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The Gospel Messenger.

“NO NEED FOR ME TO DIE.”



HE evening rays of a July sun were filling a small room in the North of London, in which I sat studying botany, in 1864.

A knock at the door arrested my study, and saying, “Come in,” John, the only son of the godly couple with whom I lodged, entered, with a slate under his arm, a book in his hand, and a cloud on his brow.

A bright intelligent lad of thirteen, his errand was quickly told. He had met with an algebraical difficulty he could not surmount, and his mother gave him leave to ask my aid. We settled down to the sum in algebra, and very soon the problem was solved, and the equation worked out all right.

John was immensely pleased, and thanking me for my help, he was marching off, with the full conviction that to-morrow would find him at the top of his class, when I said, “There is a more difficult question than that, John, I wonder whether you have got it settled yet?”

"What's that?" said the boy.

"How are you to be saved, my little man? Is that question settled yet? Are you saved?"

"I am sorry to say it is not settled," he replied; "I wish it were."

"How do you think it can be settled, John?"

"There is only one way," he responded.

"And what way is that?" said I.

"It is only by the Lord Jesus Christ, by believing in Him," he added.

"Quite true, and do you believe in Him?"

"Yes, I think that I believe in Him, but I don't feel sure that I am saved."

"Feeling has nothing in the world to do with it. You have but to believe in Him, and be saved, for God has said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts xvi. 31). Before a man knows he is saved, he generally finds out that he is lost. Have you found that out?"

"Yes, I am sure I am a sinner, and God's Word says I am lost: I believe His Word;" and tears rolled down the cheeks of the manifestly awakened lad.

"Well, I have good news for you. You say you are a sinner, and God says, 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. v. 8). It says, moreover, 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures' (1 Cor. xv. 3). Scripture also tells us regarding Christ that, 'Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto

men once to die, but after this the judgment: SO Christ was once offered TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation' (Heb. ix. 26-28). Thus, you see, the work by which the sins of sinners are put away, has all been finished by the Lord Jesus Christ, when He died on the cross. All God's claims against us have been met by Him, the death and judgment due to us have been borne and exhausted by Him, and God has shown His appreciation of Christ, and of His work, by raising Him from the dead, and setting Him now at His own right hand in glory. A risen, glorified Saviour, is God's declaration of His perfect delight and satisfaction in the work that was accomplished for sinners, when His Son died for them. Do you see that?"

"I see that," said John, "and I believe it too;" and as he thus spoke, joy began to beam in the lad's face.

"And so you really believe in Jesus?" I said.

"Oh yes, I believe Him now; I can trust Him now. I believe He died for me, and He died for my sins, and I believe He has borne them all, and put them all away."

"Very good," I said, "and therefore now you may know they are all forgiven, for the Word of the Lord says, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins' (Acts x. 43)."

John nodded his approval, and then added, "I

believe in Him. I believe my sins are forgiven. I see it all quite clearly, the difficulty is all gone. I know now that I am saved."

Now I am a profound believer in sudden conversion, but the reception of the truth by this lad was so rapid, that I wondered if he really had grasped it in his heart, or whether he had been merely assenting, in an intellectual way, to the statements of Scripture. I therefore put him through his facings, as I said, "Now, John, you tell me you believe in the Lord, that you are sure you are forgiven and saved, how would you feel if the Lord were to come just now?"

"I should feel very happy. I should like to see Him very much."

"You would not be afraid to meet Him?"

"Oh, no, I should love to meet Him."

"But again, supposing, on the other hand, that you were to die, what then? Would you be afraid to die?"

"Not at all," he said, "I could die quite happily now, but—but, there is no need for me to die now, is there?"

"What do you mean?" said I.

"Well, sir, I thought, as you have been telling me Jesus died for me, that there would be no need for me to die."

That boy's answer let a flood of light into my soul, for although I had been a Christian for over three years, and believed in the coming of the Lord too, I never saw till that moment, distinctly, and

clearly, that the death of the Lord Jesus absolutely delivers the believer from the necessity, I do not say the possibility, of death.

But the boy was right, and I had been wrong; and God's Word was true, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. xxi. 16). This infant in the family of God caused my heart to praise, as I saw, as never before, the wonderful triumph of Christ over death.

It is indeed a wonderful thing to apprehend that the death of Christ has so completely glorified God about sin, destroyed Satan's power, and annulled death, while He Himself received the wages of sin, that is death, that the believer in Him is delivered from the penal consequences of his sin, just because Christ has borne all those penal consequences for him.

