and waves of His righteous wrath against sin to roll over His blessed person on Calvary's cursed tree. He "delivered Him up for us all." "Made Him to be sin for us." He "sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (Rom. viii. 32; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 John iv. 10.)

The Son of God might have come into this world to visit us in our ruin and misery. He might have lived and laboured, and gone back to heaven from whence He had come, leaving us in hopeless misery, worse off than ever, by reason of such a light having shone upon our moral gloom.

But He did not, all praise to His precious, peerless name! He came, not merely to visit sinners, but to seek and to save them. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke xix.) "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the "chief." (1 Tim i. 15.) Having come down from heaven, He would not return thither until, by His precious, atoning death, He had made out a title for us to be there with Him.

3. But this leads us to our third substantial proof. Not only did God give His Son, and bruise Him on the cross, but He raised Him from the dead. "The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting

covenant." (Heb. xiii. 20.) The God of judgment met the divine sin-Bearer at the cross, and there settled for ever the great question of sin; and "the God of peace" has given us the unanswerable proof of the settlement by raising Him from the dead. He "was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.)

4. But all these glorious facts of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection might have taken place and the writer and the reader of these lines have heard nothing about them. Thanks and praise to our God, He took care of this. He sent down the Holy Ghost in the name of the risen, ascended, and glorified Saviour, to announce these glad tidings to us. That august Witness came down, on the day of Pentecost, to make known, in every language under heaven, the glad tidings of God's full and free salvation to every creature.

5. But the stirring events, of the day of Pentecost might have taken place, God the Holy Ghost might have come down from heaven, and announced His glorious message of pardon and peace, and gone back again. Thanks and praise to our God, He did not. He has been here ever since. He is here still, patiently labouring and testifying, amid all the opposition and enmity of earth and hell, men and devils, to make known to the ends of the earth the salvation of God. He has, in patient grace and tender mercy, caused the four grand facts already adduced to be committed to writing. *He has written a Book!* Wondrous, glorious, precious fact for us!

Yes, reader, we want you to weigh this our fifth infallible proof. What God did, in divine

power, on the day of Pentecost, He has, in divine patience, been doing ever since, namely speaking to men in their own dialect wherein they were born. He has caused His blessed Book, originally written in Hebrew and Greek, to be translated into two hundred and eighty dialects, and wafted all over the earth.* He has watched with loving, faithful vigilance His precious Book during long dreary centuries, preserving it from all the efforts of the devil to destroy it, and employing various agents to translate it into the different languages, and distribute it all over the earth.

Reader, we would affectionately ask you, Can you any longer say, "I am waiting for power to believe"? Have we not placed before you an array of facts, a body of evidence, sufficient to convince your heart of the truth that God desires your salvation? Why take all this pains; why put into your hands His own peerless revelation, why send you such a message, if He did not mean you to make your own of it?

Do you really want salvation? If so, He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) He is infinitely more willing that you should have it than you can be to get it. Why hesitate? He has given His Son; bruised Him on the cross; raised Him from the dead; sent down the Holy Ghost; put into your hands, or within your reach, the Holy Scriptures; and, in the face of all this, you are looking for some indefinable feeling in yourself without which all that God has done and said goes for nothing.

* At this date (March, 1926) the number of languages in which the Bible Society has editions of the Scriptures is officially stated to be *five hundred and seventy-seven*.

But you inquire, "Must I not wait God's time?" He replies, "Now is the accepted time"; and, "Now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iv. 7.) The fact is, all this idea about waiting for power, waiting for faith, waiting God's time, is grounded on misapplied texts and one-sided theology. Be assured it will not stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; it cannot stand before His word. He says, "If I say the truth, why do ye not *believe me*?" (John viii. 46.) He appeals to the truth of what He says as the ground on which He ought to be believed. To wait for anything to make His word true to you is to make Him a liar. Tremendous consideration for all whom it may concern!

In conclusion, we would most earnestly and affectionately entreat the anxious reader to abandon at once and for ever the false and dangerous ground indicated by the expression, "I'm waiting for power." It is simply a delusion used by the enemy to rob you of the present joy of God's salvation, the sweet sense of His love. There really is nothing to wait for. God has done all that was to be done: and He tells you so in His Word, which is settled for ever in heaven. (Ps. cxix. 89.)

Do not dishonour God's Word, and wrong your own soul, by raising objections which have no foundation in the Word of God. Just take Him at His word. Believe what He says, because He says it. This is faith; and faith is the gift of God, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. (Jas. i. 17.) Think not for a moment that faith is something of your own. Far be the thought! It is simply setting to your seal that

God is true. (John iii. 33.) It is believing with the heart what God says. "If thou shalt confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. xi. 9.)

Do you ask, "What is meant by 'believing with the heart'?" We reply by asking you, Are you really interested in the blessed salvation of God? Does your heart desire it? Then accept it in your heart this very moment. Believe it, not merely in the head, as an historical fact in which you have no particular interest, but in your heart as a precious message from the heart of God to you. This is believing with the heart unto righteousness. Oh! dear friend, do not any longer hesitate to set your seal to the truth of God. Accept Christ as God's gift to you, and you will no longer have to say, "I'm waiting for power."

We would, before parting company with the reader, seek to impress his mind with the solemn fact that the expression which stands at the head of this paper involves the denial of man's responsibility to believe the plain testimony of God, and make God the author of his unbelief. It amounts to this, "I would believe, but God withholds the power." This is the real state of the case. We give, in reply, 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who *believed not the truth*, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Mark this! Men will be damned for not believing. If a man is not responsible to believe the truth, can he be judged for rejecting it? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.)

C. H. M.

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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.

"LET THERE BE LIGHT."

A PREACHER of the gospel sat one day in his room, resting a little after a long journey.

He had scarcely settled down, however, before there came a knock at the door, and upon his "Come in," Mr. G——, a well-known acquaintance, but a determined infidel, entered.

There soon arose between them a lively conversation upon the things of God. Eternity formed the principal subject of their discourse.

Suddenly Mr. G—— said, "You know, my dear A——, that I have often heard you preach, and that I have examined everything that is to be said upon the subject. Now all I can say is, that you are a Christian; and I am an atheist, and neither believe in a God, or a heaven, or a hell."

"Very well," rejoined A——, "and I have

heard you, and examined all that you have to say. Now allow me to ask you a question, Will you do something for me?"

"Certainly, my friend, if it lies in my power."

"Then promise me, that on three successive nights, when you are in bed and the light extinguished, you will say, 'Eternity! Eternity! I must meet it! Where? God I will not accept; in heaven I do not believe; hell I deny; where am I going?'"

Mr. G—— promised, and left. The first night he undoubtedly put out the light, placed himself in the middle of his bedroom, and repeated loudly the words, "Eternity! Eternity! I must meet it! Where? God I will not accept; in heaven I do not believe; hell I deny; where am I going?"

The next night Mr. G—— felt (he didn't himself know why) that he must leave the light burning whilst he repeated the words.

The third night it was no better. An extraordinary feeling came over him. Strange thoughts rushed into his mind. A choking sensation seemed to seize his throat.

Taking courage at last, however, he began in a low voice, "Eternity! Eternity! I must meet it! Where? . . . in heaven I do not believe."

He faltered suddenly; he found it impossible to say, "God I will not accept." He felt the presence of a holy, righteous God, who in His wondrous grace and love had caused a light to spring up in his darkened soul.

After a long pause he stuttered out, "Where am I going?"

His conscience gave him the answer, "You are going into hell."

It resounded in his innermost soul. Restless

and troubled he got into bed. Sleepless, he tossed to and fro, and longed earnestly for the day, hoping then to find more rest. The day came, but it did not bring rest; on the contrary, his anxiety increased every hour. Gladly would he have hastened to his friend, to pour out his trouble and need, only his pride held him back.

The following night his soul-anxiety reached its highest point; he could no longer remain in bed, but wandered restlessly to and fro in his room. As soon as the day broke, he went off to his friend's house. He told him in a few words that his wish had come to pass, and that he was almost in despair; then asked anxiously, “What shall I do, then? Or rather, what can you do for me?”

“Nothing,” rejoined A—— quietly, without raising his eyes off the floor, “nothing.”

“What have I to do, then?”

“Nothing,” was the answer, “nothing at all.”

“What! nothing? although I am in the greatest anxiety, and bordering on despair.”

“No, nothing,” said A——, in a gentle but firm tone, as he stood inflexible before his friend.

In his heart he thanked God; but outwardly he remained motionless as a statue. He wanted him to perceive and understand his utter helplessness, and therefore would not anticipate the work that God had unmistakably begun in his soul. He knew that God was the best teacher.

Astonished, Mr. G—— gazed at him for a moment, and then broke out, “Can you, in the presence of my terrible anxiety, stand quietly before me, and say that you can do nothing for me? You a Christian, and I an immortal soul on the road to hell! Can you remain so quiet with the thought that you are the one that has plunged me

into this state of misery and despair? Can you say nothing else than 'I can do nothing for you'?"

"Yes," answered A——, in the same quiet tone as before, "I can do nothing for you. I am only a poor, helpless, weak creature like yourself. You can do nothing, and I can do nothing, absolutely nothing. But"—he continued, whilst he lifted his eyes, and pointed his finger upwards, "I can tell you of One that *can* do something, and this One is God. He can do everything; yea, He has done everything! He has sent His only begotten Son into this world to die for such miserable, sinful creatures as you and me. He has judged Him on the cross in our stead, and now the joyful news is announced to every sinner, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' " (Acts xvi. 31.)

At this moment the light of God shone with living power in the dark heart of the God-despiser. He remembered suddenly all that he had heard before, but had not received. Quick as the lightning flash his thoughts were turned to Him who had done the whole work. He apprehended for the first time in his life the blessed Person of the One who gave to that work its eternal and infinite worth. He believed, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. v. 17.) God had said, "Let there be light!" and there was light. (Gen. i. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 6.)

The God-despiser was changed into a sincere believer. And just as Paul, as soon as "it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in him," immediately went and announced in the synagogue of Damascus, Jesus as the Son of God, so also Mr. G——, within a few days of his conversion, began to seek

“ RETURN, COME.”

53

to bring before others the joyful news of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, and to lead them to the blessed Lord. Soon was he able to say with the apostle, “ For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; . . . 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. 5, 6.)

My reader, where will *you* spend eternity?

FR. GN.

“ RETURN, COME.”

(Isaiah xxi. 12.)

“ **A**ND took his journey into a far country,” are words used by the Lord Jesus in the parable of the Prodigal Son, to describe the distance the sinner is from God. (Luke xv.)

The son, once at home with the father, is now a long distance from him.

What has put him there?

Sin. It is sin that has separated man from God, corrupted and alienated his being. So that he is not only “ far off ” from God, and stranger to Him, but he is also corrupted in his being, his heart being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

But the time came when the prodigal was stopped in his mad career, and what is true in the parable is true of every one that ever has been, or ever will be, converted. Reverses, affliction, brought this young man to himself. And such is the way of God in numberless cases.

It may be that the reader cannot understand the

reverses and afflictions that have come upon him. They have been either sent or permitted by God, and for this reason, He wishes to awaken your soul, to cause you to think seriously of where you are, what you are, and where you are going. It is love divine that leads Him thus to deal with you. He wishes you to return; in fact, to be saved.

The young man "began to be in want." Friend, have you ever known the meaning of those words for yourself? Has a "famine" come upon that which once delighted your poor heart, and *appeared* to satisfy, but which in reality was a delusion? And are you beginning to realize that there is something wrong between you and God, that you have wronged your Creator, that the distance between Him and you is not that in which man was created, but is the fruit of sin?

Are you beginning to be in want?

If so, thank God for it; it is but the beginning of brighter days. The discovery of your condition as a sinner, and your distance from God, may be painful, but it is necessary, for in this discovery you acquire a sense of need which ends in turning to God.

"I must turn to my God," said a young man, upon whom God allowed the waves of affliction to roll, which swept everything away that his heart could cling to. It resulted in his salvation.

The prodigal turned for the time to a citizen of that country, but further degradation only awaited him from that quarter. The company of swine, and the withholding of the husks that the swine ate, only increased his misery. Can the world, the citizens of the "far country," assist a soul that is in need? Can they appreciate the trouble

and exercise and distress of one who is beginning to be awakened by God to a sense of his great moral distance from Him? Not at all. They can only misunderstand it all. “ No man gave ” to this awakening prodigal.

But it worked good for him, for it says, “ And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father.”

Where, indeed, is the sinner’s resource? Is it in his fellow-men? No. Where is it? It is in God. “ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in me is thine help ” (Hosea xiii. 9.) “ Salva-tion is of the Lord ” (Jonah ii. 9.) “ Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else ” (Isa. xlv.

And has not God shown His love in the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus, and already met the need of guilty man in the atoning death of Christ, and provided that which will fit him for His holy presence? “ 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. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins ” (1 John iv. 9, 10.)

If God can save, these verses show us *how* God can save. He “ sent His Son to be the propitia-tion for our sins.” Sin caused the distance ; the removal of the sins by the death of Christ opens

the way for the return of the repentant sinner.

“ He began to be in want.”

“ He came to himself.”

“ He arose, and came to his father.”

Are all these true of you, dear reader? Have you returned? Are you on your way back to the Father? The work which is the righteous ground of God's justifying a sinner was accomplished on the cross, when Jesus said, “ It is finished,” and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost; while the blessed God of all grace, through the gracious operations of His Holy Spirit, creates in the heart a sense of need, which leads the sinner to retrace his steps back to God, and to trust in the Saviour who died for him. (John xix. 30.) And the love that purposed man's salvation, and gave Jesus to die for sinners, *now* waits to receive *all* that return. God says, “ If ye will enquire, enquire ye : return, come ” (Isa. xxi. 12.)

“ But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, ‘ Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.’ ”

What an unlooked-for reception by the father ! Wonderful picture of God's receiving the sinner just as he is ! On the bosom and in the ear of the father were the true place to own in confession the greatness of his sin.

The father would fit him for his house. Thus, immediately following the confession of the son, we hear the father's voice, saying, “ Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet : and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it : and let us eat,

and be merry : for this my son was dead, and is alive again ; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

The “ best robe ” is a figure of Christ, and all a gift, “ the gift of righteousness ” (Rom. v. 17.)

The “ ring ” is a figure, perhaps, of the unending love of our God and Father.”

The “ shoes ” clearly speak of relationship, as in the Eastern countries only the members of the family wear their shoes in the house ; the servants leave them at the door.

The “ fatted calf ” expresses the communion of the children with the Father in the relationship into which He has brought them.

It is a present relationship that all who believe stand in with God the Father. “ Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God.” (1 John iii. 1.) The kiss, the best robe, the shoes, the place at the Father’s table, the joy of His presence, the light of His blessed countenance, are all ours now, if we have returned. It is for us to simply enjoy the relationship and place we have. The father, as he looked at his son, was happy to have him there ; and the son, as he looked at the father, could but rejoice with thankfulness and praise.

It is thus with God and His people. The believer has joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. (1 Pet. i. 8.) But what shall we say of the joy of God the Father ! He fills the presence of the angels with His holy joy when a sinner repents, a joy which but deepens when he is received and fitted for His presence, a joy which will be an “ exceeding joy ” when the Saviour presents them before the presence of His glory, and a joy that will fill the heart of God the Father, God

the Son, and God the Spirit, through the eternal ages.

Beloved reader, will you return, as a sinner confessed, to this blessed God, who so loved you as to give His own Son to die for you? Will you furnish all heaven with an occasion for rejoicing by your return? The blessed God but waits to receive you, to pardon you, to clothe you, to put the ring and shoes on, and to bring you into the very bosom of His family as a son, not as a hired servant, and make you perfectly happy in His love, and rejoice over you for ever. Oh! my friend, I beseech you to come. God says, Come. The Lord Jesus says, Come. The Eternal Spirit says, Come. Oh! won't you come?

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

(Ecclesiastes xi. 1.)

IN my early days I was acquainted with one a few years my senior. At the time I now speak of he was nearing manhood. He was of an intellectual turn of mind, and of great determination of character. He lost his father when quite young. His mother knew the Lord, and was anxious for her son's conversion. She showed signs of consumption, and thinking her time here would be short, her anxiety about him increased, and she spoke frequently to him about his soul, which he resented.

One day, as she was urging him to yield to Jesus, he said, "Mother, I'll *never* yield."

He told me this himself at the time, and, judging by his manner, he evidently meant what he said.

I was myself passing through exercise of soul then, which he knew, and he strongly advised me not to give way to it, but put on a bold front.

Not long after he removed to a distant town, where he spent the remainder of his life. His mother soon after died. I saw him once more a few years later, being on a visit to the town where he lived, but there seemed to be no change in him then.

More than thirty years elapsed before I heard anything definite about him, and I had often wondered whether he had repented of those words uttered in rashness so long ago.

Many a time during that long interval I had shuddered to think of them. Oh! if God should leave him to his own choice! But God had purposes of mercy towards him.

A few years ago I was delighted to hear that the Lord had dealt with him. For some time previously he had been earnestly seeking the Lord. A severe attack of influenza prostrated him, but he recovered a little strength.

One day he said to his wife, “ I want to go to C——,” naming the place he came from.

“ Oh! no, dear,” she said, “ you are not able to go.”

So the matter dropped for a day or two, when he again broached the subject, expressing a strong desire to go.

She told him again it was out of the question, as he had not sufficient strength for such a long journey.

With great emphasis he said, “ I *must* go, or else I shall go mad.”

The poor wife was alarmed, and consulted his doctor, who said, “ Well, you must let him go.”

His son and daughter accompanied him, but he was very exhausted when he reached the house, where his two sisters lived, and the very house, I believe, where he spoke so "unadvisedly with his lips." (Ps. cvi. 33.)

He was glad to go to bed at once, and seemed to think he was in the right place, being quite contented in spirit.

After he had lain there a few days, he suddenly called out to one of his sisters to come upstairs at once.

She thought he was taken worse.

The moment she entered the room, he joyfully said, "It's all settled!"

"What do you mean, D——?" she said.

Instinctively guessing his meaning, she then asked, "Do you mean,

" 'Tis done! the great transaction's done!

I am my Lord's, and He is mine;

He drew me, and I followed on,

Glad to confess the voice divine"?

"Yes, that's it," he responded.

Thank God, he had at last "yielded" himself to his Saviour and Lord, and on the very spot where he said he *never* would, and after such a long lapse of time too.

How true it is that the Lord is "long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. iii. 9.)

"He might have left us to endure,
The wrath we seemed to brave,
Our case would then admit no cure,
For who but He could save?"

ISA'S DECISION.

61

Truly this was "a brand plucked out of the fire." (Zech. iii. 2.) Had God said Amen to those reckless words of his, how awfully solemn it would have been! But the Lord spared him, that He might bring him to Himself, and make him a trophy of divine grace to His own eternal praise.

A few days after he passed away to be "with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8.)

W. R. C.

ISA'S DECISION.

"**M**OTHER, will th' man speak till us if we gang till the meeting," inquired Isa J— of her mother, while getting ready to attend a gospel preaching in the village of C— one Lord's Day evening in the month of September.

"Yes, Isa," said her mother, "he'll speak till ye if ye stay ahin' the rest."

"Weel, J—," she said to her companion, "a think we'll no gang. Weel, come; a think we'll gang an' sit gey near th' door, an' get oot as soon as he has done preachin'."

They both went to the meeting and sat on the end of a form near the door. That night the word was with power, and in power, too, to Isa and her companion.

The preacher in closing said, "I am sure some of you are very anxious to be out, but you are not leaving as you came in; you are under conviction of sin."

He then solemnly appealed to them, and pressed the necessity of decision for Christ *now*, as this might be the last offer of salvation.

The meeting closed, and the anxious were asked to remain. The majority left the room, and among the rest, indeed, among the first, Isa and her companion; but when they got to the bottom of the stairs, Isa said to her companion, "J——, a think we'll gang in again."

For a moment they weighed it, but with this decision, "We'll gang hame. He's gaun to preach again on Wednesday night, we'll come back then."

Dangerous decision, when the soul is in the balance!

Wednesday night came round, and as the hour of the meeting drew near, Isa's sister said to her, "Are you gaun to the meeting, Isa?"

"Oh," she replied, "a hinna time."

"Oh! Isa," said her sister, "ye have time for everything but the ane thing needful. Come awa."

With that she went with her sister, and she afterwards said, "Just as sure as a was putting the shawl over my head a would be catchit that night."

And caught she was, but for eternal blessing.

The word was again in power, and with increasing power to Isa. She "stayed ahin' the rest," and the man spoke to her of Christ, for the heaving breast and eyes suffused with tears had already arrested his attention. She was really anxious to be saved.

Among other scriptures read and quoted to her were John x. 27, 28; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish."

"Now," said the preacher, "haven't you heard His voice?"

She said, "Yes."

"Well, then, to such He says He gives 'eternal life, and they shall never perish.'"

For a moment she gazed at the word, evidently feeling the power of the eternal truth; then, with a deep sigh and faltering voice, said, "Weel, I'll take Him."