"You are quite right, John," I replied to the deeply interested lad, "you are quite right. Death has now no claim on you, because Jesus has met that claim. And though it is quite *possible* that both you and I may die, still it is the truth that death has now no claim on us, because Jesus has met this claim. There is indeed no *need* that we should die. His death *for* us clears us entirely."

The boy's face shone with heavenly joy as he heard this, and again thanking me for speaking to him about his soul, he left me.

I remained about a month in London after this conversation, and many a happy talk had John and I. Then my medical studies took me to Scotland,

and more than a quarter of a century rolled by ere I met my young friend again.

Some fifteen years afterwards, I heard of a godly Episcopal clergyman, labouring in Glasgow, and being the means of many conversions to God. From the descriptions I received of him, I thought I recognised my young friend. But the Lord did not let me cross his path there, and soon after he removed again to England.

A professional call in the summer of 1891 to a fashionable South of England watering-place, at length gave me my desire. The wife of the patient I was visiting said to me, "There is a well-known preacher in this town whom I think you must know."

"What is his name?" said I.

"The Rev. Dr ——," she replied.

"That is the man I have been for long trying to see. I will see him to-night."

I set off at once to his house, and, calling, found that he was at home. His servant, however, added, "The Doctor is at dinner, and never sees any one after six o'clock, sir."

"He will see me, I think."

"I'm afraid not, sir, he won't see anybody," she reiterated.

"I think he will see me," I rejoined; "take in my card." So, admitting me, she put me in the drawing-room to wait, while she took my card to her master.

The next moment the door opened, and in came

a bald-headed, middle-aged man, who with outstretched hands, exclaimed, "I am so glad you have come : I would not have missed this interview for worlds."

Twenty-seven years had rolled by since we last met, but each recognised the other, and for fifteen minutes we had sweet converse about the Lord, as he recalled the details of the above-given narrative.

He told me of his college life, his entrance into the ministry, his being located here and there, preaching the Word of God, and the blessing which God had given with that ministry, of the conversion of many souls to God, and of the joy that filled his heart as he told perishing sinners of a living, loving Saviour, who died for them, and of a quickly returning Lord for His deeply loved Church.

The second coming of the Lord, as the immediate hope of the Christian, was an integral part of his ministry, I was glad to find.

We parted, each greatly refreshed by our short interview, never to meet on earth again.

He was not a strong man, and two years later an unsuspected but deep-seated malady carried him suddenly into eternity, at the age of forty-two.

After his death, from reliable sources I learned that "he delighted in informal mission services, believing rightly that thus were the poor and un-instructed to be reached. By means of these special services, at which the gospel was preached with great plainness, simplicity, and tenderness, many were won to the Saviour. His fluency of

speech was remarkable; his command of language that of a scholar and orator; and his voice was gentle and winning; and having travelled much in the Holy Land, his congregation listened with absorbing interest to his vivid descriptions thereof."

At the time of his death he was just about to remove, from the place where I saw him, to labour again in London, and he gave his farewell address, to those to whom he usually preached, on these words, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii: 8).

His words, unknown to himself, were taken down, and among them were these:—"There is One who never leaves us—'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' St Paul is dwelling, in the words before us, on the thought of an unchanging Saviour in a changing world. What a blessed truth, that this divine and glorious Person is the same from everlasting; perfect God, and perfect Man; the all-sufficient Redeemer of every sinner that clings to Him; the same in the unchanging efficacy of that wonderful work, accomplished on the cross, when He said, 'It is finished'; the same in His offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; the same under every circumstance in life, and in death; the same in time, and in eternity; the same 'yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'

"You will see, on referring to the chapter, that St Paul calls our attention to the providential orderings of God, enjoining us to be satisfied with them, for God hath said, 'I will never leave thee,

nor forsake thee.' And these were words that the Holy Ghost delighted to use. We find them mentioned in the Old Testament three times over. Amid varying circumstances the words with which the Holy Spirit strengthened the hearts of His servants, from generation to generation, were the same. There is ever the same pathway to the presence of God, the same grace flowing from Him, and the same fountain whence springs the salvation of all. This was the message He gave to Jacob when he fled from his father's house, knowing nothing, as yet, of the covenant promise of God. As he slept by the wayside, with stones for his pillow, Jehovah came to the wanderer, and revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, saying, 'I am with thee, and will keep thee whither thou goest. . . . I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of' (Gen. xxviii. 15).

"As the centuries rolled on, Moses was appointed to be leader of God's people. He brought them as far as the borders of Canaan, and then, giving his charge into the hand of Joshua, he bade him be of good courage, and lead them into the land, which God had sworn to their fathers to give them. Joshua, like Jacob, was young and inexperienced; he had not been accustomed to so weighty a charge as this. Moses was gathered to his fathers; on what arm, then, could Joshua rely? There was not the wisdom of age to guide him; Moses was no longer there to tell what God had done in the past; but

he cast himself upon the covenant of the God of Israel, and the same message was given to him, 'As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, I will not forsake thee' (Josh. i. 5).

"And, again, when Israel had been long in the land of their fathers, God was ever showing them fresh proofs of His providence and grace. Similar circumstances occurred when David, full of years and of honour, was gathered to his fathers. He left Solomon to carry on his work, but Solomon was young, and how could he fill the throne which David had so long occupied, clothed with majesty and honour? Studying well the words of Moses, and receiving into his soul fresh promises of God, David passed them on to Solomon, cheering him with the same message. He showed him that there was the same manna which had fed past generations, and taught him that, as Jehovah was with Jacob, as He strengthened the arm of Joshua, and led Israel to victory, so would He be with him. He would be the God of promise, the God of grace, the God of infinite faithfulness, who faileth not those who seek Him, who is able to perform all that He hath said. And so He fed him with the same food; He revealed to him the same grace; He upheld him with the same promise, 'He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee' (1 Chron. xxviii. 20).

"The apostle, in this chapter, brings before us old truth, lighted up with fresh power by the

Holy Ghost, for our comfort. He bids us remember that, whatever the future may bring, whatever may be the ordering of external circumstances, He hath said to us, as His people: 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' The two-fold negative, 'I will not leave thee,' it is impossible to render into English. Indeed, the five-fold negative in the sentence makes it absolutely certain that God's attributes are all pledged in the promise, which may be paraphrased thus: 'I will not never leave thee; no, not never forsake thee.'

"In the midst of a world which is full of change, this truth is like a lighthouse above the stormy sea, its beams irradiating the ocean far and wide. Storms may rise and sink; the tide may ebb and flow, but the lighthouse stands, the beacon is there. Waves may rage, and hurricanes blow, but 'Jesus Christ is the same' from everlasting to everlasting.

"This I would leave as my last message amongst you—only my text, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' We want Him, and Him alone. There is salvation for the chiefest of sinners in what He has done. God grant that you may know it; that you may individually have fled to Him, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Nothing will avail before the bar of God but that. Here is the beginning of spiritual life; here is the first lesson in the school of God, knowing that it will be our joy to have Jesus Christ day by day. Change will come; friendships will alter; the shadow of bereavement must fall upon our every

home. How blessed is a Saviour that changeth not? One who will be with us in our darkest hour; One who will comfort us in the time of sorrow, who will keep our feet when we cross the river. Jesus Christ, whose own are gathering now in the Paradise of God, and who receiveth to Himself every one of His ransomed as He crosses the valley. Oh, to know Him, in His Person, in His work, in His love, in His tenderness, in His changelessness, in His providence, in His grace, as mine—mine through the covenant purpose of God; mine from everlasting; as mine on the cross; as mine at the right hand of God; as mine for ever. To know this is life eternal. He hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'"

With words like these before us, truly we may say, "He being dead, yet speaketh." He believed in the Lord's coming, waited for it, and wrote about it. But the Lord has not yet come. Conscious that death had no claim on him, yet my friend passed through it. This circumstance in no way invalidates the truth that was really the means of his conversion. And, dear reader, let the fact of the suddenness of his death impress on you the paramount importance of being ready, either for death, or the Lord's coming.

The year 1899 is just commencing, if you have never yet commenced with God, will you not now do so? You could not have a better time. Be persuaded to believe in the Lord, just where you

are. Yield your heart to Him, and then devote your life to His blessed service.

What an infinite mercy was it that John —— was saved as a lad of thirteen, and then led to devote himself to Christ and His interests. Will not you do likewise? Let me urge you to it.

W. T. P. W.

AFTER DEATH.



AFTER revelry comes regret. This is true, as all will testify in this present time. Sin may have a sweet taste, but there is bitterness in the dregs.

But what burdens my heart as I write is not the sorrow that sin will bring upon you now. It is your future that I think of, unsaved reader. **IF YOU CONTINUE SUCH YOU MUST DIE.** You may have years of pleasure, you may grow rich, you may get friends and fame, but *you have to die.*

But is death to be feared? I met a retired American army officer, on board an ocean steamer, not long ago, and he told me that he had been brought within an inch of death, and that his friends got alarmed, and wanted him to pray, but he said, "I was game, and would not." Empty brag. The devils tremble; men have more bravado, but less wit.