Did Isa know what unsearchable riches she fell heir to by that decision? Verily not; and far less did she understand how He whom she had taken valued what He had received in her. Another of His sheep that was lost; another given to Him by the Father out of the world over whom He rejoices, and whom He keeps and loves unto the end. (John vi. 37, xvii. 6, xiii. 1.)

But her cup was full. She left the room with joy unspeakable, and calling on a friend, she said, "M——, I'm saved; I've got Christ." Then home to her mother, and with deep feeling said, "Oh! mother, I've got the Lord; I'm saved."

That mother's heart was made glad that night, and had joy in common with the new-born soul.

Was all this simply an outburst of emotional feeling, or mere natural joy like the stony-ground hearer, soon to subside under the pressure of the trials in the way? (Matt. xiii. 20, 21.) No, but the fruit of the Spirit, the joy of a delivered soul now able to say, "Abba, Father." (Rom. viii. 15.) And Christ was her theme ever after.

How well for Isa that she went to the meeting, and that she "stayed ahin' th' rest," for not only did "the man" that was preaching "speak till her," but the Man that "receiveth sinners" both spoke to her, and received her, having first wrought in her, and led her to feel her need of Him, and then to say, "I'll take Him!"

But Isa had not the privilege of bearing testimony very long. On one Monday evening, October 14th, of the following year, she said to a sister in the Lord, "I've been thinking so much about a verse in th' sixteenth o' John th' day. It has hardly ever been oot o' ma mind a' this day. 'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.' (v. 16.) I wonder what it means. 'A little while, and ye shall not see me, because I go to the Father.' A dinna ken what it means."

Before that week ended, He who has gone to the Father, and of whom she said, "I'll take Him," had called her home to be with Himself up there.

That same preacher, while holding meetings in a town on the Borders, had a letter on the following Lord's Day morning from a dear brother in the Lord, a fisherman, in which he said, "You will be sorry to hear that Isa J—— is with us no more. She went to be with the Lord yesterday morning."

Sorry indeed to lose her fellowship here, but glad, for her sake, that she had gone home to be with Christ, which is "far better." Phil. i. 23.)

"He and I in that bright glory,
One deep joy shall share;
Mine, to be for ever with Him;
His, that I am there."

J. H.

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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.

"IN A VISION OF THE NIGHT."

(JOB XXXIII. 15.)

I WAS about ten years of age when I dreamed that I was walking in some beautiful grounds. The noon-day sun shone brightly, the grass was soft and green, and the trees waved luxuriantly their feathery branches in the balmy air.

It was an attractive scene, one likely to beguile thought, and detain the wanderer. A fresh, rushing stream invited the weary to drink. I stood looking at the bright sparkling waters, but did not drink.

I passed on. Near this stream I observed some descending steps, and was curious to know whither they led. The pathway widened towards them, and the steps looked broad and easy. I thought not of the sparkling water I had passed,

nor the bright scene I was leaving behind. Something impelled me to go on.

As I descended a noise made me halt for a moment. It sounded like a door closing over the opening above, and a rattling chain fell heavily upon it. A strange fear crossed my mind as to how a poor feeble child could raise this great doorway, and again reach the pleasant grounds above; but I comforted myself with the thought, "I shall find another way of exit."

At last I reached the bottom of the steps, and found myself in cellars of great extent. They were dimly lighted by means of gratings above. All amazed, I looked around me on every side, and saw in this dingy, dismal place many figures moving to and fro. They seemed very restless.

I wondered where I could be. I thought how easily I had got into this terrible place. Fear began to lay hold of me. I felt I must inquire from some of these strange people where I was, and how I could make my escape. They seemed to avoid me; but I was determined to have information.

In the gloom I approached one very tall person, and demanded of him where I was, and if he would kindly show me a way out of these vaults. I looked anxiously for his reply, and his countenance struck me. It was marked by a sad expression of hopeless endurance, yet of painful restlessness. He gazed on me, but did not speak.

Again I said, "Do, please, tell me where I am."

Still no reply. He was wrapped in a long black Spanish mantle. This he slowly unfolded, and displayed to my affrighted gaze, not his body, as I should have expected, but a pillar of fire.

Horror seized upon me. I rushed to another figure, similarly dressed, and put the same questions. He, too, was silent; but, after repeated entreaty, he in like manner unfolded his robe, and displayed another pillar of fire. The thought was dawning on me of the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. (Mark ix. 44.)

Then, to my relief, I saw a face I knew. “ Now,” I thought, “ I have found a friend who will safely deliver me from this dungeon.” I addressed her by name, telling her how afraid I was, and how foolishly I had yielded to curiosity, and thus got where I now was.

She looked on me with sad but eager interest, and said, “ *You are not here for ever, you may yet escape.* This is hell! I have crossed the gulf of which Scripture speaks, ‘ Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot.’ ” (Luke xvi. 26.)

As she spoke I awoke, and oh! how thankful I was I was not yet in hell for ever! I resolved I would never be there. I would diligently seek and find the way to heaven.

But what gloom filled my soul! I believed God had unveiled to me the miseries of the damned, and the torments of the lake of fire. Could I help going there? I cried to God, “ What must I do to be saved? ” This was my first earnest thought, as in God’s presence, as to my soul’s salvation. But He had much to do to break down my pride of heart and self-sufficiency before He could say, “ Daughter, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven, go in peace.” (Luke vii. 48, 50; viii. 48.)

I did not tell anyone of my dream. I hid it in my heart, and pondered God’s dealings with me,

for I firmly believed He had ordered the dream to warn me of my lost condition.

Time wore on. I was very unhappy, and would have had recourse to almost anything to drown thought. I sought the society of the thoughtless, vainly endeavouring to enter into their amusements, and laughed at their jokes. My outward manner, however, was no index to my state of heart. I could not forget my dream. God would not let me do so. I had given myself up to novel-reading, especially that of an historic character. These, more than anything, absorbed my thoughts, and for the time being made me less anxious. But God again spoke to me, and in a very striking manner.

My maternal grandfather, an aged Christian, was dying. I went with my dear mother to the chamber of death. He was very happy, and about to have "an abundant entrance" ministered into the presence of His Lord. His mind had begun to wander, yet he spoke of his blessed Master. I sat by the fireside, while my mother stood by his bedside.

I heard him address her thus: "My dear child, your daughter is just now reading a book that is drowning thoughts of eternity. Oh! take it from her; it will damage her soul."

My mother regarded this remark as the fancy of delirium; but I knew better. God had again spoken home to my soul. I felt I dare no more again open "Thaddeus of Warsaw," the book that then engrossed me. My grandpapa's words were as a message from the eternal world. No one knew what I was reading, but God made this dying believer His channel of communication with me.

Stripped of these literary resources, I was again a prey to the workings of an awakened conscience. Shortly after this I was sent to school. The lady was a Christian. She devoted an hour, after the early dinner, to reading and prayer, and I was told that those *who cared for their souls* might be present, if they asked permission.

To own I was an anxious soul was a great struggle, but I felt it was the moment when God called me to own whether I desired Christ or the world. I thought I might get blessing and the light I sought at this little meeting. I gave in my name as one who wished to attend.

The instruction given was of a legal character, yet our teacher was real before God, and very earnest for our blessing. She pressed much, what I have ever since been thankful for, the solemn responsibility of being a Christian, and that the world forms its esitmate of the Lord by His people. Alas ! how often is the picture a false one, through the carelessness of their walk !

I now sought Christ with my whole heart, but I was wholly ignorant of the *grace* of God. (Titus ii. 11.) I prayed much, read the Scriptures, and gave myself long portions of them to commit to memory. I declined going to evening parties of young people of my own age. I took the place of being *for* God, and had a sense that separation from the world was right; but I did not know the love of God, nor that He compensates before He asks any surrender. I was still on the principle of works, and had not

“ Cast my deadly doing down,
Down at Jesus’ feet.”

The Lord was working in my soul, and He who had begun the good work would perfect it.

A year later I was removed to another school. While there I attended the ministry of an able servant of Christ, one who possessed great mental powers, and who doubtless knew the grace of God; but whose teaching was doctrinal and argumentative in character, and not much directed to the heart.

Though my *mind* feasted on all he said, and I sought to make others share my enjoyment of truth, I still had no assurance as to my salvation. I dreaded sin, and avoided it, as far as my light went; but how dark was my spiritual understanding!

I believe I had life at this time; others could see signs of it; but, if asked, I should not have dared to say *I was saved*. Like the prodigal in Luke xv., I had turned my back on the far country; I loathed "the husks that the swine did eat"; but the Father's kiss I had not yet received, nor was I seated at His table sharing His joys.

With the light I had I sometimes spoke for Christ, and was used in awakening others. One thoughtless girl was sent to sleep in my room, that I might gain an influence over her, for I was believed to be a Christian.

I had left school, and was paying a visit, when one morning I received a letter from my eldest sister, telling me of her own conversion and that of two others in the family. It was at a time when God by His Spirit wrought mightily in Scotland, and many were turned to the Lord. My sister was brought immediately into conscious light and liberty of soul before God; the very thing I had for years sought.

At once I said to the friend with whom I was

staying, "I must go home and see if I cannot also receive this blessing."

She remonstrated, telling me I had long been a Christian. But I knew I had not peace with God, and I would not be detained.

On the evening of my arrival at home I conversed with an aged servant of Christ, a lay preacher, whom God was greatly using in conversions. He thought I was saved.

Next night I went to hear him preach. He spoke on John i. 29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"; and on 1 Peter ii. 24: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He dwelt on the great truth of "Substitution."

I had never before heard it preached so clearly or simply, nor the love of God in giving this blessed Substitute so presented. *While* he spoke the burden of years dropped, the darkness passed away. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." (Ps. cxix. 130.) I felt as a caged bird set free. My soul was filled with joy. I could sing *my* song of deliverance and would like to have gone at once to be with Jesus, to sit for ever at His blessed feet. *He* had done it all. The blessed Scapegoat had carried *my* sins into the land of forgetfulness. (Lev. xvi. 10, 22.) God remembered them no more. (Heb. x. 17.) I thought God's thoughts as to myself, my sins, and my Saviour.

In a dream God had shown me I was lost, and the portion of the lost; in His word He pointed me to Christ who died for the lost; and that same word assured me, "He that believeth *hath* everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) I believed God's testimony on the Son, and I was happy. *Now* I

could say, "I am saved; I *have* eternal life; and I only want to enter bodily into the 'inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven' for those who now 'are kept by the power of God, through faith.' " (1 Peter i. 5.)

"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM."

(Matthew xxv. 1-13.)

THERE is an immense difference between profession of faith and possession of faith, just as much as there is between current and counterfeit coin.

A mere professor is like a bad filbert nut, all shell and no kernel; whilst the possessor is like the good filbert nut; kernel as well as shell are there; the shell of profession surrounds and has within it the kernel of possession. Which are you, my reader? A mere professor of Christianity, or a possessor of Christ?

Religion is earth-born, and occupies its deluded votaries with themselves and the earth. Christianity is heaven-born, and occupies the truly saved with Christ and heaven.

In the chapter referred to at the head of this paper Christ is looked at in four different characters.

First, as the bridegroom, hope and object of His people's hearts.

Secondly, as Lord of His servants, who will reckon with them when He comes.

Thirdly, as the Son of man, who will as surely "come in His glory" as once He came in humiliation.

Fourthly, as the King who has gone to receive the kingdom from His Father, and who will then return and reign over this at present demoralised world during the Millennium (or thousand years.) (Luke xix. 10; Rev. xx. 4.)

But it is about the first thirteen verses of Matthew xxv. that I want to say a little to you now.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.” (v. 1.)

The only place where the term “the kingdom of heaven” occurs is in Matthew’s Gospel, and there it occurs about thirty-two times. This expression, “the kingdom of heaven,” implies that the King is in heaven, having been crucified and rejected from the earth.

The lamps mean profession. The ten virgins are a picture of professing Christians. And they all went forth from Judaism or heathendom, professedly to meet the Bridegroom. Mark you well, it was not death and judgment, the common lot of man, that they were expecting, but the Bridegroom who, as their Substitute, had borne death and judgment for them, so that there might be no hindrance to their constantly and joyfully looking for Him as their Bridegroom.

“And five of them were wise, and five foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.” (vv. 2, 3.)

These verses imply that half the profession of the day is false and half real; five of the ten were wise, and five were foolish. Now the folly of the foolish consisted in this, that they took their lamps, and took no oil with them; that is, they rested in a mere profession; they had no heart for

Christ, and they had not the Holy Spirit, of which oil is the standing type in Scripture.

“ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” (v. 4.)

The wisdom of the wise is seen in their not resting in a mere Christless profession; they were not content with having put on Christ in baptism; they had sought Him as their portion, and found Him. There is nothing said about the foolish having “ vessels ”; but the wise took oil “ in their vessels ” with their lamps. The wise had hearts for Christ; their bodies were the temples of the Holy Ghost, and thus their profession was a reality. Having believed with the heart unto righteousness, they were enabled to make confession with the mouth unto salvation. (1 Cor. vi. 19; Rom. x. 10.)

Which are you, a wise or a foolish virgin?

“ While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” (v. 5.)

This verse is a vivid and painful description of the condition of spiritual stupor and supineness that the professing church fell into during what is called “ the dark ages,” when the hope of the Bridegroom’s return was entirely lost sight of.

“ And at midnight there was a cry made, **BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM**; go ye out to meet Him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.” (vv. 6, 7.)

These verses show very solemnly the worldly and selfish ways into which the professing church fell. It gave up seeking Christ’s things, and sought its own things only; but the cry, “ Behold, the Bridegroom,” startled them from their slumbers, and produced a genuine revival.

Revival refers to sleepy Christians, and to such

the word is, “ Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Eph. v. 14.) Dead sinners do not want reviving; such need to hear the life-giving voice of the Son of God. (John v. 25.) When the fire has been lighted, and allowed through carelessness to get low, it needs reviving; but when it has never been lighted, it is not reviving that is necessary there; it has to be lighted; and this was the effect of the midnight cry; it manifested where there was life, and where there was none.

“ And the foolish said unto the wise, GIVE us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out ” (or are going out). (v. 8.)

The foolish awake to the discovery that they had “ NO OIL.” They may trim their beautiful lamps by going to morning and evening prayers, by constant sacramental commemorations, by giving to religious causes, by visiting and helping the sick; but, having no oil, when they thus light their lamps it is only to see them flare up and blaze away for a few moments, and then go out in smoke, and leave their unhappy owners in greater darkness than ever, the sure end of mere profession.

The foolish say to the wise, “ Give us of your oil.”

“ But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.” (v. 9.)

The terms on which God sells and man buys the Holy Ghost are, “ without money and without price.” (Isa. lv. 1.) God is too rich to sell and man too poor to buy on any other terms. Paul said to the Galatians, “ Received ye the Spirit by

the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii. 2.) The wise virgins got the Holy Ghost by the hearing of faith. The foolish tried to get His presence at the religious law workshops, but were unsuccessful, as all must be who go there for it.

"And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and THE DOOR WAS SHUT." (v. 10.)

The coming of the Bridegroom will prove who are His, and who are not; and that time is very near. Christians have nothing to do with fixing dates, but ought to be *always* expecting the return of their beloved Bridegroom.

"They that were READY went in with Him." Who made them ready? "Giving thanks unto the Father, which HATH made us meet" (or fit or ready) "to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12.) It is the Father's work to make His children ready for His own holy presence; and He has done it, and they are entitled to know it, and to praise Him for it.

"The door was shut," and separated the wise and the foolish for ever. The wise are inside with the Bridegroom, and the foolish for ever shut outside from the Bridegroom and the marriage feast.

And now, what an awful scene takes place on the outside of that shut door!

"Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I KNOW YOU NOT." (v. 13).

Then eyes that never wept will weep, and lips that never prayed will pray, and hearts that never felt will feel, and knees that never knelt will

kneel; but it will be all outside the closed door !

And these were not backsliders. Two things prove it; first, they had “ no oil ”; and, secondly, Christ says, “ I know you not,” and “ I *never* knew you.” Now, what characterises Christians is that they have the Holy Ghost, and that the Lord knows them. (1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Tim. ii. 19).

What will the end be of those who are left outside the shut door? They have thrown away their last chance; they have forfeited their last opportunity. Not one who has arrived at the years of responsibility, who has heard the gospel preached, and been guilty of rejecting it, will ever have another opportunity of being saved after Christ has been and taken His people home to glory. (v 12; Luke xiii. 24-27; 2 Thess. ii. 10.)

The Christless religionist may plead, “ I have been baptised, confirmed, and regularly taken the sacrament.”

“ I *never* knew you,” is His answer.

“ But I have wept, prayed, and done my best.”

Again He repeats, “ I NEVER knew you.”

“ But I have been regularly to church, chapel, or meeting.”

“ I NEVER knew you : depart from Me, ye that work iniquity,” is the final word. (Matt. vii. 21-23.)

O ye who are clutching tenaciously as with deathless grip the oilless lamp of a Christless profession, know ye that if ye continue as ye are your lamp will soon go out in the blackness of darkness for ever; but now, ere it is TOO LATE, come to Jesus for life, for the Holy Ghost, and for fitness for His return, and join the wise virgins in the midnight cry, “ BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM.”

H. M. H.

WHAT DOES FAITH REFER TO?

FAITH judges as God judges.

Faith is the only thing that gives certainty. Reasoning may be all quite well for the things of this world; but if God speaks, faith believes.

Faith "sets to its seal," not that it may be, perhaps; but, that "God is true." (John iii. 33.)

"Abraham believed God" (not in God, though that is also true); he believed that what God said was true. (Rom. iv. 3.)

What, then, does God tell me, if I am a believer in His Son?

That my sins and iniquities He "remembers no more." (Heb. ix. 17.) I believe it. That I have "eternal life." I believe that, too. It were sin to doubt it; not to believe that of which He assures me, is wrong to God. If a son, I am in His presence without a spot of sin through the blood of the Lamb. Faith believes this: God has said it.

Were it my own righteousness in which I stood there, it must be torn to shreds; but it is a question about God's estimate of the value of the blood. What has it done? Cleansed half my sins? No! it "cleanses us from all sin." (1 John i. 7.) Again, I read, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." (1 Pet. ii. 24.) Is this some of our sins? It is "our sins." And then if my soul knows, on the one hand, the value to God of the blood of the Lamb, I know, on the other, that it all results from the love of the Father.

Here, then, there is comfort and peace (and what a comfort is the settled certainty of salva-

tion !) in this setting to our seal that God is true. It is not in the searching of my own heart, but in the assurance of the word of God. There is nothing like the simple certainty of faith. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

I assume that I am a person in an anxious state of soul, and wanting to get the certainty of life possessed. I look at the testimony of God. There I get absolute certainty. I say, "God is true." This is faith. All that I discover in myself is not faith. I may be much exercised; but there is not one thing in my own heart that can in the least assist me in finding out anything about this life.

Faith rests upon the testimony of God. When I have received and rested upon His testimony, it is important for me to examine myself as to my ways, and the like; but I never go and search into my own heart for certainty as to whether the blessed Son of God has told me the truth: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." (John v. 24.)

Observe again: there is no searching any further than this; I believe on Him who sent the Son. In the presence of the Father and the Son I have eternal life. Who can give me more? Life may be fed, indeed, here, and glorified hereafter; but there is no searching any deeper. There may be exercises of soul in bringing to it; but the definition John gives of a Christian is this, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." (1 John iv. 16.)

By faith we find everything done. It is only to believe. Faith produces all manner of fruit in us. There is wondrous power in it; but still, it is only to believe; that is all.

Just as though you had been deeply in debt, and some kind friend had paid the amount, and when that was done, had sent you word. The person comes and tells you that your debts are paid, and you believe it. Now your believing produces joy and gladness, doubtless, in your heart, but, of course, it does not in any measure go to liquidate the debt.

So as to salvation. The debt has been paid; Christ has finished the work; and the believing soul enters into all the blessed results. (Rom. iii. 22, iv. 22.) Faith is exercised upon that which has been already accomplished. "It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." (Rom. iv. 16.) Nothing redounds to the glory of the creature. It is a person simply depending upon the truth of God.

Let all who know the joyful sound,
With gladness send the tidings round,
And tell that God is love:
That God so loved the world He gave
His own dear Son the world to save;
God's message from above.

That all who in the Son believe,
Shall never perish, but receive
Life endless and divine;
No condemnation e'er shall know,
From death to life they pass below,
And then in glory shine.

'Tis not of works: let no man boast,
Save in His name, who saves the lost,
The Lord our Righteousness!
O sinner, now from working cease,
Receive from God a blood-bought peace,
And Jesus, LORD confess.

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"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.

"IT'S THAT I WANT TO KNOW."

IN going about among the villages in the smallest county of England, the writer was told of an aged woman who had for years been troubled about her soul. On going to see her the following conversation took place:

"Well, Mrs. H., I understand that you are anxious to know whether you are saved or not? Do you not believe that Christ died for sinners?"

"Yes, sir, I know He died for sinners, and I know I am a sinner, and a great one, but I want to know that He died for *me*."

"'Christ died for all,' and 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now that word '*whosoever*' means '*every one*.' You are one, are you not?"

"Oh if I could but feel happy I'd believe He died for me!"

"You want to feel happy first, and believe afterwards?"

"Well, sir, if I felt happy like in my soul, I should *know* He had had mercy on me, a poor sinful crettur. I can't *make* myself believe, sir."

"You want to feel a work begun in your own soul first, and then you will believe that you are an object of God's mercy, one for whom Christ died?"

"Yes, sir, that's it exactly."

"Well, now, suppose you were in debt for rent, and expected your landlord to come in to-morrow at twelve o'clock to seize your goods?"

"I should be full of trouble, sir."

"But suppose a friend came in to-day, a gentleman whom you could trust, and said, 'Mrs. H., I've paid your rent; there's an end of your debt; it's finished,' would you turn round and tell him, 'If I could but feel happy I'd believe it?'"

"No, surely! I wouldn't treat a kind gentleman like that."

"How would you feel?"

"Well, sir, I should feel very happy if I believed it."

"Then your happiness would entirely depend upon whether you believed it or not? You would have to believe *first*, and then be happy *because* you believed the debt was paid?"

"Yes, sir, in course I should. I couldn't feel happy unless I did believe it."

"Well, now, the Word of God, speaking to believers, says of the Lord Jesus, 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree'; and Jesus said, 'It is finished!' (1 Pet. ii. 24;

“ IT’S THAT I WANT TO KNOW.”

83

John xix. 30.) He was *dying* when He said it. We usually think that the words of one who is dying are weighty and solemn; how much more the words of the Lord Jesus Christ! Yet you don’t believe Him!”

“ Oh sir, indeed I do! Surely *He* never said anything as wasn’t true. But He didn’t say it was finished for *me*, sir. It’s *that* I want to know.”

“ But the Word of God declares ‘ He died for ALL.’ (2 Cor. v. 14-15.) Are you one of the ‘ ALL ’? ‘ The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.’ Are *you* a part of it? ‘ He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’ If so, where is *your sin*?” (1 John iv. 14; Heb. ix. 26.)

“ Jesus says, ‘ It is finished.’ Oh, if I could but feel——”

“ Then you don’t believe Him?”

“ Oh, I must! I’ll *try* to believe Him.”

“ That won’t do. Would you tell the kind friend who said your rent was paid, your debt finished, ‘ I’ll *try* to believe you?’ ”

“ Well, I *will* believe it ” (meaning at some future time).

“ That won’t do either. Look at His words, His dying words, ‘ It is finished.’ Where is all your debt to God?”

“ I *do* believe it.. ‘ It is finished.’ Thank the Lord, my debt is paid! He said so; bless His name, and I *do* believe it. ‘ It is finished!’ ” And the poor old creature’s joy was extreme.

The writer went from time to time to see her after this, and always found her rejoicing in the Lord. (Phil. iv. 4.)

J. L. K.

NOT A PLAN BUT A PERSON.

A LITTLE boy of some seven years of age was taken dangerously ill, and the writer, on hearing of it, went to see him.

The parents of this boy were members of one of the village chapels, and had brought up their child *religiously*; in fact, religiousness was a marked feature in this village, and if "cleanliness is next to godliness," as some say, the inhabitants appeared to be ambitious of proving that they were in any case "not far from the kingdom of God," for a cleaner village could hardly be found in any county in England. Three chapels and a church opened their doors twice a week for their several congregations, and although the number of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ was exceedingly few, the number of *professors* might be correctly computed as very nearly equal to that of the census of the population of the place.

On arriving at the house where the little boy lived, and was supposed to be dying, the writer was accosted by the mother, who very civilly invited him upstairs to see her son, and in doing so, remarked, "He is *well* acquainted with 'the plan of salvation.'"

This was said with the evident intention of implying that the writer's visit was *hardly* needful, though tolerated for religion's sake.

"The plan of salvation," thought the visitor, as he ascended the stairs; "'well acquainted with the plan of salvation,' and probably as ignorant of the PERSON OF THE CHRIST as a Hottentot! Oh, the delusions of religiousness! Better far to have been born where the gospel of the grace of God was never heard than to mistake

acquaintance with 'the plan' for the knowledge and love of Christ, knowing much and many things *about* Him, yet totally blinded as to *Himself*, who is neither a plan nor a scheme, but a living, loving, gracious, glorified PERSON."

A very few words with the sick boy satisfied the visitor that his mother was right enough; he *was* well acquainted with "the plan," and quite satisfied both with it and himself. A bright intelligent boy, he had readily seized (intellectually) what he himself, young as he was, called "*the scheme of redemption*," but proved to be altogether without Christ, as the writer (knowing the parents) had expected.

His first care was to dig away the shifting sands on which the poor boy's hopes were built, and to show him as gently as he could the rotten slough that lay beneath; a process which drove the religious mother from the room. Then when the boy's self-satisfaction was turned to misgiving and alarm, the visitor went on to tell him of One who, when here on earth, *loved* little children, and proved it in many ways. Love, light, grace, truth, and glory, all were found in Jesus; and now, sitting at God's right hand, He was waiting to be gracious to a poor, foolish boy, who had thought to merit heaven because he knew a good deal about "*the scheme of redemption*." These were themes so new to him that while they convicted him in measure of his sinfulness in reducing One so precious to a mere "plan," mapped out in his little brain, but found nowhere in his heart's affections, they (by grace) opened his eyes to see JESUS AS HE IS.

Then, to encourage him to come to Jesus, the visitor told him how He took little children up into

His arms, and laid His hands upon them, and blessed them; how, when the disciples were disputing among themselves as to which of them should be the greatest, He showed who was greatest in *His* loving eyes by setting a little child in the midst of them, as an Eastern king or chieftain sits surrounded by his servants; how, when a poor girl had died of fever, and was raised to life again at His almighty word, He thought of, pitied, her exhaustion, and "commanded that something should be given her to eat"; how even, when going to the cross for our sins, with all its anguish full before Him, He could still think of children, for He said to the women, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves AND FOR YOUR CHILDREN"; and how, having once suffered for sins, and all His sorrow past for ever, and He at God's right hand in glory, He forgot not the children; for He sent down the Holy Ghost to preach through "His messengers" the forgiveness of sins, even to His murderers, and to say, "The promise is unto you and to *your children.*"

Whether the poor boy had ever heard these things before or not, he *now* saw that there was, up there in heaven, an OBJECT too worthy and winsome, too perfect and precious to be slighted, "who, when He had by HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) And he understood for the first time in his life, by the Spirit's teaching, what is meant by the words, "That whosoever believeth IN HIM [not merely *about* Him] should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

The boy did not die, but recovered, and meeting another boy one day in the village street, he said

to him, "It was your father that showed me what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Do *you*, dear reader, know "what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ"? It is to be feared that tens of thousands in Christendom *think* they do, while yet to them Christ is but a theory, a map, a plan, a scheme, a system of theology! How admirable was the wisdom of God when He inspired His servant to write, "If any man LOVE NOT the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha!" (1 Cor. xvi.)

Do *you* love Him? If He is your very own Saviour, you surely do; if you do not, you certainly are yet in your sins. "He that hath the Son hath life." Have you? Is He yours? Can you look up there where He is, and say, "My Saviour"; not simply, "*Our* Saviour" sits at God's right hand, having put away *my* sins by His precious blood?

"He that hath NOT the Son of God hath not life," although, he may have the most minute and intimate acquaintance with "the plan of salvation" that it is possible to attain, while yet he is ignorant of Christ, who is NOT A PLAN BUT A PERSON. (1 John v. 12.)

J. L. K.

The person of the Christ,
Enfolding every grace,
Once slain, but now alive again,
In heaven demands our praise.

The heavens are opened now;
Sound it through earth abroad;
And we, by faith, in HEAVEN behold
Jesus, the Christ, our Lord.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND ETERNAL LIFE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

READ 1 JOHN ii. 12 ; v. 13.

THESE two scriptures bring before us two subjects, namely, forgiveness of sins and eternal life, which I wish to speak about.

The first thing about which a soul is troubled, when God begins to deal with it, is its sins, sins which it is quite conscious it cannot put away, nor go into heaven with, and for which it knows it deserves to go to hell.

And how are they to be put away?

A verse in 1 Cor. xv. 3, makes it very simple :
“ Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”

“ *Our sins* ” ; that is, the sins of those who have believed in Jesus, converted persons. It means only saved persons, not everybody in the world. Christ did not die for the sins of all the world. It never says so in Scripture. If Christ had died for the sins of everyone, then everyone must be going to heaven. If He put away everybody's sins, then nobody could go to hell. No ; He put away the sins of those who believe on Him.

God will never put a believer into hell, because Christ put away his sins. God will not ask payment for sins at two persons' hands ; one payment is enough for Him. “ Christ died for *our* sins.” That is how the question of sins is dealt with. There was no other way suitable to God but by Christ dying for them ; and if you want to see

what an awful thing sin is, look at Christ on the cross. It was our sins put Him there, the judgment of God against our sins. The moment you see that Christ died for your sins, you will never love them again. How could you love them when Christ had to *die* for them? Those very sins cost the Lord Jesus His life; so of all things I hate, it is those sins.

A verse in Galatians i. 4 brings out a little more than that verse in Corinthians: "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

A man who says he believes in Jesus, but does not know that his sins are forgiven, is always worldly, because his sins are for ever tying him down here. It is like a balloon ready to mount up into the air, but kept to the earth by the cords which tie it down. Until a man knows his sins are forgiven, his sins are like the cords tying him down to earth. Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might *deliver* us from this present evil world." Were any of your tears, prayers, experiences, sighs, or works there? Why Christ did it all eighteen hundred years before you ever could have had any of them.

Now look at 1 Peter ii. 24 for another verse about sins: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

"*Our* sins" again. Now then, beloved, how *many* sins had He on Him then?

People say, "Oh, all my *past* sins!"

Is He then coming again to put away your *present* sins, and then the *future ones*? Do you want Christ to die three times? That is impossible. How could He? He has shed all the blood

He had. "Behold, I am alive for evermore," He now says. (Rev. i. 18.) He cannot die any more.

Don't you see, *all* your sins were future when Christ died eighteen hundred years ago. He had *all* our sins upon Him; every sin that we have committed, or ever shall commit, were all laid upon Him, and if they were not put away then, they never can be put away; for Christ will never be on the cross again. You did not *find out* that your sins were put away till quite lately perhaps, but the work was *done* eighteen hundred years ago. Your sins were not *put away* the other day, but you then first found out that they were.

Just look at another verse: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

There are three things in that verse.

First, what *Christ* was.

Secondly, what *we* were.

Thirdly, what our condition has cost Him.

Look at every separate word of it.

Who was it that suffered? He that was holy, harmless, and undefiled.

For *whose* sins did He suffer? Not His own, but the sins of the unjust.

What you and I deserved to suffer for ever and ever the Lord Jesus went through on Calvary's cross, that we might never go through it in hell, and that we might be with Himself in the peerless heights of glory for evermore. How shall I then trifle with the sins for which the just Jesus suffered on the cross?

Do you believe that Christ died for your sins, according to the Scriptures?

Do you believe that He gave Himself for your sins, that He might deliver you from this present evil world?

Do you believe that He Himself bare your sins in His own body on the tree? and that He suffered for your sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God?

They must all have been there, or else none of them. *Where* is the Lord Jesus, who had them upon Him? Is He on the cross now? Indeed He is not; it was sins that kept Him there, but He is not there now. He went into the grave, but He did not leave the sins in the grave, as people say; for He could not have left that cross for the grave if He had not already put them away. The reason He could leave the cross was, because the sins were all gone. He is not on the cross now, nor in the grave. Look up to the brightest spot in the glory of God, and the first thing that will meet your gaze will be Jesus. Could He be in glory if any sins were on Him? Certainly not; and yet Jesus is there, with the marks of the nails in His hands and feet, and the mark where the spear pierced Him in His side, "a Lamb as it had been slain." (Rev. v. 6.)

Where are the sins then?

That brings me to the twelfth verse of 1 John ii. : "I write unto you, little children, because your sins *are* forgiven you for His name's sake."

Does it mean that they are *being* forgiven? or that they *shall* be forgiven? No; it says they *are* forgiven; it *is* accomplished. Whether one of you has been converted fifty years, and another fifty minutes, it is just as true of one as the other. "I write unto you, little children."

There is a letter from your Father, and what is

it about? To tell you that your sins are forgiven! How is it that God can tell me I am forgiven? Because He forgives me for "His name's sake," who has made the payment in full to God with His own precious blood.

Christ paid my debt on the cross, and God raised Him from the dead as the proof of it, and now He adorns the throne of God. Why doubt any more?

When the devil comes, you either resist him, or you entertain him. Are you going to entertain him? or resist him by planting your feet firmly on the word of God? Suppose Satan comes in and says, "Oh, *your* sins are not forgiven!"

I say, "You are too late, Satan; for I have God's word for it that they are, and you are a liar, and the father of it." (John iii. 44.)

I cannot doubt my Father's letter to please Satan. Well, then, we have no more doubt about the sins being forgiven.

Satan says, "Oh, but God will bring you into judgment for them *one* day!"

But I turn to Heb. x. 17, and meet him with the word of God: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

I not only have a letter to tell me that I am forgiven, but that God will remember my sins *no more*. Now supposing I sin, won't it separate me from Christ? What is to be done? Have I ceased to be a child of God now?

Did your being a sinner hinder His saving you? No. Then do you think He is going to cast you off now you are His child, and yet have sinned? Sins won't hinder His keeping you; but they come in between you and Christ, and hinder your communion and enjoyment of Him.

How do I know it? Because 1 John ii. 1 tells me so: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Suppose that my besetting sin is temper, and I have got angry about something, what am I to do? Before you can do anything, before ever you can think, as quick as the lightning flashes, or the pendulum swings, or the heart throbs, or the pulse beats, if you could see what happens, the Advocate is with the Father before ever you have time to confess.

The instant any true child of God sins, the devil would like to come in, and make that sin separate between the child and the Father. But the Advocate goes to the Father about it. And what happens? I am made conscious that I have sinned, and I go and confess it to God.

The joy of salvation is then restored to you. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) It shows how grace triumphs over sin. The Holy Ghost in me brings some word of God home to my conscience, and causes me to turn out my heart in God's presence; and He is faithful and just to forgive me my sins. Sins touch my communion; but they can't separate me from Christ. How could God put me into hell for the sins for which Christ suffered on Calvary's cross?

Well, then, we have seen clearly from Scripture that the sins are for ever put away; but we ought to praise God for these things; and a beautiful little song of praise comes out in Rev. i. 5, 6: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from

our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

In these verses you get the washed, the Washer, what we are washed from, and what He washes us with. Now then we praise Him. Shall you and I drink in His love to us ; shall we know that He has put away our sins, and have no note of praise for Him, no heart full of worship for Him? Oh, no ! let our hearts go out in songs of praise and thanksgiving to Him.

Now I will close with a few words on eternal life. " And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John v. 11.)

What is the difference between forgiveness of sins and eternal life? Eternal life is something additional to forgiveness of sins. Picture a man thrown into a debtor's prison because he owed money. There were two things he could not do in prison : he could not *get* into debt, and he could not *pay* his debts ; for how could he work at anything to earn money in the debtor's prison. Supposing I know the poor miserable being who is in this plight, and I go to him and ask him who his debtors are, and how many debts he owes, and he gives me their names. Well, I take the bills, and pay them, and get the receipts for them all. Then I go back to the prison, and I show the governor there all the receipts as proofs that the debtor is no longer a debtor. He lets me go to the man, and he sees the debts are all gone. The governor says, " We can keep you no longer ; you are a free man." Away he can go, able to say truly that there is not a man to whom he owes anything.

No, he does not go. Why? "Ah!" he says, "I know my debts are all paid, and that I am free; but I have not a halfpenny in my pocket, and the moment I get out of prison I shall have no power to keep out of getting into debt again."

"Well, first of all thank the one who paid the debt, and then I will tell you I have something more for you."

So the man thanks him gratefully; and now he says, "There is a cheque-book for you, and you can write out a cheque to any amount, tens of thousands if you like. I have put a fortune into the bank to your account."

Now the man leaps for joy. "I am out of debt," says he, "and no chance of ever getting into it again."

Well, that is forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Who can spend up eternal life? If you have eternal life, it is in God's own Son you have it. It is not a matter of *feeling*, it is a *fact*. There is the fortune for you; but *where* is it? It is in the bank: "This life is in His Son." First He tells you He has given it to you, and then He tells you where He has put it for you. The Son of God Himself is my life.

And now, lastly, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life." Two letters for you from God, one about forgiveness of sins (1 John ii. 12), and now the other about eternal life. (1 John v. 13.)

Well, this enables me to go through the world as light of heart as the nightingale whose breast is full of song. What do I want with cares? Have I not got the forgiveness of my sins, eternal

life, the Holy Ghost? And am I not united to Christ in glory. (1 Cor. vi. 17; Eph. v. 30.)

Tell everyone about it. Is it given to us that we may hide it in our hearts? No; it *must* find its way out somewhere if you have got it. How can my eternal life come to an end? It is Christ Himself. It is a wonderful thing to find out on the infallible authority of the word of God that I have eternal life. "I give unto them *eternal* life." (John x. 28.) "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in Christ Jesus*." (Rom. viii. 1.) There is none for Christ, so there is none for us who are in Christ.

H. M. H.

Forgiveness! 'twas a joyful sound
To guilty sinners doomed to die:
We'd publish it the world around,
And gladly shout it through the sky.

'Twas the rich gift of love divine;
'Tis full, effacing every crime;
Unbounded shall its glories shine,
And know no change by changing time.

For this stupendous gift of heaven,
What grateful honours shall we show!
Where much transgression is forgiven,
May love with fervent ardour glow.

By love inspired, may all our days
With every heavenly grace be crowned;
May truth and goodness, joy and praise,
In all abide, in all abound.

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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.

"IT IS AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE."

IT is now almost three years since two of my sisters were converted. They had just left school, and were in the midst of the pleasures of the world.

One day a friend asked them, as a favour, to go and hear the gospel preached, and they went. On that same evening God blessed His word to the salvation of their souls.

Ever since that day they again and again entreated all of us to go with them to hear the gospel, and often told us of the Saviour's love for us, and that He was not willing that we should perish, but that we should accept His free gift of everlasting life.

But none of us took much notice of what they said, and often we laughed at them. Constantly, too, they talked to me when alone, but I never heeded what they said, and told them I had enough

religion on Sundays, without having it on week days.

I went on in this way, rejecting Christ, for about two years and a half more, and then I began to think about eternity. I knew that if I died as I was I was sure to be lost for ever. I could not put the thought of it from me, and it made me wretched, though I did not tell anyone I was unhappy.

In this miserable state I continued for about seven weeks, when I went to hear the gospel. I listened attentively the whole time, but did not feel any benefit until afterwards, when a friend of my sister's spoke to me, and, among other texts, he quoted, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

I had heard it before, but it never came home to me as then. I thought, "Jesus says so; it must be true." I took Him at His word, believed that He would not cast me out, came in faith to Him, and went home saved and rejoicing.

I used to think it was hard to believe, but it is as simple as possible; just simply to trust Jesus.

So I would now say to any one, Come to Jesus while there is time. Don't put it off. You may never see to-morrow, and what an awful thing to die unsaved! Come now, for, "Behold, now is the accepted time! behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2.) Believe God, and you are saved, for He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). c.

WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?

CAIN had a "religion." He was a *religious* man; as religious as Abel. But he had no love to God; he had no faith. He was a religious man, but not a godly man.

It is a strange introduction to this picture, the setting forth of Cain as a *worshipper*, and a worshipper moreover of *the true* God. We read: "And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain *brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.*" (Gen. iv. 2, 3.)

There is no mention made of false gods before the Flood. Cain was a worshipper of the one living and true God. Soon after the Flood there were idolaters, and then God called out a separate people as witnesses of His character, to make good His name and grace. But there is not any mention made of false gods before Joshua xxiv. 2, 14, 15: "Your fathers . . . served other gods"; a fresh crime, a fresh snare of the devil, which called for new measures on the part of God. Satan had come and slipped himself in between man and God, and was the one that was really worshipped, though under the name of gods; and the call of Abram was the call and witness of "the Most High God."

Are your "artificers in brass and iron" worshippers of the true God? So was Cain. And he took some pains, too. He offered that which he had been toiling for in "the sweat of his face." He was a "tiller of the ground," and he "brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord."

He did not bring that which cost him nothing. (2 Sam. xxiv. 24.) Nay, his worship cost more of toil than that of Abel. He came in the way of nature, offering the fruit of his toil and labour.

And you have done the same. This is ever the character of false worship. Religiousness does not take a man out of the character of Cain; it rather brings him into it; so that you have not got one step in that way out of the character God has marked as that of Cain.

Observe, I do not charge you with being a hypocrite, for I do not say that Cain was not sincere. There is no doubt indeed of his *sincerity*; but then his sincerity only evidenced the blind hardness of his heart. Human sincerity means nothing; it is often but the greatest proof of the desperate darkness in which a man is. Those were sincere of whom Christ said, "Whosoever killeth you will think he doeth God service." (John xvi. 2).

Saul of Tarsus was thoroughly sincere when he "thought" he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." (Acts xxxvi. 9.) He consulted, moreover, the chief priests and elders, the religious authorities of the day. He was zealous for his religion, and thoroughly sincere as a man, but totally blind as to God and the things of Christ, thinking to do God service by fighting against and slaying His saints.

Cain, in his sincerity, brought to the Lord that which cost him something; that which was the fruit of his toil. He came to God as a worshipper, and in so doing offered to God that which he had brought honestly as a man, but which proved him to be ignorant of his state as a sinner.

What, then, is man to hope for? you will say. He is to hope for nothing. Did he not get out of Paradise *because of sin*? What possible ground can he have *as a sinner* for hoping to get into heaven? What ground had Cain for hoping that God would accept either himself or his offering? God had driven man out of Paradise because of sin, what ground had he to expect by the works of his hands to get back into the presence of God?

You may say, It was not the works of his hands, but the fruits of God's creation. But what would you think of the man who was hoping to get into heaven by offering his corn and his wine to God, supposing, like Simon Magus, that the gift of God may be bought? (Acts viii.) Why, it would show that his conscience was as hard as the nether millstone, utterly insensible to the condition he was in, as well as to the character of God.

The very worship of Cain proved the desperate, utter insensibility of his heart to the judgment of God against sin, and to those mighty things which had recently happened, the effects and consequences of which he was now experiencing. (Gen. iii. 17, 23, 24.)

How came man to be toiling there in the sweat of his brow? Their very toil told the tale of the curse. They had been driven out of Eden for *sin*. But in Cain we see utter recklessness to the judgment of God. He had forgotten the very nature and being of that God who, at the first, had set man perfectly happy in the garden, to keep it, and to enjoy its fruits (fruits yielded to his hand without toil or labour); and supposed that, by toil and labour (the judicial consequences of sin), he could produce something that God would accept.

There was utter, desperate recklessness as to the judgment of God.

Cain's worship was the worst thing he did. It was, in fact, the denying that he had sinned. Such blindness to what he had been, such hardness of conscience, in supposing that he could get into the presence of God in his sins as if nothing at all had happened! Such wretched assumption, that because he was a "tiller of the ground," *tilling* of the ground was all right! But how came it to be all right? Because God had *cursed* the ground? He, a defiled sinner, driven out of Paradise, brings "of the fruit of the ground" which the Lord had cursed "an offering to the Lord"; that is, he brings into the presence of God the sign and seal of the *sin* that had driven him out from God!

And how comes a man to be going Sunday after Sunday, as he says, to "worship God"? What is all this toil? To "make peace with God"? God is "the God of peace"; He "preaches peace," a *made* peace, through "the blood of the cross"; yet man goes on, seeking to carry something into God's presence as "a duty," "to make peace," without once asking about God's way of peace. (Heb. xiii. 20; Acts x. 36; Col. i. 20.)

Cain was a worshipper of God; but there was no *faith* in Cain. There was no faith to recognize his own ruin and sin, no faith to apprehend the judgment of God against sin. He had no business in the presence of God as he was, no title to be a worshipper of God. He had not a bit of faith to recognize his own condition as driven out of Paradise, his sin and estrangement from God, or that blood, *death*, was necessary in order for him to approach God. (Heb. viii. 8; x. 19.)

WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION?

103

That is just the world's worship. And are you any the better for it? Are you any the nearer to God?

What if God does not receive your worship? Suppose that, after all your well-doing and toil for God, God rejects it; for that is what Cain's toiling met with from God: "Unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect" (v. 5.) Would you be content?

How was it with Cain? "Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." (Gen. iv. 5.) And it is ever thus. The moment God puts man on the true ground of his condition before Him, the enmity of the natural heart breaks out against God. Cain was "very wroth," exceeding angry. And why? Because his heart was opposed to *grace*. He had not owned the first principle of sin in the presence of God.

And you, when the sovereign grace of the gospel comes to you, are "very wroth." What, a man do his best, you exclaim, and not be accepted! So thought Cain. And so thinks every man naturally; that is, he thinks that God *must* accept him just as well as he accept God, bringing down God to his own measure of holiness. And then the wrath of man breaks out, and he rejects the righteousness that God holds out to him; he will not have His Son. (Rom. iii. 21-26.)

There is not a principle in Cain that is not found in you. Surely there is no evil in brass and iron; nor is there any harm in sweet sounds. The evil and the sin is in this, that men are using these things to hide God from them. If you are worshippers of the true God, so was Cain. We may put a terrible name on that which we see in Cain, and yet approve of the same thing in ourselves.

The light tells us that was sin in Cain, which the spirit of self-love tells us is not sin in our own case. What difference is there between you and Cain? Take the Bible, and see if you can make out any difference. The only real difference is this, that you have a farther and more developed knowledge of "the Seed of the woman" (Christ), and therefore that of the two you are the more guilty.

Having sinned against God, abused His goodness, and refused His Son, man turns to please himself as if nothing had happened. It is more terrible to a spiritual eye to see insensibility after sin has been committed; it is a far deeper shade of sin than even the commission of the crime. The returning of a soul to God is just in the being awakened to a sense of the awfulness of this state.

There is yet another feature in the Cain-character, open hostility to those who know God's principle of grace, to those whom God does accept. See what follows: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (v. 8.) Abel, as a simple, helpless man, should have demanded Cain's sympathy; but Cain hates the one whom God delights in.

And so it is now. Why is it that you are so angry at a fault in a Christian, which you readily excuse in a man of the world, if it be not hatred to the name he bears? If it ought to produce better fruits in him, why not adopt it yourselves? If you are expecting better from him than from the world, why not follow that which you profess to believe will produce the better fruit?

But you have not merely hated the name of

Christ, you have been guilty of hating that which God has established in Christ. And here is the same principle that crucified Christ, the desperate recklessness of sin.

You cannot deny that the world has crucified Christ. God's Son is not now in the world. He has been in the world. He became a man amongst men: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (John i. 14). Man saw and hated Him, and summed up his evil in killing Him. I ask you, therefore, Has God no such question with you as He had with Cain: "*Where* is thy brother?" (v. 9.) And is not God demanding of the world, *Where* is Christ?

Cain replied, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" Here is a much worse character of sin than Adam's. It is the haughtiness and recklessness of sin. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Not only has there been sin against God, sin that has exiled man from Eden, and separated him from the presence of God, but there has been sin also, that has led to the hatred and destruction of a Brother (blessed and perfect in His ways), whom man has seen. Your disclaiming this displays and is the proof of the recklessness of your hearts. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," said Jesus, "they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." (John xv. 22-25.)

The coming of the Son of God into the world

has shown the real state it is in. Why was Christ rejected by man, except that man hated God? That was the only reason that Christ was slain in this world. They hated God, and therefore they hated Him. They hated the Light. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John iii. 20, 21.) "They loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And this is their sin, that they have put the Light out of the world. Like Cain, they were "of that wicked one, and slew" *their* "brother." (1 John iii. 12.) Like him, too, in the motive. "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46.) Even Filate said, "I find no fault in Him." (John xviii. 38; xix. 4, 6.) The world has sinned against God in crucifying and slaying Jesus. They hated God, and therefore turned God's Son out of the world when sent to it in love.

How came Abel to be an accepted worshipper? "And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." (v. 4.) He was accepted by blood. There was this testimony in his offering: I cannot go to God *as I am*; I am driven out of Paradise; sin has come in between me and God, and death, "the wages of sin," must come in between me and God, or I cannot go to God; I cannot go as I am.

He took the place of a sinner, and put in faith between himself and God the blood of a victim

that had been *slain*. Unless in his going to God he had owned his necessity that he could not get into the presence of God at all but by blood he would not have been accepted any more than Cain. But he knew and owned that he could not get to God without blood; he was of faith, and faith ever sees that "*without shedding of blood there is no remission.*" (Heb. ix. 22.) He put death, judicially inflicted death, by slaying the victim, between himself and God, and then he comes into the presence of God as an accepted worshipper. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (Heb. xi. 4.)

All who come not through Him are rejected, because they do not know that they are so utterly sinful that they cannot come into God's presence except through the blood of His Son. And, on the other hand, all who say, "I cannot go up except through blood," see that it is the perfectness of love, God's own perfect blessed love, that to meet man's need spared nothing, not even His only begotten Son. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21.)

This is the language of FAITH.

When Christ shall come with trumpet's sound,
Then may thy soul in Him be found!
Dressed in God's righteousness alone,
Presented faultless at His throne.

“ HE GAVE ME PEACE.”

AS I was going up the staircase of the Edinburgh Infirmary one day, I met one of the nurses, and said to her, “ Are there any in your ward, nurse, very near to death?”

“ Oh yes,” she answered, “ I have just left the bedside of a young girl who has been in some months. She is in very great suffering day and night; and I should be glad to see her at rest. I do not think it can be very many days now. She is a wonder to me, for she never murmurs, and seems quite cheerful; and yet she has no friends to visit her, and the ladies who come seem to pass her bed unnoticed.”

“ Will you take me to her?” I eagerly asked.

She turned back with me, and I was soon standing by the sufferer.

Just as we entered the ward two nurses were endeavouring to ease her position by moving her gently in a sheet from one side of the bed to the other.

Though this was done with great tenderness and care, a looker-on could see it was agony to the dying girl. Great tears rolled down her sallow cheeks, though no sound or cry escaped her except a gentle “ Thank you; that will do now.”

It always unnerves me to see suffering, and I had to sit silent a few minutes after the nurses had left, and, as the poor thing lay with closed eyes, I feared to disturb her.

I spent a little time in prayer that God would give me the right word for her. Her breathing soon showed me she was not asleep, and though her eyes were still closed, her lips sometimes

moved, and a very sweet smile passed over her features, which otherwise would have been plain and unattractive.

I gently laid my hands on hers, and said, " Will you tell me your name, dear? "

" Agnes, " she answered, and, trying to raise her heavy eye-lids, she said, " I cannot see you now ; but I like your voice. "

" Well, Agnes, " I said, " I think you must have listened to a much sweeter voice than mine ere this time. "

" Yes, yes ! " she answered, with great earnestness ; and, as if gaining a little gleam of strength (like the last flicker of a candle just dying out) to tell the good news for the last time, she breathed out her full heart's story of love ; " Yes, here in this bed He met me, that loving Saviour. It was in the stillness of the night, four months ago. He came and spoke peace to my soul. None ever spoke to me of His love in dying for poor sinners like me ; and when He saw me suffering here He just came and told me of Himself, and, oh ! I have had such peace ever since. The suffering is nothing in prospect of being with Him so soon. "

And again she smiled, one of those long, lasting, radiant smiles I had seen before.

" And you know Him, too, " she said, trying to press my hand with her swollen, helpless fingers.

I was just telling her of the Lord's love to me too, when the nurses returned to move her again, and I hastily left the ward. As I said, " Good-bye, Agnes, " she whispered, " Do come to-morrow ; come to-morrow. "

To-morrow came, and the next day, and I was unable to visit Agnes ; and when at last I found

myself in her ward I feared to look at her bed lest it should be empty. But no, her poor suffering body was still there, and a nurse sat on the bed supporting her head on her shoulder. I saw she was just passing away.

"Oh, nurse," I said, "I am too late, and Agnes wished me to come again."

In a moment she heard my voice; the sweet smile came once more, and she felt over the bed for my hand.

"Very soon you shall be past the reach of all suffering," I said.

I know not if she heard me, but her lips moved, and the nurse said, "I think she is trying to speak to you."

She sank back exhausted on the pillow. I knelt down close to her, to hear, if possible, her last words. There was silence for a few moments, a strange stillness seemed over all the ward.

Gently, yet clearly, her last testimony of her Saviour's love came: "He gave me peace! perfect peace! abiding peace! Soon I shall have everlasting peace with Him!"

The lips closed; the sealed eyelids opened not; in a moment the happy spirit of Agnes was with Him who so loved her, and who had saved her, and given her peace through His blood the moment she rested upon His finished work (Col. i. 20).

In Christ we read the Father's love,
And find eternal peace;
In Him we meet a Saviour God,
And fear and terror cease.

“THAT, SIR, IS THE CONTEXT.”

I KNOW more of the Bible than you can tell me,” said a young man, as he refused a gospel tract offered him.

“Very likely,” was the reply; “but do you know this?” pointing to the heading of the tract, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.”

“No, nor you either; for no one can possibly know that in this life.”

And this is the thought of many in so-called Christian lands, who repeat week by week, as part of their creed, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.”

“Let me read you a verse of Scripture,” said the one who had offered the tract; and turning to Acts xiii. 38, he read aloud: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” Then he made a few remarks on the simplicity of the word.

The young man replied, “Yes, yes, that is all very well; but you must not take a passage from its context. I am sure there is something about good works in the chapter. Give me the context,” he said angrily.

A good deal more was said than I have written; but seeing plainly the spirit of the man, my friend added, “‘Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.’ (Acts xiii. 41.) **THAT, SIR, IS THE CONTEXT.”**

Without another word the objector turned away, and we saw him no more.

In contrast with this I saw the other day the case of a poor woman dying of heart-disease, and very anxious about her soul.

As I repeated to her the words of the Lord Jesus in Luke vii. 48 and 50, I said, "She had been a great sinner, but her heart was broken, and her tears ran down unto the Saviour's feet, and He turned to her, and said, 'Thy sins *are* forgiven. Thy faith *hath* saved thee; go in *peace*.'"

Scarcely had I uttered the words, when the poor woman, with the tears running down her face, burst out, "Praise the Lord, then; I do believe; I am saved!" And her look of intense anxiety and distress changed to one of rest and peace.

What of *your* sins, my reader, all your guilty yesterdays? Are they forgiven, blotted out as a thick cloud (Isa. xlv. 22)? Or are you still uncertain if they will not appear against you as a host of witnesses in "that day"? (Rev. xx. 12.) Is the language of your heart, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." "For Thy *name's sake*, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great"? If so, there is a blessed word just suited to you: "To Him [Christ] all the prophets bear witness, that every one that believes on Him will receive through *His name* remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for *mine own sake*, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. xlii. 25.)

W. R. H.

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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.

MADE VERY HAPPY.

IT was in the autumn of the year 18—that I was privileged to witness for the first time in my life the saving power of the grace of God in the conversion of a sinner.

I had often heard of conversions, and knew that I must myself be converted if ever I was to go to heaven; but how I or anyone else was to be converted was a matter of which I was profoundly ignorant. Not ignorant from want of instruction, nor from not knowing, even from childhood, the *theory* of the gospel; but, like thousands of other persons, my ignorance lay in this, that I thought I believed everything. That is, I did not doubt the truth of what is declared in the Scriptures, but how believing that Jesus died for sinners, even for me, would save my soul, was something I never could see, or rather *feel*.

Awakened, at about the age of twelve years, through God's mercy, to a sense of my sinfulness before God, and to my need of a Saviour, I passed a few years of my life with a good deal of inward strife; for the world on one hand, and Christ on the other, were both bidders for my worthless heart.

Such was pretty much my state at the time I have named, when my French tutor, who had for six years been my instructor, and to whom I was much attached, was taken ill with a disease from which it was not possible he could recover.

My father and mother had often spoken of his soul, and longed for his blessing; but there seemed a barrier in the way. My tutor had been brought up a Roman Catholic; but, like too many of his fellow-countrymen, he had lapsed into utter carelessness as to God, and even into infidelity. He never went to church, chapel, or meeting-house, and his pet thought of what was good was to hate every priest and all priestcraft.

It is true that on one occasion he accompanied me and my brother to hear the famous Pasteur M—— preach a sermon in French, and that on another occasion he came with us to hear a young man deliver a special gospel address to young men. But, beyond these two instances, I never knew my poor friend to go to hear the Word of God anywhere.

One day, while my parents were still wondering how his soul could best be reached by the sound of the gospel, some friends came to say we ought certainly to get some one to call and see Monsieur I——, as he was dying, and he ought not to be allowed to die like a heathen.

Accordingly, the next day my father suggested

that I should ask Monsieur I—— if he would like to see a friend of ours, a devoted servant of Christ, who had spent many years in France in the Lord's work. He had just come to town, and the Frenchman had often heard the name of Mr. D—— in our house.

I rather objected to doing this, on the ground that I did not make any profession of religion; but I afterwards consented. I went, therefore, that morning to see the sick man, taking with me some little comforts for the body, such as he required, but hardly knowing how I was to broach the subject of a visit from Mr. D——

As soon, however, as I went into his room, I found the way was already plain for me. The sick man was unhappy in a way I had never seen him before. As soon as he saw me he said, "I am a miserable man. I wish I was dead. But I am afraid to die. I am a burden to you, and I am a burden to myself and to everybody. I wish I was dead. *If I were as holy as that young man*" (meaning the one we had heard preach some months before), "I should not be afraid to die."

I felt for the poor fellow, and gave him such comfort as I could, telling him to cheer up, and take a more hopeful view of his case; that perhaps, after all, he would pull through, and be himself again.

"By-the-by," I added, "our friend Mr. D—— is here at present. You have often heard of him. He speaks French like a native. Perhaps you would like him to call upon you, and cheer you up a little?"

To this the sick man, with all the natural grace and politeness for which his nation is famed, not only assented, but even seemed most thankful for

the suggestion. After a little more conversation I left him.

My next step was to call upon Mr. D——, and ask him if he would be willing to come with me in the afternoon to see the man whose case I described to him. He very readily consented to accompany me, so about four o'clock we proceeded to the house of the dying Frenchman.

The introduction over, Mr. D—— was very soon seated by the bedside of the patient, talking to him of his native land, and various places in it which they both knew. It was a pleasant conversation to the sick man; and it was very easy to see that Mr. D—— had quite gained his confidence.

Presently the conversation changed. Mr. D—— turned to the subject of the dying man's state before God, and immediately met with a hearty response. There was an eagerness about the way in which he seemed to grasp at every word spoken (as a drowning man would catch at a straw), which, in my ignorance, I supposed arose from politeness on the part of Monsieur I—— who must needs assent to all that was said.

In the course of their conversation (which I cannot detail as I should wish), Mr. D—— spoke of Christ as the sole and *all*-sufficient Saviour.

"Ah!" said the Frenchman, "if I only knew Him; if I only had Him!"

"Well," replied Mr. D——, "He is beside you. He is here. He is knocking at the door of your heart, wanting to come in. He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' " (Rev. iii. 20.)

The moment the sick man heard these precious words he sat up in the bed, and with both hands pulling his night-shirt open, and baring his breast, he looked up, and said with the most intense earnestness, "Oh! I am open, I am open. Come, Jesus, into *my* heart!"

A little more conversation followed, and we took our leave.

As soon as we were outside the house, Mr. D—— took my arm, and said, "Do you know, F——, I believe that man is converted!"

"CONVERTED!" I thought. "I—— converted!" It seemed more than I could credit.

I said nothing, but thoughts passed rapidly through my mind:—"Could this marvellous change, by which a guilty sinner is made meet for the glory of God, take place in so short a time, and in so very simple a way? Was it possible that if Monsieur I—— died now, he would go to heaven to be with Christ? Was every question settled between him and God? Was he really ready to go, while I, with so many more advantages, was still unsaved? Ah well!" I thought, "time will tell, and time will prove all."

And so it did.

Monsieur I—— lived for some weeks after his first interview with Mr. D——. The change in him, in his spirit and in his hopes, was something indescribable. His Roman Catholic wife again and again said, after his death, "Well, whatever that gentleman you brought said to my husband, it enabled him to die very resignedly, and made him very happy."

But it was *much more* than mere *resignation*. That is a poor, cold word that does not at all express the longing of the soul who desires to depart

and be with Christ. Monsieur I—— was *saved*. He knew it; he knew his Saviour, too, and his whole heart's craving was to be with Him. He wanted to *see* the blessed One who had plucked him as a brand from the burning. Several times he said to me, when I had brought him little bodily comforts, "Ah! I don't want these things now. They only help to keep me here, and I would rather go to be with Jesus."

Before long he was called home to enter into the inner chamber, the Father's house, to be "for ever with the Lord." Happy and perfectly peaceful he was unto the last.

Have you, beloved reader, opened your heart to the blessed Saviour who stands knocking, and seeking an entrance? Many and many a time has He knocked, and long has He waited. He has knocked every time you have heard the gospel; He has knocked by sickness, it may be, or by the removal, through death, of a beloved one from your side. He has knocked in a thousand ways and at a thousand times; and yet have you never, as the dying Frenchman did, opened your heart to let Him in?

You *mean* to do so, no doubt; you intend to open to Him *some day*. You perhaps think the grace that has waited so long will still wait *your* convenience. You think of a future day, another time, a convenient season. But oh! how you slight the love of Him who knocks, and how you imperil your own soul, by listening to the devil's gospel, "TO-MORROW!"

The following touching lines only too truly tell the way in which the grace and kindness of the Saviour are so often treated:—

"Lord, what am I, that with unceasing care,

Thou didst seek after me, that Thou didst wait,
 Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
 And pass the gloomy nights of winter there?
 Oh strange delusion ! that I did 'not greet
 Thy blest approach, and oh ! to heaven how lost,
 If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
 Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon Thy feet !
 How oft my guardian angel gently cried,
 ' Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt
 see
 How He persists to knock and wait for thee.'
 And, oh ! how often to that voice of sorrow,
 ' To-morrow I will open,' I replied
 And when the morrow came, I answered still,
 ' To-morrow.' "

I would call the reader's attention to another knocking, not the Saviour's knocking at the hard and impenitent heart of the sinner, but the knocking of *many* at a *closed* door which cannot again be opened, even though they are importunate, and plead their works as a passport.

Hear the words. They are from the lips of Christ : " Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for MANY, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, AND SHALL NOT BE ABLE." Why is this? How awful to think that some shall seek to enter in, and yet shall not be able What can it mean?

The next verse explains it. It is very simple, but very dreadful. They have put off until it is TOO LATE. The Saviour had knocked at *their* door, but they did not open. He called, but they did not answer; and now He has risen up and *shut to* the door. (Luke xiii. 24-27.)

Ah ! poor silly souls, YOU are now " without " and HE is within, eternally separated !

“ Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now ! ”

May the Lord mercifully give you so to learn your need of Him, that you may no longer delay opening your heart in simple faith to Him who so graciously deigns to knock, and seeks to be your guest !

F. C.

“ I KNOW IT IS TRUE.”

AFTER a severe illness, I went to visit some relatives, and though too weak to preach, I was able to visit a few people.

I had not been long with my friends when I heard of a woman, some two miles off, who was dying of dropsy, and most anxious about her soul's salvation.

I found her out without much difficulty, and after hearing from her all about her ailments, I spoke of eternal matters, of the holiness of God, the horribleness of sin, the preciousness of the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from every sin, the value of the immortal soul, and the immense importance of its immediate salvation. (1 Pet. i. 9; Heb. ii. 3.)

The sick woman assured me that she was most anxious to be saved; that she had wept, prayed, and done all that she could, but that she was nothing bettered, but had rather grown worse.

I showed her from the Scriptures that Jesus had undertaken the whole responsibility of her salvation from first to last, that before He left the cross He said, “ It is finished ”, “ 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.” (John xix. 30; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.)

“ I KNOW IT IS TRUE.”

121

She replied that it was all very beautiful, but that she could not see it.

I urged that the word of God said, “ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” (John iii. 36.)

“ But I do not feel it,” she replied; “ and how can I know I am saved until I do?”

I replied, “ ‘ Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.’ ” (John v. 24.)

“ Well, I hope I am saved,” she answered.

I saw that God had indeed wrought repentance toward Himself in her soul, but that the devil was trying to hinder “ faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts xx. 21.)

I now turned my back upon her as she was lying in bed, and while in that position I took my watch out of my pocket, and concealing it in my right hand, turned my face toward her again, and said, “ Since I turned my back upon you I have taken my watch out of my pocket, and put it into my hand. Do you believe it?”

“ Yes, sir, I do,” she replied.

“ But you did not see me take it out of my pocket, and place it in my hand, neither can you see it in my hand. How is it, then, that you believe me without seeing?”

“ Because, sir, you told me so.”

“ Then why do you not believe God without seeing when He says, ‘ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ’?”

“ But I must feel it, sir, first, before I believe I have it.”

“ Did you feel me take my watch out of my

pocket, and put it into my hand? And do you feel it is my hand?"

"No, sir; I do not feel it is there."

"Then why do you believe it is there?"

"Because you told me so."

"But does not God say that 'your sins are forgiven you for His (Christ's) name's sake'?" (1 John ii. 12.) "Why do you not believe God?"

"I hope I am forgiven now," she replied.

"But do you hope I took my watch out of my pocket, put it into my hand, and that it is in my hand?"

"No, sir; I do believe that you have done with your watch as you have told me."

"How is it that you find it so easy to believe me, a poor failing man, without seeing, feeling, or hoping, and yet cannot believe the unfailing and loving God?"

The Spirit of God made her ashamed of her wretched unbelief, and blessed the simple illustration to "giving her full assurance of faith." (Heb. x. 22.)

She lifted up her voice and cried, "Blessed God, I will not treat your servant better than you. I do believe you now without seeing, feeling, or hoping; and because you say I have the forgiveness of all my sins and everlasting life, I know it is true."

I fell on my knees to praise God for His mercy to this poor doubting but honest heart; but she was so full of gratitude to God herself that I was obliged gladly to listen to her audible praise; and thus she passed away into His presence who loved her, and gave Himself for her. (Gal. ii. 20.)

Should this meet the eye of anybody anxious about his or her soul's salvation, I would say

“ WHEN HE HAD SPENT ALL.”

123

that the road to peace is simply to believe what God says about Christ and His work, and about the sinner and his need; that faith is taking God at His word, and believing what He says, just because He says it. Therefore, just where you are, as you are, and just now, receive the full, free, everlasting salvation of God as a gift to simple faith, without seeing, feeling or hoping. (Acts xvi. 31; xxviii. 28.) H. M. H.

“ WHEN HE HAD SPENT ALL.”

(Luke xv. 14.)

THE young man referred to had spent all, and then “he began to be in want.” His fancied pleasures were over. The great enjoyments he had promised himself had come to an end. His self-chosen path had led to nothing but poverty, suffering and sorrow. His disappointment was great, his thoughts of earth were blighted, and all was now a dreary void.

Yet he did not give in, so as to retrace his steps at once, notwithstanding all this, but he sought for something to do; and even tried to satisfy himself with the husks that the swine did eat, but could not. Thus he went on till every means had failed, and every hope was gone; and then it was that he thought of his father’s house, the happy home he had left, where he knew there was bread enough and to spare, while he was perishing with hunger. Oh, how well for him it was he remembered this!

No doubt he often wondered that others should seem to go on enjoying themselves as usual. They did not seem aware of the famine which was

in the land. To them the birds sang as sweetly, and the flowers bloomed as beautifully as ever they did; therefore they were not unhappy. They saw no cause for regrets. They had not spent their all, neither had the world lost its charm for them. For this poor young man it had.

I have often thought that if he had settled down in "the far country," and had begun making things happy and comfortable about him, doing the very best he could to improve the place, becoming a respectable citizen, and the like, that he would have shown even a greater alienation from his father's house, and would have been far less likely to have returned to it. But his only object had been to enjoy himself, to have his full swing of pleasure, as people say; and this he did not feel he could do while his father's eye was upon him. He must get away from home, and then he could do as he pleased.

Before very long he found what a mistake he had made, though at first, while the excitement lasted, things seemed to go on pretty well. But soon it was over, leaving him in bitterness and remorse; going on from bad to worse, till he did not know which way to look, and was on the very verge of perishing with hunger.

When things had reached the very lowest ebb, "he came to himself," and thought of his father's house, the home of his boyhood. There was there bread enough and to spare; there would be some even for him, though he had behaved himself so badly. He arose, therefore, and went to his father.

He did not even stay to make himself tidy and respectable, as people would say, so that he might be received in a proper manner. No; the bread

of the father's house was everything to him, and he forgot all else beside.

But he did not as yet know his father's heart, and the deep joy he would have in receiving him back. This could not be known in "the far country." Therefore we see him arranging what he would say to his father. He would tell him how sorry he was he had done as he had. He knew he had sinned very greatly, and was no more worthy to be called his son. And he thought he would ask his father to make him as one of his hired servants.

It was quite right for him to have such feelings as these while he was away from his home. His self-abhorrence could not be too great, nor his repentance too deep. Low thoughts of self indeed became him, and they were quite what they should be.

But when he had met his father, and his father was about his neck kissing him, he could not then ask to be made a servant, blessed as even that would have been. No, he must have his right place there as a child. His father even would not have been happy for him to have to be there in the position of a servant. It would besides have filled the whole house with confusion.

This truly is lovely. Oh! what is God doing in these favoured days in which we live? He is taking up sinners, even some of the deepest dye, and bringing them into relationship with Himself by Christ Jesus, making them His own dear children for ever. (Gal. iii. 26.)

I think, too, it is so very beautiful to see that not one word was said to this young man about his past conduct. Bad as it had been, it was forgotten for ever. We are sure he felt his naughty

ways most keenly, and blushed every time he thought of them. But the father's heart was filled with love, nothing but love; so that he remembered his sins no more, but said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke xv. 24.)

Oh, how happy this young man must have been to have found himself welcomed home in such a delightful manner, after all that he had done! I do not think he could ever have turned his eyes again toward "the far country," but for ever afterward must have found his joy and delight in doing his father's will, seeking to please him well in all things.

Oh, the eternal bliss of turning to God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and finding in Him our *present and everlasting* all!

H. T.

Yes, mercy's gate stands open wide
And through its pearl-like portal
The old and young from every side
Press into bliss immortal.

Come, all who feel the load of sin,
The heavy laden, dreary;
For JESUS waits that gate within
To welcome all the weary.

Come in, come in, while yet you may,
Before the night of sorrow;
Come in, come in, while still 'tis day;
Too late, too late, the morrow!

THE PROCRASTINATOR.

MANY have so often refused the gospel, so put off the soul's salvation to some future time, that when they have been, as it were, surprised into the reality of death, they have exclaimed, in deep and bitter remorse of conscience, "I have sold my soul for a straw"; or, "Too late! too late!"

Others have been so sensible of their being eternally lost, that they have spoken of their going to the bottomless pit almost with the last breath.

Reader, beware of procrastination! "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

D—— was a young man of twenty-five years. When I first saw him he was just recovering from fever, and seemed very anxious about his soul. He realized, in some measure, his deliverance from an early grave, and now his mind was exercised about eternal things.

I endeavoured to set before him God's simple way of salvation.

He said, "Oh, if I am spared, how differently I would live!"

I tried to show him that that was a device of Satan; that it was his duty now to trust the Lord Jesus.

He recovered, and as his strength returned his anxiety disappeared, and he now only seemed to rest in the vain hope of "turning over a new leaf."

To my surprise, on entering the hospital ward one day, I found him again ill. He was very much alarmed, and I again spoke to him. My visits were earnestly sought, and as cheerfully paid, in the hope that now he would be led, not

to rest on "turning over a new leaf," but to resting only on JESUS, and become at once a new creature.

He was brought very low, but was once more restored, and after a few weeks was again walking about convalescent, hoping to be dismissed in a few days from the building where his life had been in so much jeopardy. He had as yet not embraced the free offers of the gospel, but waited for "a convenient season." (Acts xxiv. 25.)

I had just entered the hospital one afternoon when the nurse of the ward where D—— was a patient came for me.

I followed her to his bedside. There he lay; every limb trembled; his eye wandered wildly; his lip quivered.

I spoke to him of the compassion of JESUS; His work for the lost; His willingness to save.

He listened for a few minutes, but as if my words could no longer be borne. He gave me such a look that I cannot soon forget. Oh! the despair and terror that seemed mingled in that gaze, and his voice almost filled the ward with the cry, "IT'S TOO LATE! IT'S TOO LATE!"

Before the sun went down the lifeless form of the procrastinator was carried away.

Now, then, beloved reader, believe. Why will you tarry a moment more? Cast yourself fully **THIS MOMENT** on the Lord. Oh come to Him! He will not cast you out. Forgiveness of all the past you shall freely have at His hands; all shall be cancelled and blotted out; you shall be justified before men and devils; no longer a stranger and an exile, thou shalt be a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "Now is the accepted time." (Acts xiii. ; 2 Cor. vi. 23.)

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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.

A REMARKABLE OLD PICTURE.

I AM about to give some interesting and instructive incidents that occurred in the life of a "High Church" clergyman, one devotedly attached to church architecture, music, and ritual; who visited his parishioners weekly, doing his utmost to get them to church, and to make good churchmen of them. In the main I shall simply quote his own words. He says:

"I remember that my thoughts dwelt very much on forgiveness and salvation, but I preached that these were to be had in and by the Church, which was as the ark in which Noah was saved . . . and all who were not inside were lost. . . I had no idea that I was lost now. Far from that; I thought I was as safe as the Church herself, and that the gates of hell could not prevail against me."

But all the time he was a stranger to conversion, forgiveness, salvation, and the new birth. Often he said to himself, "What can this conversion be?" and God graciously showed him through his own servant, in the way described as follows:—

"Soon after, my gardener, *a good churchman*, and duly despised by his neighbours for attaching himself to me and my teaching, fell seriously ill. I sent him at once to the doctor, who pronounced him to be in a miner's consumption, and gave no hopes of his recovery. No sooner did he realise his position, and see eternity before him, than all the church teaching I had given him failed to console or satisfy, and his heart sank within him at the near prospect of death. In his distress of mind he did not send for me to come and pray with him, but actually sent for a converted man, who lived in the next row of cottages. This man, instead of building him up as I had done, went to work in the opposite direction, to break him down. That was to show my servant he was a lost sinner, and needed to come to Jesus just as he was for pardon and salvation. He was brought under deep conviction of sin, and eventually found peace through the precious blood of Jesus.

"Immediately it spread all over the parish that the parson's servant was converted. The news soon reached me, but, instead of giving joy, brought the most bitter disappointment to my heart. Such was the profound ignorance I was in.

"Still I went on, hoping against hope, 'building from the top' without any foundation, teaching people to live before they were born.

"God was speaking to me all this time about the Good Shepherd who gave His life for me;

but I did not hear Him, nor suspect that I was lost.

“ In those days, when building my new church, and talking about the tower and spire we were going to erect, an elderly Christian lady, who was sitting in her wheel-chair, calmly listening to our conversation, said, ‘ Will you begin to build your spire from the top?’ It was a strange question : but she evidently meant something, and looked for an answer. I gave it, saying, ‘ No, madam, not from the top, but from the foundation.’ She replied, ‘ That is right ! that is right !’ and went on with her knitting.

“ This question was not asked in jest or in ignorance ; it was like a riddle. What did she mean? In a few years this lady passed away, but her enigmatic words remained. No doubt she thought to herself that I was beginning at the wrong end, while I went on talking of the choir, organ, happy worship, and all the things we were going to attempt in the new church ; that I was aiming at sanctification without justification, intending to teach people to be holy before they were saved and pardoned. This is exactly what I was doing. I had planted the boards of my tabernacle of worship, not in silver sockets (the silver of which had been paid for redemption), but in the sand of the wilderness (Exod. xxvi. 19, xxx. 12-16.) In other words, I was teaching people to worship God, who is a Spirit, not for love of Him who gave His Son to die for them, but in the fervour and enthusiasm of human nature. My superstructure was built on sand, and hence the continual disappointment. . . . No wonder that my life was a failure, and my labours ineffectual, inasmuch as my efforts were not put

forth in faith. My work was not done as a thank-offering, but rather as a meritorious effort to obtain favour with God."

And is not this where thousands are to-day in highly privileged and responsible Christendom? They have a name to live, but they are dead, and all their works are "dead works," from which they need cleansing by "the blood of Christ" to enable them "to serve the living God." (Rev. iii. 1; Heb ix. 14.)

At this point the subject of my narrative went on a visit to a truly saved and godly clergyman, who told him plainly he was "not converted," and showed him from the Scriptures he was not, and then prayed for him. "What he prayed for," he says, "I do not know. I was completely overcome, and melted to tears. I sat down on the ground, sobbing, while he shouted aloud, praising God."

A few days after this the subject of our paper was truly converted to God whilst preaching from the blessed words, "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. xxii. 42.)

The news spread in all directions that the parson was converted, and that by his own sermon, in his own pulpit. The church would not hold the crowds who came in the evening. He says, "I cannot exactly remember what I preached about on that occasion, but one thing I said was, 'If I had died last week I should have been lost for ever.' I felt it was true. So clear and vivid was the conviction through which I had passed, and so distinct was the light into which the Lord had brought me, that I knew and was sure that He had brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock,

and put a new song into my mouth. (Ps. xl. 2, 3.) He had 'quickened' me who was before 'dead in trespasses and sins.' " (Eph. ii. 1, 5.)

Another incident I will give in his own words :

" . . . As I was sitting by the fire one wet afternoon, my eyes fell on a little coloured picture on the mantelpiece, which had been the companion of my journeys. . . . It was a quaint mediæval illustration of Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, copied from a valuable manuscript . . . in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford.

" As I looked at the engraving before me I began to suspect for the first time that there was a design in the arrangement of the figures, and that it was really intended to convey some particular teaching.

" I took the picture in my hand, and studied it, when I observed that the cross or pole on which the serpent was elevated stood in the centre, dividing two sets of characters; and that there were serpents on one side and none on the other.

" Behind the figure of Moses is a man standing with his arms crossed on his breast, looking at the brazen serpent. He has evidently obtained life and healing by a look. On the other side I observed that there were four kinds of persons represented, who were not doing as this healed one did to obtain deliverance.

" First, there is one who is kneeling in front of the cross, but he is looking towards Moses, not at the serpent, and apparently confessing to him as if he were a priest.

" Next behind him is one lying on his back, as if he was perfectly safe, though he is evidently in the midst of danger; for a serpent may be seen

at his ear, possibly whispering, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'

" Still further back from the cross there is a man with a sad face doing a work of mercy, binding up the wounds of a fellow-sufferer, and little suspecting that he himself is involved in the same danger.

" Behind them all, on the background, is a valiant man, who is doing battle with the serpents, which may be seen rising against him in unabating persistency.

" I observed that none of these men were looking at the brazen serpent, as they were commanded to do. I cannot describe how excited and interested I became; for I saw in this illustration a picture of my own life. Here was the way of salvation clearly set forth, and four ways which are not the way of salvation, all of which I had tried, and found unavailing. This was the silent but speaking testimony of some unknown denizen of a cloister, who lived in the beginning of the fifteenth century, in the days of ignorance and superstition. But notwithstanding this darkness, he was brought out into the marvellous light of the gospel, and has left this interesting record of his experience.

" Like him, I also had fought with serpents; for I began in my own strength to combat with sin, and strove by my own resolutions to overcome. From this I went on to do good works, and works of mercy, in the vain hope of thus obtaining the same for myself. Then I relied in the church for salvation, as God's appointed ark of safety; but not feeling secure, I took another step beyond, and sought forgiveness through the power of the priest. This I found was as in-

effectual as all my previous efforts. At last I was brought (by the Spirit of God) as a wounded and dying sinner to look at the crucified One. Then . . . I found pardon and peace. Ever since it has been my joy and privilege (like Moses pointing to the serpent) to cry, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John i. 29); 'I have determined to know nothing but *Jesus Christ* and Him crucified'; that is, to tell only of the person and office of Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts iv. 12.) "SALVATION IS OF THE LORD." (Jonah ii. 9.)

H.

Vain is the thought of man
 To merit heaven by prayer;
 'Tis only Jesus' precious blood
 Can give admission there.

Could ceaseless prayers ascend;
 Could tears for ever flow;
 The soul were still unblest, unsaved,
 And peace could never know.

But faith's one look at Christ
 Expiring on the tree,
 One heart-believing glance at Him,
 Can set the sinner free.

None can, without the blood
 Of Jesus, be forgiven;
 'Tis resting on His blood alone
 That fits the soul for heaven.

THE THREE RIVETS.

I WAS lately addressing a large number of boilermakers and others at an extensive railway works, and took occasion to speak of THE SALVATION OF GOD, which John the Baptist announced in connection with the person of Christ, whose advent he heralded in the beautiful strain recorded in Luke ii. 3—6

I then directed their attention to John v. 24 for "the three rivets" by which the Spirit of God would affix this blessed salvation to the soul of the believer: "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."

1. Now, the first of these rivets is, that this salvation is PERSONAL. This is found in the word "he." Salvation is an intensely personal thing, or it is no salvation at all. A man may repeat, "Have mercy upon us miserable sinners," all the days of his life, and go down into hell with them upon his lips. It is quite another thing for him to have taken his true place personally before God, having his soul laid bare as an individual consciously in His presence.

It is of the greatest importance to be clear as to this; for we may depend upon it that in this matter generalities are not only worthless, they are positively pernicious. It is a trick of Satan to divert us from our own deep personal need, and by it souls are hoodwinked to their eternal ruin. Salvation is a thing which is as peculiarly individual to a man as his birth. It is utterly incapable by its very nature of being generalised.

Nothing can surpass, then the significance involved in this little word "he," he that *believeth*; for the believing is just as personal as is the salvation. It is my individual faith which assures my soul of individual salvation.

This is the first of the rivets which the Lord forged for securing to us this wonderful salvation as the known portion of the soul, and the apostle Paul knew its value when he said of Him, "Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*" (Gal. ii. 20), and many more since his day have joyfully echoed those words.

2. The second rivet is PRESENT. This we find in the words "hath" (everlasting life), and "is" (passed from death unto life). That salvation which is "the salvation of God" is a present thing. We do not in the pages of this periodical put before you, dear reader, that you ought to *hope* to be saved; indeed we do not. On the contrary, we urge you *to be saved*. "Look unto me, and *be ye saved*," is the Lord's word to your soul. (Isa. xlv. 22.)

Most of those who read these lines may, like myself, have forgotten much of the grammar they learned at school; but we can scarcely have forgotten the two numbers, singular and plural, and the three tenses, past, present, and future. Now we have previously found that the salvation of the soul is in the *singular* number (nothing more intensely personal), and here we find it to be in the *present* tense.

Let this be remembered, then; let us each be able to say of our salvation, "Singular number and present tense." Blessed be God that this "everlasting life," of which the Lord speaks, is

not merely in prospect, but is a present possession to the believer; for *he hath it*.

He is not told to work for it, to wait for it, or to wail for it.

He is not told to hope for it, to grope for it, or to mope for it.

But he "hath" it if he has believed. Through ignorance he may not know it; but God says he "hath" it, and therefore if he have it not he is no believer according to God's reckoning; for this is the necessary effect of it, and whoso has it not has never made the wonderful passage which the Lord spoke of from the gulf of death to the haven of life.

I do not think I ever yet met a man who wanted to be damned, who really wanted to spend eternity with the devil and his angels in the lake of fire. Nay, I go further; for I never yet met the man or the woman who did not want to go to heaven at last. The most careless and most thoughtless, and, may I not add? the most depraved, when they permit themselves a thought on the subject, would like to go to heaven when they die. But being without faith in God, never having believed in Him, they perish in their sins, and find out when too late that neither calling themselves miserable sinners, nor hoping to be saved and to go to heaven some day, has availed them for salvation, the salvation of God.

3. Our third rivet is PERMANENT, found in the word "everlasting" (life). We all know, my fellow-workmen, that good work wears well, and our workwomen know that good material washes well. It's not bad work which will not wear out, and it's not a bad dye which will not wash out. The workman may be known by his work. Sal-

vation, the salvation of God, is God's own work, and it is like Himself, worthy of Himself; it reveals and commends Him to us, being divinely perfect, infinitely precious, eternally permanent, as enduring as He is, of whom it is said, "From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." (Ps. xc. 2.)

Dear reader, may these three strong bolts, these finely fitted and well-tempered rivets, be divinely driven into your soul in the power of the Spirit of God, and clinched there with the hammer of the Word, that you may henceforth know that you are in PERSONAL, PRESENT, and PERMANENT possession of the salvation of God. R.

Is there a thing too hard for Thee,
 Almighty Lord of all?
 Whose threatening look dries up the sea,
 And makes the mountains fall?
 Who, who shall in Thy presence stand,
 And match Omnipotence?
 Ungrasp the hold of Thy right hand,
 Or pluck Thy people thence?
 Let hell accuse, let earth assail,
 Nearer to save Thou art;
 Stronger than all the powers of hell,
 And greater than my heart.
 Lo! to Thyself I lift mine eye;
 Thy promised aid I claim:
 Father of mercies, glorify
 The risen Jesu's name.
 Salvation in that Name is found,
 Cure for my grief and care;
 A healing balm for every wound:
 All, all I want is there.

“ALL MEN EVERYWHERE.”

THERE are two incontestible proofs that man is a responsible being. One is, that God calls upon him, yea, commands him, to *repent*; and the other, that God is going to *judge* him.

God never calls upon horses, cows, or dogs to repent; and when they die He will not raise them from the dead again, and judge them for the deeds done in the body. But “God . . . now commandeth ALL MEN EVERYWHERE to *repent*.” (Acts xvii. 30). And, “It is appointed unto MEN once to *die*, but *after this the judgment*.” (Heb. ix. 27.)

These are most solemn considerations for those who teach that man is not a responsible being.

Repentance must not be confounded with conversion, nor with remorse. It is on earth that people must repent, and be converted. There is neither repentance nor conversion in hell; there is nothing but eternal remorse there. I know it says, in Matthew xxvii. 3, “Then Judas . . . repented himself.” But the word translated there “repented” is a different word from that invariably translated “repent.” It is a word that signifies *remorse*; that is, Judas’s day of repentance being over, “filled with remorse,” he went and hanged himself.

Repentance is turning “from dead works.” (Heb. vi. 1.) There is much more than turning from dead works involved in repentance, as I hope to show you from the Scriptures before I have done. Conversion is the turning of the will and heart and life to God. (1 Thess. i. 9, 10.)

Remorse, like a quenchless fire, an undying worm, will be the burning, gnawing portion throughout eternity of the finally impenitent and unconverted.

Repentance, as the word signifies in the Greek, means a change of mind, an after-thought founded upon reflection. “ It is literally an after or changed thought, a judgment formed by the mind on reflection, after it has had another or previous one; habitually, in its use in Scripture, the judgment I form in God’s sight of my own previous conduct and sentiments, consequent on the reception of God’s testimony, in contrast with my previous natural course of feeling.”

Repentance is always preceded by faith. It takes place consciously in the presence of God, and is produced by the revelation of God through His word to my soul of what I am and what I have done. God shows me that I am lost and guilty. The moment my faith bows to this solemn revelation on the part of God of what I am and what I have done, repentance is produced in my soul.

To say that repentance must come before faith, is a most unscriptural and mischievous kind of teaching. “ The setting a certain quantity of repentance first (as some men preach) as a preliminary process to believing, I hold to be utterly mischievous and unscriptural. According to such views, repentance must take place without the word of God; for if it be by the word of God, there must be faith in that word, or else repentance is founded on unbelief, which is absurd.”

Jehovah by His servants in the Old Testament called upon guilty sinners, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, to repent; and repentance was

wrought by a testimony rendered, and by their belief of that testimony. See an instance of what I mean in Jonah iii. "And Jonah . . . cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed. So the people of Nineveh *believed* God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. . . . And God saw their works, that *they turned from their evil way.*"

Clearly repentance here was founded upon the word of God about coming judgments, and their faith in it; that is, *faith preceded repentance*, as it always does and always must.

If we turn to the New Testament we shall find that Jesus and His apostles preached repentance. In Matthew iii. 2, iv. 17, you will find Jesus and His servant John using exactly the same words: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." All those who believed this two-fold testimony saw and felt their unfitness to enter the kingdom of heaven, and repented or judged themselves on account of this moral unfitness.

Turning to Acts ii., we find a third and the most advanced testimony that we have yet considered. It is an open-air meeting. Thousands are congregated together. The apostle Peter is the preacher. His subject is Jesus and the resurrection. In the most scathing language he charges home upon the consciences of his hearers the murder of the Son of God. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." And when they realised their guilt

in rejecting Christ, and believed as to God's righteous act in raising Him from among the dead, the Holy Ghost used the word to prick them in their hearts, and genuine repentance followed.

“ Repent therefore of this thy wickedness,” was said to one. (Acts viii. 22.) Surely this is enough to convince anybody that repentance is not believing, though following it; neither is it conversion, nor forgiveness, though they also invariably follow believing. Unless I believe God's testimony that I have been guilty of wickedness, I shall most certainly not repent of it.

Repentance is not only sorrow for what *I have done*, but also for *what I am*, my state. Take Job as an instance of the deep, real judgment of state. “ I have *heard* of Thee by the hearing of the ear : but now my eye seeth Thee. Wherefore *I abhor myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.” Where did Job's repentance take place? and what produced it? It took place consciously in the presence of God, and faith in what his ear heard of God produced it.

After the resurrection of Christ, God exalted Him with His own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to *give* repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. (Acts v. 31.) “ Then hath God also to the Gentiles *granted* repentance unto life.” (Acts xi. 18.) But whether *given* to the Jews or *granted* to the Gentiles, it is “ *toward* God,” and is accompanied by “ faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts xx. 21.) It is “ *the goodness of God that leads us to repentance.*” (Rom. ii. 4.) When I believe the goodness of God to me, a ruined and guilty sinner, in delivering Christ for my offences, and raising Him again

for my justification (Rom. iv. 25), I pass judgment upon myself before God, and abhor myself: I repent on account of my God-hating, Christ-rejecting, Holy Ghost-resisting, sin-loving, unbelieving, guilty course. "Repentance is the judgment we form, under the effect of God's testimony, of all in ourselves to which that testimony applies. *Hence it is always founded on faith.*"

Repentance is not something that takes place in a lump, and then is all over for ever. No; even after we are forgiven, and have got the Holy Ghost indwelling our body as His temple, the closer we walk with God conditionally, the more we shall judge everything in our state and actions that the word of God shows us is unsuitable to God.

To sum up this already too long paper, we have seen that repentance is an after-thought produced upon reflection; that it is produced by the Holy Ghost's application of the word of God to the conscience and heart; that it is founded upon faith in the word of God; that it takes place consciously in the presence of a holy God; that it is the judgment of my state and actions; that it is a gift from the ascended and glorified Christ; that God grants it; that it is toward God; that the goodness of God leads to it; that it is from dead works, and an ever-deepening thing to the end of the Christian course.

Thus much may suffice to show the place and importance of repentance in the Scriptures. I pray God, in conclusion, that He would, by His Spirit and His word, work in all who may read this paper genuine REPENTANCE.

H.

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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 OF WORKS."

A SERVANT of the Lord travelling by train with only one fellow-passenger, prayed silently that he might be enabled to speak a word to him about the salvation of his soul, when the other passenger asked, "Do you take an interest in the election?"

The following is the substance of the conversation which then took place:

"It is not in my line," replied my friend.

"Do you not vote?"

"No. But I submit myself to the powers that be." (Rom. xiii. 1.) "I should like the Lord Jesus Christ to have His rights, and the government to be upon His shoulder." (Isaiah ix. 6.)

"What do you belong to?"

"To Christ. I am a Christian."

"That does not mean anything. I cannot tell what you are by that."

"It means a great deal; it means the present possession of eternal life."

"You cannot know you have that. What do you belong to? Which of the sects?"

"Indeed I can know I have eternal life."

"How?"

"By the Word of God."

"How do you know you have the right book?"

"Because I have been born again. It has converted my soul. I have felt its power, it led me to Christ. I have been brought to know Him through it, and to give up the world; which, like others, I once loved and enjoyed."

"If you had given up the world, you would be walking barefoot, and give your railway fare to the poor."

"I am on my way to preach near London, and it is too far to walk. But it is a wonderful thing to know that my sins are forgiven, and that I have eternal life; to be sure, if the train were to go off the line this moment, that I should go to heaven."

"Tut, tut, that is all nonsense."

"Oh, no it is not. It is precious truth. But 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3)."

"That is baptism."

"No, it is not. I was not born again until I was grown up."

"You must work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

"Ah! yes, quite true. But it is not the salvation of the soul that is spoken of in that passage, but our salvation or deliverance from all that is opposed to us in our path and progress through this world as Christians. And, besides, who was

“ NOT OF WORKS.”

147

it addressed to? Why, to saints. And therefore you must be a saint first before you can work it out. God calls all true Christians ‘ saints ’ in His Word. I can say I am a saint, through grace alone. Can you? ”

“ The saints are up in heaven.”

“ Some are, but I can show you dozens of passages of Scripture where there are saints spoken of as on earth.” (Acts xxvi. 10; Phil. iv. 21-22.)

“ You shut out good works.”

“ I do not shut out works, but I put them in their proper place. I do not believe in a man as a Christian, unless he shows his faith by his works.” (James ii. 14-26.) “ If the tree is good, it will bear good fruit. As one has said, If there is fire in the grate, there will be smoke coming from the chimney.”

“ You must have works to know.”

“ But you put works first, and do not know the Lord at all. You must know Him first, before you can do good works.”

“ What do you mean by knowing Him? ”

“ Ah ! that is it, you do not know Him. Faith does. We believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and we know we have eternal life.” (1 John v. 13.)

“ We know whom we have believed,” too. (2 Tim. i. 12.) “ If you want to be saved, you must trust in His precious blood; nothing else can cleanse you from sin.” (1 John i. 7.)

“ You must have works.”

“ They are the fruit of faith. It is not of works, lest any man should boast.” (Ephes. ii. 9.) “ But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom. iv. 5.)

At this point in the conversation the train drew

up at the platform, where the gentleman was to get out. His fellow-traveller drew out a little tract from his pocket, called "Nothing to do, all done," and offered it to him. But, satisfied apparently with his own good works (!), he had neither heart nor ear for the blessed story of God's grace, and would not take it.

As he descended from the carriage, his companion pressed home upon him the simple truth, "It is not of works, mind you; no nothing, nothing but the blood will do. Nothing but the precious blood of Christ can avail you. If you want to be saved, you must be cleansed in the blood of Christ. It is not of works, God says so. Nothing, nothing but the blood can atone."

He heard, but outwardly appeared to take no heed, and passed on without reply. God only knows what he may have thought within himself. A careless, or calm exterior often covers an anxious soul, a troubled heart. Man's natural pride often keeps back the lips from confessing to the misery and wretchedness within. The works of a man trying to please God in the flesh (Rom. viii. 7-8), are a poor solace to an uneasy conscience. Not of works; ah! that makes nothing of man and all his righteousness. We are all slow to learn that lesson. Nothing but the blood. Ah! that makes everything of Christ and His finished work. We are all slow to apprehend that.

Works instead of the blood is a very old system of theology. You will find it practised by a member of the first family the world ever saw. The way of Cain is nearly six thousand years old (Gen. iv. 3-7; Jude 11.) Many follow it in enlightened Britain to-day. Strange infatuation!

Awful delusion! Sinner, beware! God says it is “not of works.” My reader, what is your religion worth? Is it “works,” or “the blood”? Your works of righteousness or the precious blood of Jesus? Is it “I, I, do, do,” or “Christ,” and “done”? Christ is all. God’s great salvation needs no sin-stained addition of yours. Christ’s perfect work needs no patchwork of yours to improve it.

Whatever you are you need Christ. Whatever your creed down here in the world, heaven’s occupants will be those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Without the shedding of the blood of Christ there is no remission of sins. (Heb. ix. 22.) And if you die, sinner, without that (and you might die to-morrow), you will rise in your sins to the judgment of the great white throne. (Rev. xx. 12, 13.) Works of righteousness which you have done will avail naught there (Titus iii. 5.) All who stand at that awful tribunal will hear the sentence of eternal judgment, and, Christless and hopeless, suffer the penalty of eternal misery and woe. (Rev. xx. 15.)

Awake then, sinner, before it be too late. There is no time to be lost. Think of God’s wondrous love in the gift of His only begotten Son. (John iii. 16.) Think of God’s wondrous grace reigning through righteousness. (Rom. v. 21.) Come as you are; come now, owning you are guilty and lost. That is the first step in true repentance towards God. Christ will deliver you from the coming wrath. (1 Thess. i. 10.) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. (Isaiah i. 18.) He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. (John iii. 36.)

You need Christ ; will you have Him? " As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John i. 12.) And let those which have believed be careful to maintain good works. (Titus iii. 8.) c.

THE ONE WAY.

" **W**ELL, sir, the minister told me as I *must* pray if I want to get forgiveness."

Such was the reply given by a poor old man who was dying in a village in one of the midland counties, to a question which his visitor had just asked him.

The same visitor had often been to him before, and had again and again put Christ before him; but although he had been long lingering in ill-health, and under medical treatment, he had not looked death in the face, and thus had paid but little attention to what had been said to him. He now knew he was dying, and knew also that there is "after death the judgment" awaiting the sinner, and hence his conscience was alarmed. But another person had been to him, and told him, in his anxiety for his soul, that he must *pray* for forgiveness.

"And how long," said his visitor, "must you pray before you get forgiveness?"

"I don't know, sir," said the poor man, dolefully; "but I suppose I must pray as long as I live."

"Then you will never know before you die whether you have got it or not?"

"No, sir, I suppose not."

"Would you like to die without knowing it?"

"No, sir, in course not. But I can't expect to be *saved* unless I *do* pray."

"Then your prayers are to save you?"

"Well, sir, I don't know about that. It's Christ as must save me if I am to be saved; but I must pray to Him to do it."

"That is, you must have a hand in it, and yet will never know whether He has done it or not until you die! Now just listen to me. If I were to hold out five shillings in my hand, and ask you to accept it, would you beg and pray of me to give it you; or would you simply *take it*?"

"Why, in course I should take it," said the poor man, smiling in spite of himself at the absurdity of such a question; "in course I should take it."

"If I offered you five shillings, and you believed that I *meant it*, you would not keep on begging and praying and entreating me to give it to you?"

"No, sir, in course not."

"You would take it at once. Well, now *listen to God*. 'Be it known unto you . . . that through this man (Christ Jesus) is PREACHED UNTO YOU THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS: AND BY HIM ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE JUSTIFIED from all things.' (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) God *offers you forgiveness*, and you keep on praying Him to give it to you. He bids you to *know* that you may have it through Christ, and you say you cannot know it till you die. He tells you that you may be justified from all things BY CHRIST, but you want to be justified BY PRAYER. He says, 'All who believe are justified,' and you won't take Him at His *word*; for if you did you would not keep on *asking* Him to give you that which He offers you. In short, you

don't believe Him. Now 'he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar.' It is a most solemn thing to do that; and to expect to be saved for doing it is strange indeed!"

"I don't mean to do that, sir," said the old man, in alarm.

"No, you don't *mean* it, but you are *doing* it. Do you not see that if God *offers* you salvation, and you keep on asking Him to give it you, that you as good as tell Him you don't believe Him?"

"What be I to do, sir?" said the dying man in distress.

"What would you do if I offered to give you five shillings? You would take me at my word, of course. Take *God* at His word; believe *Him*. 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.' Jesus says, '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.' *Simply believe Him*, and you are saved at once; He says so." (Rom. iv. 3; John v. 24.)

A few more words were said, prayer was offered, and then the poor old man, who was as simple as a child, *took God at His word*, and before his visitor had left the cottage he was quietly resting in the finished work of Christ upon the cross for sinners. His surprise at his own blindness was now as great as his difficulty had been before, and he wondered at himself almost as much as he marvelled at the grace that had so suddenly and so completely saved him with an everlasting salvation in Christ Jesus; through simple faith in Him.

He lived long enough afterwards to give abundant evidence of the reality of the work of God in his soul; for the false teacher who had persuaded

" SALVATION OF THE LORD."

153

him to look to prayer and religious exercises instead of to Christ for salvation came again; but the old man's faith, or rather the divine work in his soul, stood the test well. His reply "to them that did examine him was this":

"Hasn't Christ said, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH everlasting life'? And haven't I heard His word, and don't I believe? Very well; then I have everlasting life, in course, because He says so"; and he lay back on his pillow with a smile of quiet triumph on his dying face.

How is it, my reader, with you? Is it *religious exercises, prayer, or CHRIST ALONE?*

J. L. K.

" SALVATION IS OF THE LORD."

(JONAH II. 9.)

WHAT depth, power, and fulness are in this brief statement! What a truth it presents to the heart! "Salvation is of the Lord." It is not of man, nor by man. It is divine. There is not one atom of the creature in it, from first to last. If there were the weight of a feather, or the movement of an eyelash of man's doing, in any shape or form, it could not be said, because it would not be true, that "salvation is of the Lord." But blessed be God, man has nothing to do with it except to receive it, enjoy it, and walk in the light of it, now and for ever, here and in heaven.

Before proceeding to unfold the precious word "salvation," we must remind the reader of something very necessary for him to know and re-

member; and that is that the very fact of God's having provided salvation for man is a plain and unanswerable proof that man is *lost*. There is no getting over this. It may be said to be an indirect proof; but it is a proof, and one that cannot be gainsaid. Why provide salvation, if man be not lost? For, be it noted, it is not a question of *help*. Mere help will not do! A man may say, "With the help of God I hope to get to heaven when I die." But this implies that he is to co-operate with God in the great business of salvation; and most clearly in that case salvation would *not* be "of the Lord"; but partly of the Lord, and partly of man. And, moreover, man could never sing that lovely song of the redeemed, "Worthy is the Lamb," inasmuch as he would have to add, "Worthy am I," which were simply blasphemy, and nothing less.

But no; man in himself is lost, totally, absolutely, and irretrievably lost; lost and perfectly powerless; perfectly incompetent to help himself in any one way to be saved. It must therefore be a full, free, and perfect salvation, or nothing at all. It must be wholly of God, or it is of no possible use. Every link in the golden chain of salvation must be of divine formation; for if man had to supply a single link it would most assuredly be a missing one.

When the Holy Spirit deals with the soul; when He sends the arrow of conviction into the heart; when He brings the conscience into the light; then verily we are made to feel the intense reality of that wonderful little monosyllable "*lost*."

Then too we find that nothing short of a full, free, everlasting salvation will avail for us. Help

will not do ; we want to be *saved*. The only word that will do to put over against our true condition as lost, is that most precious little word "*saved*." The former expresses all that we are in ourselves, all that we are in nature. The latter sets forth all that we become in Christ.

And we are either the one or the other. There is no neutral ground as to this question. The reader is either lost *in himself*, or saved *in Christ*. No doubt there are heights and depths in our lost condition ; heights of folly and depths of depravity ; some higher up and some deeper down ; various shades, grades, and conditions of lost men, women, and children. So also there are heights and depths in our condition as saved ; heights of privilege and depths of spiritual blessedness. But there is not the breadth of a hair between those two conditions, lost or saved. Reader, which is yours?

We hear the voice of Jonah sounding in our ears these most blessed words, "Salvation is of the Lord." And this voice reaches us from the very belly of hell. "I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me ; out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas ; and the floods compassed me about : all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of Thy sight ; yet I will look again toward Thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul : the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottom of the mountains : the earth with her bars was about me for ever : yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord

my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed."

Here, then, we have profound exercises of soul. There is no superficial work in all this, no mere lip profession, no cold formal utterance of religious formularies, no empty generalities. All is intensely real. The soul is actually made to feel something of the awful reality of hell, to taste the bitterness and horror of the outside place, the anguish of being cast out of God's sight, the crushing weight of Jehovah's billows and waves, the very darkness and desolation of the pit of hell.

All this the blessed Saviour entered into perfectly, entered into for us, entered into it that we might never know the reality of it. All praise to His peerless Name! He went down into the dust of death. He actually encountered all the billows and waves of God's righteous wrath against sin. He tasted the very bitterness and anguish of the forsaken place, that His people might never taste it. For this they praise Him, and will praise Him through eternity's countless ages.

But who are they that can most fully and blessedly enter into the glorious result of those priceless sufferings of Christ? Those who, like Jonah, have entered most deeply into the reality of their condition as lost, ruined, guilty, undone; those who have been most thoroughly exercised in heart and conscience under the powerful ministry of God the Holy Spirit, and thus brought to feel and own that they deserve nothing but the everlasting consumings of the wrath of God. We

" SALVATION OF THE LORD."

157

may rest assured of this : that the more we feel how near we were to hell, the more we shall magnify the grace that has rescued us ; the more we realize how thoroughly we have earned for ourselves the wrath of a sin-hating God, the more we shall value and delight in His everlasting favour.

It is not that the depth of our spiritual exercises has aught to do with our salvation. Most surely not. " Salvation is of the Lord," whether our exercises be deep or shallow. But we are most fully persuaded that those who undergo the deepest ploughings, under the mighty ministry of the Holy Spirit, make the most solid, steady, satisfactory Christians afterwards. There is a deplorable amount of levity, indolence, and self-indulgence prevalent ; great lack of depth, seriousness, and self-judgment. It is to be feared that many are ready enough to accept salvation as a free gift, without entering, by the power of the Holy Spirit, into what it cost the blessed Saviour to make it thus free to us.

In short, we want to enter more fully into the power of the cross of Christ. We want to understand its application to our sinful nature, so that we may not so readily give a loose rein to that nature. The selfsame cross that has blotted out our sins has condemned sin, crucified our old man, destroyed the body of sin, crucified us to the world, and crucified the world to us.

TWO SOUTHERN WARNINGS.

IT was the evening of the weekly gospel preaching at Q——'s cottage, in the village of O——. The weather was fine and warm, and as many pleasure-seekers were passing and repassing it was suggested that we should have the meeting out of doors.

We accordingly took our stand at a point where three roads met, close by the shop of a baker, and there a goodly number listened for nearly an hour and a half to the old, old story, God's glad tidings to sinners about His Son, Jesus Christ.

Among the number none appeared more attentive than the baker, who stood in his doorway. Ah! little did he think, as he heard the gospel; that it was for the last time, and that in less than a week he would pass away from this world, and his eternal future be unalterably fixed. But so it was; one hour in apparent health and strength, the next hour a corpse. Of his spiritual state we knew little or nothing. We fear he was, like too many, alas! careless about his soul. God alone knows if he received His message. "That day" will declare.

Just a week after that last message to the baker, we were again on the same spot, and the word was again pressed home upon a number of souls. Many were there who knew of the solemn event mentioned above, and occasion was taken to urge those present to accept the message of mercy *now*, and to warn them against putting it off till a more convenient season, seeing the one more proof before their eyes of the uncertainty of life, they

were urged to flee at once to the refuge set before them.

One of the hearers this time was a sailor, one of those who carried the body of the baker to the grave. He had once *professed* to be a child of God, but had gone deeply in the paths of sin and ruin. He too listened for the last time to the message of love and peace, the good news of the blessed God, as freely offered to the poor backslider as to the sinner in his sins.

That the word fell faithfully and distinctly on the outward ear there could be no doubt whatever. For a long time he listened, apparently rivetted to the spot, but about his soul, if he heard, and if in hearing he received eternal life, again "that day" will declare; but to all human appearances we could not think so.

His end was a sad one indeed. On the Friday he listened to the good news of salvation, and to the solemn warnings of God's Word; on the Lord's day he was intoxicated, and fought with a companion in sin in a public-house, when he received a severe blow which ultimately mortified; and on the following Friday, just one week from the time we first saw him, he was in eternity. I saw him not, but to some who visited him, he spoke of heaven, but we could gather nothing satisfactory of his state.

How solemn that word of Abraham to a rejector of Christ in the gulf of despair, "Son, remember." Yes, there is memory in hell. How many oft-heard and unheeded warnings and gospel invitations will be recalled there, and how bitter will be the remembrance of mercy unheeded and rejected in the dark abode of the lost! How un-

speakably awful to think of the remembrance of the gospel *in hell*, to recall the Saviour's loving words, "I would, but ye would not" !

"A river is flowing of pure living water,
It comes from the temple of God and the Lamb ;
The invite is issued to every quarter,
For all who are thirsty : who hears should proclaim.

Who drinketh shall live and be saved for ever,
Who hears and neglects it draws near to the day
When careless and scorers, where hope cometh never,
Shall *think* of the water they once threw away."

W. R. H.

Notice to Subscribers and the Trade.

The publication of this periodical will be discontinued after December, 1926.

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NOVEMBER, 1926.

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BELSHAZZAR'S FATEFUL FEAST.

(DANIEL V.)

BELSHAZZAR'S days, described in the Book of Daniel, seem to me peculiarly to foreshadow the present days of Christendom. They were days of the world's feasting and merriment. The captivity of the people of God was forgotten, and the vessels of God's Temple were again brought into the world's banqueting houses, to minister to their revellings and earthly joys.

If my reader is in the midst of such scenes, be sure that already God's finger is writing on the walls of the temples of earth's glory, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"; and if not visibly there, yet in the pages of God's Word are written the words, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." (Matt. xxv.) God's servants are sounding out the cry; the midnight hour is

already past, the day of the Lord is close at hand, and every witness that God sends is a savour of death unto death to those who reject His salvation, and are revelling in the world's banqueting halls.

"There is no danger," people say, "there is plenty of time yet. Some say Christ is coming, but we see no change since the beginning of the creation. The earth is solid; the mountains and rocks are firm; the seasons go on; let us build houses, and make ourselves happy: a few little innocent pleasures will do us no harm."

But, my reader, where are you trying to make yourself happy? Shall I tell you? In a world so wicked that God had once to destroy it with a deluge. In a world where God manifest in the flesh was born, and was crucified, and Who, in consequence, having been rejected, is now in heaven, and is quickly coming again to judge it. Ah! sinner, a greater than Cyrus is coming. He is standing at the door. Men are erecting their palaces, their exhibitions, their temples of fame, but the people of God are despised, though perhaps not violently persecuted, and, as I said before, the vessels of God's sanctuary are now ministering to the world's banquetings and feasts.

No doubt Belshazzar at his table would tell his guests about the history of those vessels; would talk slightingly of the God of Israel, His Temple, and His people. But Daniel was an unknown person in those days, and was marked as God's servant and child by entire separation from Belshazzar's feast. There sat the proud King, no doubt, utterly forgetful of God's dealings with his father Nebuchadnezzar, boasting of Babylon's glory, her high walls, her illustrious personages, her generals and her victories. There sat the

proud nobles and statesmen of Babylon, with lofty looks and lifted up hearts, quaffing wine with one another, and doing the gallant with Babylon's ladies. There sat the grand ladies of the same empire, haughty, and looking with wanton eyes at the young men, dressed from head to foot with gorgeous apparel; the mothers seeking good marriages for their daughters, the daughters rivetting the young gallants with their charms. As for Darius and his armies outside, they probably were the subject of ridicule. What could they do against the high, thick walls of Babylon, and the great river Euphrates that flowed through the city, which was closed on each side by its brazen gates?

But suddenly there is a pause. Belshazzar the king looks up from his cup of wine, and sees the fingers of a man's hand writing on the corner of the wall. His countenance changes, his knees knock together, he cries aloud for the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and wise men of Babylon, to come and explain to him this startling phenomenon. No one is able to explain it; but there the writing was, and the conscience of the King bore witness that it was a presage of his doom. There is a gloom now on every face in the feast: the wine, the revelry, the fine young men, the beautiful women, are all forgotten. Every face is directed up to the wall. Some faces are hid in terror, but every heart is occupied with the strange handwriting of judgment.

The news spreads through the palace. The Queen-mother hears it, and knowing that there was one man in Babylon that could convey the secret to the king, hastens to tell him. Daniel is sent for, and is brought speedily into the banqueting hall, and the king with promises of great re-

ward, asks him the meaning of this mysterious writing.

The man of God, the only one there who had peace in his heart, stands forth and addresses the king. He refuses Babylon's gifts and rewards, and then recounts to Belshazzar and his lords some of God's dealings with his father. He reminds him how all the glory of his kingdom had its source in the Most High God. It was He who established Nebuchadnezzar in his kingdom, and gave him all his power so that all the nations trembled before him. He reminds Belshazzar again that, when his father's heart was lifted up with pride, God removed him from his kingly throne, and gave him a beast's heart, so that he was driven from amongst men, and dwelt with the oxen for seven years, till he confessed that the God of heaven ruled in the kingdom of men, and gave it to whom He would.

All this had been done, and yet Belshazzar had been forgetful of it, and had not humbled himself, though he knew it all. On the contrary he was lifting himself up against the God of heaven, and had brought the vessels of God's house before his lords, and had drunk out of them, and had praised the gods of gold and silver, which could neither see nor hear.

Daniel then interprets the handwriting : " Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. Mene : God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel : Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres : Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Thus Daniel speaks. Proclamation is made to make him the third ruler of the kingdom, but as the herald goes round, louder shouts of victory

and despair are heard. Cries of, "The brazen leaved gates are open, and the Persians have taken one end of Babylon," sound forth in the midnight air. The short history of judgment is over. On that same night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius, the Median, took the kingdom.

Is not the history and the glory of the nations of Christendom somewhat set forth in Babylon's history? Has not God allowed a spiritual Babylon to hold dominion over the people of God ever since the first few centuries of the church's history? And was not that a history of worldly tyrannizing glory, over God's people, until God, as it were, forced conviction on the worldly rulers of Christendom at the time of the Reformation, that He was the Saviour God?

And since the Reformation what has been the history of Christendom over again but the history of Belshazzar? There has been an utter forgetfulness of what has preceded, and the nations are giving themselves over to feasting and revelry, despising God's people; and praising their institutions, as they call them, and their religious systems, but utterly forgetful and ignorant of the God who has made Christ head of His body, the Church, and has given into His hands all things in heaven and earth. (Eph. i. 19-23.)

Reader, I was once (as, perhaps, you are now) in the midst of all the world's glory, its feastings and revelry. But I saw in the light of God's Word, God's fingers writing the mystic words of judgment on the walls of this world's palaces. I have heard the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." I have seen the world's judgment already written centuries ago, on the cross of the Saviour. In that cross, under His blood, my

soul found refuge, and then I understood that the long-suffering of God was salvation.

Yes, dear reader, believe me; the reason why this world's judgment is not already executed is that God is waiting, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But, oh, think of the solemn words, "Mene, Tekel"! Already has the verdict gone forth on the nations in their present shape: "Mene": "Thy kingdom is numbered, and is finished." To each individual soul who has rejected Christ is the word repeated.

"Tekel": "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." Ah! dear reader, such is man. Tried without law, he was lawless; under law he was a law-breaker; tried under grace when Christ came, he proved himself the enemy of God. What has God done? He has exalted His Son; and on the ground of His sacrifice He is still pleading with a world that rejected Him, "Be ye reconciled to God." Afresh from the glory the gospel of God is presented to a Christ-rejecting world as the only way of salvation. To thee, sinner, God renews His offers of forgiveness. Only repent of your awful neglect of His great salvation, take the place of having been actually tried and found wanting, and you will receive immediate forgiveness, and a complete righteousness in which to stand in the glorified Christ.

Seek not any longer the favour of the proud men of the world whose looks are lofty, and whose hearts are lifted up. Look up into the glory of God, and see a Man seated on the Father's throne, rejected by the proud men of the world, but honoured and glorified by God, and say which will you choose? Look not any more on the institu-

tions of men, their exhibitions to show off the world's glory. There is a day coming, yea, it is close at hand, when all these things shall be destroyed by the coming of the Lord from heaven. Oh ! cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; wherein is he to be accounted of (Isaiah ii. 10-22.) What will all these things profit in the day of the Lord's displayed glory?

The day of the Lord cometh. The proud men and the vain women that now figure together in the world's banqueting halls, ballrooms, and palaces, will then have to stand unmasked in their sins before the Lord of glory. Everything in that day will be judged according to Christ's standard, and woe betide any that stand before that throne of judgment in their sins.

Again I sound the cry, " Behold, the bridegroom cometh." (Matt. xxv.) That day will be a day of joy and delight for those who have had their sins washed away by the blood of Christ, who possess eternal life and divine righteousness in a glorified Christ. But, oh ! it will be a death-knell to this poor world. When God's people are gone, Satan on earth will reign supreme ; the strong delusion to believe a lie will set in ; the anti-christ will reign on the earth, soon to give place to Christ returning with His angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And believe not, dear reader, Satan's last lies before the end, that there is no such thing as eternal punishment. Believe not any misled professing Christian, seeking to beguile you in such a thing as this. God does not deceive people when He says, three times in succession, " Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not

quenched." (Mark ix. 43-48.) And again, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And again, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. xxv. 41-46.) Think you that the eternal God, who created an immortal creature for His glory, can support this creature's living independently of Himself *all* the days of his life; prostituting his time, talents, and mind to sin and wickedness, in which he has lived and died, and, after all, save him? Tell me not you cannot help living in sin, for you were born in it. I answer, it is the very reason for your turning back to that God who made you, and who has now revealed Himself in giving His Son to die for you to save you.

As a Saviour-God He is revealed in the gospel. His word is "Turn unto Me"; "Come unto Me"; "Look unto Me." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) Oh! reader, may this may be your happy part. It is true that you are weighed in the balances, and found wanting; but God is revealed to you as a Saviour. Through His glorified Son, whom He gave to die for you, He offers you free forgiveness and eternal life and salvation as His present gift, as well as the certain hope of glory in the future. These glad tidings the word of God brings you. The Holy Spirit strives with you. Oh! open your ear and hear. Listen to His gentle but determined pleadings. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

A. P. C.

GOD'S EXHAUSTLESS GRACE.

WE are living in a day of divine grace. The word of God tells us that grace is reigning through righteousness. (Rom. v. 21.) Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (John i. 17.) God had tried man for some forty centuries, from Adam onwards, and he proved a complete failure. The law given by Moses, a perfect expression of what was due from man to God and his neighbour, only served to make his case worse, for he utterly lacked power to keep it. He was thus manifested both as a sinner and as a transgressor.

But "God is love"; and though man richly deserved judgment, "He 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.) "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . *full of grace and truth.*" (John i. 14.)

But if God is to be glorified as to the question of sin, man's deep need met, and creation delivered, the Son of man *must* be lifted up upon the cross. (John iii. 14.) Christ went into death, offering Himself through the eternal Spirit without spot to God, and by *the grace of God* tasted death for every man (or thing). (Heb. ii. 9.)

And God raised Him from the dead! "The Man Christ Jesus" now in heavenly glory is God's testimony to accomplished redemption. The Man who might have come down from the cross, laid down His life, was buried, rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and sat down triumphant at the right hand of the Majesty in the

heavens, *His redeeming work done.* And now God sends forth *the gospel of His grace* to a lost and guilty world. (Acts xx. 24.) Grace comes down from the glory of God. God says to man now, Jew and Gentile alike, "There is no difference" (Rom. iii. 22), for "*all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" (Rom. iii. 23.) But side by side with this solemn statement we read the precious words, "*Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" (Rom. iii. 24.)

Wondrous declaration! May God write it upon the table of your heart as with the point of a diamond. All "*come short of the glory of God.*" But grace, the absolute, perfect grace of God, comes in, and justifies "*whosoever believeth.*" God alone could have conceived so blessed a thing. You are a sinner, lost and guilty, and God presents to you a Saviour in glory, His well-beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you believe on Him? Yes. Then God says you are *justified*, cleared. By whom? *By God Himself.* It is God that justifieth. (Rom. viii. 33.) When? *Now.* How? *Freely.* Yes, without a single good work, fleshly effort, experience, or prayer. Freely, without money and without price, the moment you believe. What by? *By His grace.* Mark, God's grace; the undeserved, unmerited, free favour of God. Through what? "*Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*"

A perfect man, Jesus, the Son of the living God, wrought a perfect work. God is perfectly satisfied, yea, glorified; and if you believe, you are perfectly justified; perfectly, eternally saved.

Read the verse again. Ponder each word. Remember, it is the word of God, who cannot lie.

(Titus i. 2.) It is written that sinners might believe and be saved. "Being—justified—freely—by His grace, through the redemption—that is in Christ Jesus." Is not that enough? Rest there, and rejoice.

Perhaps you look in at yourself, bewailing your sinful state. Maybe you say inwardly (if not with your lips), "But I am such a sinner, I feel I must do something. Surely it cannot be quite so easy as you say."

Ah! there it is. Self instead of Christ! Your righteousness, instead of God's! Your thoughts instead of His Word! Let me be plain with you. Now, don't shrink! All that you are, all that you have done, all you are trying to do, and all that you ever may do of yourself, is so mixed with sin that if your salvation in any shape or form depends upon you, to hell you certainly *must go*. When you find out that you are not only a lost sinner, but that your case is utterly hopeless as regards what you can do or be, then you are a fit subject for the grace of God, and not before.

The law made sin to abound. But where sin abounded, *grace* did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might *grace reign* through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. v. 20, 21.) Now, give up self at once, and believe God. Grace is reigning through righteousness, not at the expense of righteousness. If God dispenses grace, He is righteous in so doing. You are a sinner, without righteousness; but God has raised Christ to heavenly glory, and now righteously proclaims His grace. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you can take to yourself that blessed scripture, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin;

that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) How wondrous the grace of God! Yet is there *something better still*.

Better still? Yes, better still. Supposing you were penniless, and I gave you a sovereign, it would be cause for thankfulness on your part, would it not? But suppose that I gave you a heap of sovereigns, would not that be better still? Surely. And this is the manner of God's dealings with sinners. I read in Rom. v. 17 of those who believe receiving not only grace, but *abundance of grace*, and the gift of righteousness. Think of that: abundance of grace! May God give you to know it and enjoy it.

But even this is not all. In 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, I read of *something better still*. The apostle Paul is there describing his conversion to God, and speaking of the blessing of which he had become partaker, which is true of every one that believeth. He says, "And *the grace* of our Lord was *exceeding abundant* with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Yes, indeed. Well may he call it *exceeding abundant grace*, when we look at the awful depths of sin to which man has sunk, and the wondrous fulness of the blessing which God bestows. But even this is exceeded in the thoughts of God, for in Eph. i. 7 the apostle speaks of *something better still*. Addressing believers in Jesus, he writes, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to *the riches of His grace*." (Eph. i. 7.) Who can estimate the unsearchable riches of the grace of God. No figures known to man can compute them. A million lifetimes would never exhaust them. The riches of this world soon melt away. Death comes, and the wealthiest are laid low, leaving

their treasures behind for others, who in their turn are called to give them up and to meet God. But the riches of His grace are an eternal provision, that stretches infinitely beyond this world. And the possessor of this heavenly wealth will find, when he arrives in the eternal glory of God, that the blessing, notwithstanding all anticipations, is *something better still*.

In the ages to come, God is going to show to redeemed sinners, those who believe on the name of His Son, the *exceeding riches of His grace* in His kindness towards man through Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 7.) Thus the God of love heaps up the blessing, piles up the grace, if I may so speak, until the soul is lost in wonder at its measure, and even then discovers wider, fuller, richer prospects, yea, even *something better still*.

The destined blessing of the heirs of God will be *to the praise of the glory of His grace*. Well may God say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. lv. 8, 9.) Will you then, dear reader, forfeit such infinite and eternal blessing for the paltry pleasures of sin for a season? Receive Christ now, and the perfect grace of God will be your portion, too. And yet there is *something better still*.

In Eph. iii. 18 the Spirit of God tells of blessing so marvellous that language fails to describe it: "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is *the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*." Of what? We are not told. Breadth, length, depth, height, alone express it. My reader, can you explore the breadth? can you

search the length? can you fathom the depth? can you scale the height? No, it is all beyond your loftiest thought. When you finite can grasp the infinite, then can you grasp the fulness of the blessing brought to believing sinners by the grace of God.

But Paul, His chosen instrument to bring out these precious things, himself was cognisant of *something better still*. Caught up to Paradise, he heard *unspeakable words*, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Beloved reader, ponder this, I beseech you. A man like ourselves, caught up into the third heaven (whether in or out of the body he could not tell; God knoweth, said he), and there hears things said that are not allowed to be spoken by the lips of men. Marvellous communications fell upon the ear of that honoured servant of the Lord in that glorious scene beyond all human thought. Ah! dear reader, *Christ is there*. What inconceivable joy and bliss must His blest presence give! What must it be to be there with Him?

In conclusion, I plead with you once again. Will you have Christ? As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them which *believe on His name*. (John i.) Grace has mounted the throne, and reigns through righteousness. Grace brings salvation, present, full, and free, to every one that believeth. Despise or neglect it at your peril. (Acts xiii. 41; Heb. ii. 3.) Christ is coming quickly. (Rev. xxii. 12.) The believer rejoices at the thought. To him it is *a good hope through grace*. The sinner trembles at the thought. Why? Because that solemn moment will *close the day of grace*.

E. H. C.

HE'S RISEN AGAIN.

I WAS seeking to scatter the good seed of the word of God in a retired district in Cheshire.

On my way from one village to another, I saw in the distance an old man hurrying on toward the one I had left. Not wishing to stop him, I said to him as, he hurried past me, "Christ has died for us, my friend."

"Aye, aye, sir," he answered, cheerfully; "but *He's risen again!*"

I passed on, rejoicing to meet with so unexpected a testimony of faith in a risen Christ; nor could I help thinking that the old man's reply expressed a fuller gospel than that which I had sought in a few words to preach to him.

"That Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried," is indeed a precious truth, and one which is calculated to call forth from every believer deep, heartfelt praise for such an expression of love. And when we remember, dear fellow-believer, that He bore not only *our* sins, but the *stripes* which we merited, we then rejoice to know that every claim which divine justice had against us has been fully met. What joy to know "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. i. 14.)

But this is not all. The apostle Paul continues, "*He rose again* the third day, according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 4.) "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.)

Forgiveness of sins, precious truth! is one thing known to a believer now, even as it was by a godly Jew, but *he* knew not what every believer knows,

or should know, namely, justification in a *risen* Christ.

Many Christians conclude that pardon and justification are one and the same truths. Not so. A man may receive the pardon of a fault from his fellow, but justification he cannot. It is God's prerogative to justify a sinner. A man may forgive his fellow a terrible injury, which he has sustained at his hands, and if he meet the offender in the street, that injury at once comes to his memory; and to run toward him, and inquire after his welfare, is the last thing the aggrieved one would be likely to do. He has forgiven; but the injury is, perhaps, never erased from the memory. Whereas, God not only forgives, but forgets (Heb. x. 17); and more, actually justifies the offender.

Perhaps these lines may meet the eye of one who, sheltered beneath the precious blood of Jesus, has not settled peace with God. Let me say to such, "Christ has made peace for you through the blood of His cross. He is our peace." (Col. i. 20; Eph. ii. 14.) The One who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, is at the right hand of God, ever living to make intercession for us. (1 Peter ii. 24; Heb. vii. 25.) Put to death for your offences, He was raised again for your justification. (Rom. iv. 25.) God has raised His beloved Son from among the dead, and exalted Him to the highest place in glory, even seated Him at His own right hand. And mark! His exaltation is the measure of your acceptance! J.

Notice to Subscribers and the Trade.

The publication of this periodical will be discontinued after December, 1926.

DECEMBER.

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.

THREE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS.

(LUKE xviii.9-14; PHIL. iii. 1-11.)

ON thinking over the scriptures referred to above, three very different characters rise before my mind's eye.

1. The self-righteous, or self-justified man.
2. The self-emptied man.
3. The Christ-righteous, or God-justified man.

I seem to see each of them looking in a different direction. The *first* is looking around at others. The *second* is looking within at himself. The *third* is looking up at Christ in glory. I will glance at them in this order.

1. The first, or self-justified man, we are told in Luke xviii. 9, "trusted in himself that he was righteous, and despised others." That is, compares himself with other professors of the same creed as himself, and he finds to his own intense satisfaction that he is much better than most of them. He looks around, it may be, at those

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attending the same "place of worship," and sees "extortioners, unjust, and adulterers," and he thanks God that he is not like them (nor even like that bad man in the next pew to him (*v. 11.*), nay, more, he is actually religious: "I fast twice in the week"; and benevolent: "I give tithes of all that I possess" (*v. 12*).

Now, unsaved reader, is not this something like what passes through your mind as time after time you enter your "place of worship," and look around at others in the congregation?

Know, O vain man, that God now judges men not by a merely moral code, nor by their relations to their neighbours, but is testing everything by that blessed Man who was rejected and despised by the religious of the earth (*Matt. xxvii. 20, 41, 43; 1 Cor. ii. 8*), was hanged on a tree, but is now raised to God's right hand by the glory of His power. Tell me, Can any righteousness of your own give you a link with that blessed God-man?

2. The next character is the *self-emptied man*, the man who, like the publican, has learned that the "extortion, knavery, and adultery" are not in others but in himself, in that breast of his which he beats again and again in agony. He cares not to look around on "others," and he dares not "lift up his eyes to heaven." There he stands "afar off" for he knows he has no right to draw nigh to God, crying for *mercy*; for *righteousness* would condemn him to hell as a sinner. This is real repentance, a man taking his right place before God. Surely a fit case for "the balm of Gilead," as it is written in *Luke v. 31*, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." A worthy

case for justification freely by God's *grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood (Rom. iii. 24-25). How blessed it is to see that it is our sins which fit us for the pardoning mercy of God !

3. The third character is the Christ-righteous, or God-justified man of Phil. iii. 7-11, the man who has seen Christ in glory as the One who has been raised from the dead by the power and righteousness of God for his justification, and he has peace with God by faith in the God who raised Christ; peace as certain and unalterable as is Christ's place at the right hand of God. And now he trusts in Christ, and despises himself. This is the man who can look up, for he has found perfection in Christ risen and glorified, and nothing good in himself.

The God-justified man has despaired of himself. He has come to the same judgment about himself that God showed when He condemned sin in the person of Christ on the cross. And he has learned that there is before God now Christ risen from the dead, and his whole ambition is to know more of that blessed One in whom he is "complete" (Col. ii. 10).

Oh ! my reader, what a change is this from what he was before. Once he used to say, " If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I *more* " (Phil. iii. 4), but now he calls himself the *chief* of sinners. What has brought about this great change in his soul? How is it that the most righteous man has become the chief of sinners? It is in this way : He has not only been born again, but revolutionised by a sight of Christ in glory (read carefully, Acts ix.

1-20), and he has learned that that blessed One who has had no place at all in his heart or in his religion, because there was "no room" for Him (Luke ii. 7), is the very One who is the centre of all God's affections, thoughts, and counsels.

Now let us listen to the inspired utterances of the Christ-righteous man :

" But what things were gain to me, those I have counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may have Christ for my gain [or win Christ], and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection " (Phil. iii. 7).

He desires to have nothing but Christ for his present and eternal portion. Oh, my reader, may you know the blessedness of this through faith in the same glorious person !

"THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST."

THERE is but one common road to salvation, peace, and glory, and that is through " the precious BLOOD of Christ " (1 Peter i. 19).

When Adam fell he lost innocence, and departed from God; and neither could he nor any of his posterity ever regain it, or find their way back to God. But God has devised a way whereby sins shall be put away, sin judged, and the sinner be brought back to Himself: " Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God " (1 Peter iii. 18).

“ THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.” 181

I remember being once asked to go and see a dying man on the Surrey side of London. Arrived at his house, his kind, hard-working wife opened the door to me, and invited me to walk in and take a seat whilst she made known my arrival to her husband, who was resting in an inner room.

Before he came into my presence, the hollow cough which indicates consumption made me acquainted with the nature of his disease. Feebly he crept into the room where I was sitting; and as soon as he had recovered himself a little, he began to tell me how long he had been ill, how much he had suffered, and that the doctor said that there was no chance of his recovery.

I asked him how he stood in relation to ETERNITY. He told me he was quite ready to die. I then asked if he would kindly tell me what had made him ready. He replied, “ I weep over my sins, I say my prayers, and do the best I can.”

His reply made me sigh from the deepest depths of my heart, and after a moment's silence, I said : “ Forgive me for being faithful with you, but you are labouring under a terrible delusion, and in trusting to your own doings, you are trusting to a rope of sand ! God says, ‘ The BLOOD shall be to you for a token . . . *where are ye*, and when I see the BLOOD I will pass over you ’ (Exod. xii. 13). Now mark, God does not say one word about your tears, prayers, or your doing your best. God's Word is all about the BLOOD. Again, God says, ‘ It is the BLOOD that maketh an atonement for the soul ’ (Lev. xvii. 11). Now, there is no BLOOD in your tears, prayers, or your best doings; consequently, they are not God's ‘ token,’ and they can never make atonement for your soul.”

The poor dying man sat silent and pale,

evidently eagerly drinking in the words of God.

I continued : " God says, ' Without shedding of BLOOD is no remission ' (Heb. ix. 22); and, ' The BLOOD of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin ' (1 John i. 7). Notice, *not* the tears, prayers, or even the blessed life-works of Jesus, could or did put away our sins; no, nothing less than His BLOOD would do for God, or for the sinner; and if even the holy tears, prayers, and life-works of Jesus never put away our sins, is it at all possible that our unholy tears, prayers, or works could ever put them away?

" ' My hope on nothing less is built,
Than Jesus and the BLOOD He spilt;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on His dear name.
On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

Having repeated the above, I commended the man to God in prayer, and left him.

I soon repeated my visit. The anxious wife let me in, and in a few moments her husband and I were in earnest conversation about his eternal salvation.

I was not long in discovering that a great change had taken place in him, and in his thoughts about preparing for eternity. His words were few, but they sufficed to show the mighty change God had wrought in his soul. He told me that, after I had left him, the words of God about the Lord Jesus and His BLOOD kept ringing in his ears, and that God had shown him where he was wrong, had delivered him from the sad delusion he had so long been under, and that now he was trusting simply, wholly, and alone, to the precious

“ THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST.” 183

BLOOD of Christ (1 Peter i. 19), and could truthfully and thankfully say,

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

We praised God and the Lamb in the language of Scripture, for having saved his soul, and made him fit for glory. “ 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 ” (Col. i. 12-14). “ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own BLOOD, and *hath made us* kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen ” (Rev. i. 5, 6).

With deep emotion, I took my leave of him now as a brother in Christ, for I felt sure his days in this sin-stricken, sorrowful world were few. I was unable to visit him again, being called away to labour in the gospel in Scotland, but I heard from a Christian who visited him to the last, that he died happy in Christ, with unshaken and unswerving faith in the precious BLOOD of God’s own Son.

And now I would most affectionately ask the reader of this narrative if he or she is on the only road that the Redeemer has made by His BLOOD to God and glory? If not, I would urge you *at once* to have “ faith in His BLOOD,” which alone can free you from sins, and make you “ whiter than snow ” (Ps. li. 7).

H. M. H.

THE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION.

SOME time ago a lady moving in the higher ranks of life said to the writer, "I am a believer, but I have not assurance"; and he sometimes meets an old gentleman upwards of ninety years of age, who says with much feeling, "My dear sir, I want assurance."

Such cases as these are by no means uncommon. There are thousands in the same state. Why is it? Are they not believers? Are they not looking to the Saviour to save them? Have they not sincerely come to Him for salvation? We believe that many of them are truly looking to the Lord Jesus Christ to save them, and though they have not *peace*, yet they have *life*. Then why have they not assurance of their being saved? We doubt not there are several reasons why they have not.

1. Some are looking wholly to their feelings, imagining that some particular experience must be gone through before they should speak with certainty of having forgiveness of sins and eternal life. It is astonishing how many are crippled by being thus entangled with their *feelings*; though it be quite true that a soul does feel happy when he knows he is saved. But we have joy and peace, not by *feeling*, but in *believing*. Happy feelings therefore *follow* assurance, and do not precede it.

2. Others are hindered by listening to unsound ministry, and reading religious books which deny the precious truths of the present possession of eternal life, present peace with God, and so forth.

3. Many who are truly believers live so much in

THE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION. 185

association with what is contrary to the Lord's mind, that His Holy Spirit is grieved, and hindered from leading them into the simplicity of the only way of true joy and peace.

4. Not a few are so mixing up law and grace, and adding ordinances, sacraments, the observance of days, and all kinds of religiousness to the work of Christ, in order to make their salvation more secure, as to undermine the value of Christ's work, so that they never can in these ways find assurance.

5. There are others so systematically instructed in false doctrines as to imagine there is no having assurance of salvation except on a deathbed.

Nothing is more clearly taught in Scripture, than that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; that He died for sinners; that He is the only Saviour; and that by Him all that believe are justified from all things. It is also clear that no one can be lost that comes to God by Him; so that the vilest sinner who approaches God by Jesus and His blood is safe. The Israelites who were under the shelter of the blood of the lamb in Egypt were *safe*. Though the judgement of the destroying angel came upon every house in Egypt where the blood was not, yet God fulfilled His own gracious words, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt." Thus all who believed God and put themselves under the shelter of the blood were perfectly safe, whatever fears or lack of assurance there might be. (Exod. xii.)

We can imagine some of the Israelites, when they heard the shrieks in the next house at the first-born's being struck dead by the destroying

angel, fearing, trembling, and troubled about their own safety. Like many believers now, they might have so looked at their own unworthiness, sinfulness, weakness, and the like, until they have cried out, "Oh that I were certain of my safety!" Would not a faithful Israelite have replied, "You are perfectly safe; the destroying angel will not come here, because the blood is on the lintel and door-posts of the house"?

But the fearing one might further say, "How can I be certain, so certain as not to have another fear or doubt about it?" The other would then reply that God had said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exod. xii. 3).

Thus we see that assurance is founded on two immovable and unalterable realities, namely, the work of Christ and the word of God. The death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin has satisfied God about the just judgement of our sins, and therefore it should perfectly satisfy us. In virtue of the blood of Christ God can pronounce us cleansed, and give us the Holy Spirit as the seal and earnest of our inheritance; and it is by that blood alone that guilt is removed, and we have a purged conscience. Besides, the word of God assures us of shelter and safety from judgment, present forgiveness of sins, and much more, by the precious blood of Christ.

It is when a soul can be before God *wholly* on the ground of the blood of His Son, and receive God's own assurance by his word of forgiveness of sins, justification from all things, being now a child of God, that then he has assurance. He is so fully assured by the unalterable word of God,

THE ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION. 187

by the Spirit, that he doubts no more. He says—

*“ My doubts and fears for ever gone,
For Christ is on the Father’s throne.”*

Happy is the soul who is thus looking to Christ and His blood, and has received God’s testimony in His own word to his everlasting safety !

Sometimes we find a person under gospel preaching become exceedingly happy in receiving Christ as his Saviour. But we see him again after a few days, or weeks, and find that his happiness has fled, and he fears he has been deceiving himself in imagining that he was converted, so that his distress is great. If asked if he could give up his hope of Christ entirely, he replies at once, “ Not for ten thousand worlds : still I fear I shall not be saved ” ; and then speaks of his sins, feelings, unworthiness, and the like. The fact is that he has become self-occupied, and is looking within for evidence of his security, instead of looking only to the word of God as authority for the assurance of salvation. If we ask him, “ Are your sins forgiven ? ” he replies, “ I once thought they were, but I am afraid they are not.”

Now what does God say about it? That is the point. Hearken then to His word. God says, “ To Him [Christ] give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” Now, do you look to the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Saviour? “ Yes I do ; I could not look to any one else.” Then what does God say to *you*? He says, “ You shall receive remission of sins.” And more, He says, “ By Him [Christ] all that believe are justified from all things.” “ And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more ” (Acts x. 43, xiii. 39 ; Heb. x 17).

Can you, then, wish anything more to assure you of your perfect safety? Forgiven; justified from all things; and God remembers your sins no more! It is God who gave His Son to die for sinners; it is God who delivered Him up for our offences; it is God who declares that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin; it is God who raised Him up from the dead for our justification; and it is God who declares that "by Him all that believe are justified from all things." Oh, the unutterable blessedness of this way of perfect peace with God! May every reader of these pages have assurance of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the unalterable word of God!

H. H. S.

A RELIGIOUS LADY'S CONVERSION.

IN a quiet country town in a pleasant part of the West of England resided an elderly lady, a widow, who lived comfortably on her means was known to every person in the neighbourhood, and universally respected. She was kind and generous to a degree, so that her life seemed taken up with thoughtful care for the benefit of her fellow-creatures, and in ministering to their necessities. She was accustomed to dress neatly, and generally might be seen in the morning walking about in a black silk cloak. On the inside of the cloak was a very large pocket, made expressly for the purpose for which she required it.

Being acquainted with most, if not all, of the well-to-do people of the town, her habit was frequently to call on them, and thankfully accept anything they had to contribute for the benefit of the poor whom she knew. These offerings she

A RELIGIOUS LADY'S CONVERSION. 189

carried off in the large pocket inside the cloak : and it was her delight to make good soup, jelly, or other articles of food, for the sick and needy, as also to help them with clothing.

She went on in this way for many years, and had the reputation of being "a very good old lady." When at the advanced age of three score years and ten, though her sight grew dim, she still perseveringly pursued the same course. Nor was she indifferent to religious duties, as people speak. Far from it. She was as much admired for her diligence in religious exercises as for her benevolent activities. The parish church was seldom open without this aged lady being one of the congregation. Serious, too, in her manner, of the thousands in that town, perhaps no one had a better religious reputation than Mrs. P.

When about seventy-three years of age she heard that a medical practitioner, residing about four miles from the town, was coming to preach on a certain evening in a room almost exactly opposite her house, and she had a great desire to hear him. A lady friend was also willing to accompany her.

The subject to which the preacher called attention was the Lord's question to Peter in Matthew xvi; "Whom do ye say that I am?"

After perhaps referring to the pointed, personal way in which our Lord addressed men, he endeavoured to show from Scripture God's own testimony to the eternal Godhead and perfect manhood of His beloved Son, that such as really own Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God," are pronounced to be "blessed," and to such it is the Father (not the flesh and blood) who hath revealed His Son. No doubt he went on to

speak of the finished work of Jesus on the cross, but the prominent point in the discourse was the *person* of the Son. There seemed nothing unusual in the meeting, beyond its being composed of a large and attentive audience. But when they were separating the old lady stepped forward, and asked the preacher to call on her the next time he came into town.

When he called, this aged lady almost immediately said, "I see now that I have always been a Unitarian until the other evening at the preaching. I believed in God, but I never knew His Son till the other evening, and now I am quite a different person. I see now that He has saved me, and I am so happy."

I replied, "You have always had the character of being a very religious person, zealous in going to church, doing good," and so forth.

"I know it," said she, "but I had not got salvation. I was doing all these things in order to obtain salvation, but never could succeed. But now I know that God sent His only begotten Son, and that He has saved me."

Such was the substance of the narrative. And I remember well that she added, "I tell you, sir, that I have been thinking, as I have comfortable means, and as you do not seem to have friends in the town, that if you will use my parlour for yourself or friends, whenever you wish to converse with any, or to have them to dinner or tea, I shall be very happy."

This last expression of hers seemed such a confirmation of the reality of her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that the preacher could only praise God, and take courage. It forcibly reminded him of Lydia's conversion, whose ear the Lord opened,

A RELIGIOUS LADY'S CONVERSION. 191

and who said to the apostle, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there." (Acts xvi. 15). It is also remarkable that as Lydia's conversion was the beginning of the work of the Lord in Philippi, so the conversion of this old lady was followed by the conversion of many others in her town.

It need scarcely be added that the preacher recognized this door of hospitality as opened by the Lord, and for years after this the old lady was rejoiced to have the privilege of receiving many of the Lord's dear children into her house, and of using her substance in various ways in the Lord's service, and thus showing that she had passed from death unto life by her love to the brethren (1 John iii. 14).

There is one feature in this narrative to which the writer would call special attention. It is the air of respectability and usefulness with which souls may move religiously on the broad road which leads to everlasting destruction. Such cases, we fear, are by no means uncommon. People of this stamp certainly look better outwardly than the immoral and profane, and yet, perhaps, are more thoroughly deceived by the great adversary of souls. To "do good," "be useful," "try to get better," "act with sincerity," "practise ways of benevolence and sympathy," are expression often pressed on the unconverted, with the delusive hope of helping their salvation. Such ways, like those of the Pharisees, are certainly beneficial in a social point of view, and we all prefer to have such well-behaved neighbours; but to put these things in any degree as stepping-stones or means of eternal salvation is not only in direct opposition to God's word, but sets aside

the only Saviour whom God has sent, and who declared, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." (John xiv. 6).

Scripture declares that "by the deeds of the law [or the best doings that man could bring] shall no flesh there be justified in His sight." (Rom. iii. 20). How blind, then, must those be who are endeavouring to do what God says cannot be accomplished! The common sentiments that "God only requires men to do their best," "to act up to their conscience," and the like, are only pure inventions, and quite contrary to His revealed will in the Scriptures. All such presumptuous ideas are levelled immediately by one verse of divine truth, and "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John x. 35). Look, for instance, at John iii. 36, "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" Again, in Romans iv. 5, it is written, "To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." When the Philippian jailor was in distress, and cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" did the apostle tell him to *do* this and that? No, he told him that salvation was by believing, and therefore not by doing, and said, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" (Acts xvi. 31).

H. H. S.

Notice to Subscribers and the Trade.

The publication of this periodical will be discontinued after December, 1926.