But is death to be feared? A man broken down by hell's slavery said, "I should have committed suicide but for what came after death." Oh! ye sinners, guilty and death-bound, ye might sport gaily, from day to day, to the very portals of death, were it not for those two words in God's book, "AFTER DEATH."

I was sitting beside an open window. In the street below stood a long line of coaches. It was a sad day in the house opposite. The remains of the late owner were to be borne away to the silent grave.

A few days before, death, like a bird of prey, had made a fell swoop upon him; the cigar fell from his lips, and without a word he was gone. "Sudden!" did you say? It was solemn, awfully solemn, to be flung like that from a gay world into eternity. The gold left, pleasure over, friends gone. ALONE, and in eternity. The great FOREVER commenced, but where? I had known him as a prosperous, thorough-going man of the world, but the curtain dropped on that, and the world saw him no more.

Oh! it is a solemn thing to die, deeply solemn; but TO BE DAMNED, what tongue can tell the awfulness of that?

And knowest thou, unconverted reader, that thou art in danger of being damned—yea, positively, in danger of being cast at any moment into hell-fire; and wilt thou be indifferent, wilt thou hurry on to ETERNITY, utterly regardless of the judgment

thy sins deserve, and which must overwhelm thee in ghastly and irretrievable ruin? Oh! then listen—

“In the depths of hell,
 Poor sinner, thou shalt be,
 Unwashed, uncleansed, unknown,
 God’s remedy,
 With all the lost, in endless woe,
 Without one ray of hope, or spark of joy,
 Thou’lt spend ETERNITY.”

“*God’s remedy*,” did that strike you? would you like to know it? Is there a desire in your heart to escape the richly merited judgment? Then, thank God, we can speak to you of a Saviour. His name is Jesus. Precious name to believing hearts. He who bears it sits upon the throne, the crown of glory encircles His worthy brow. Once He left that place, sent in love from God. “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. i. 15). To the cross He went, to bleed and die, that through His death blessing might flow to you. “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. v. 6). What a simple and blessed statement. Does that mean you, my dear reader? Will you take the place of an ungodly, wrath-deserving sinner? If so, you may take the Saviour, for He died for such as you. His blood can wash away the foul stain of sin. His blood can make you clean.

“God hath raised him from the dead” (Acts xiii. 30), “and given him a name above every name;

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. ii. 9, 10); and "through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Believe now on Him, and God's glorious salvation shall be yours. Then—

"Let everybody know it
That Christ has set you free;
And if it sets them longing,
Say, Jesus died for thee."

J. T. M.

THRICE LOST.



AN is thrice lost! He is lost as a sheep! Lost like a piece of silver! And lost like a young man! That is, in other words, he is lost as to his soul; lost as to his body; and lost as to his spirit! Lost! *Lost!!* *LOST!!!*

We have in parable in Luke xv. the history of the way that God seeks and saves this thrice lost being; and all the wealth of love that is in Him wells up at every stage of His dealing with him. Happy the man who has to do with the God who is depicted here!

We do not get *redemption* in Luke xv., because it was not yet accomplished; but He who wrought redemption there set forth, in graphic, thrilling words, the results of it, in the activities of divine

love. Grace is love in activity towards undeserving objects; and we get here the grace that *seeks*,—as the shepherd sought the lost sheep, and the woman the lost piece of silver; and the grace that *receives*,—as the father received the prodigal. Though redemption is not spoken of, it is the basis of all this; apart from redemption there could be no seeking of sinners, and no receiving them, and the sinner never seeks the Saviour until the Saviour has first sought him. Scripture asserts “There is none that understandeth, there is none that *seeketh* after God” (Rom. iii. 11).

Luke xiv.-xvi. form a section in themselves, and it is very complete. In xiv., we have a man, who, having heard the Lord enunciate the principles of the kingdom, says, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” Immediately the Lord, in grace, presents to that man the opportunity of eating bread there, in the parable of the great supper. That is all very well, but man will not come. Not only does he not seek God naturally, but he will not come when invited. And although mentally owning it is a good thing to eat bread there, he begins at once to make excuses. God has something better for man than anything down here, but man makes an excuse of the very blessings He has given for refusing His invitation.

A farm! Five yoke of oxen! A wife! Earthly temporal blessings! Good things in themselves, but used wrongly by fallen man to shut himself out of heavenly, eternal blessings. There was

nothing wrong in any of these things; but man gets so much occupied, even with right things, that he refuses what is infinitely superior. Note, it is not bad things, necessarily, that hinder man from reaching heaven; but good things do so. A solemn consideration!

A man, if asked to-day,

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO TO HEAVEN?

might say, Oh yes, I hope to go. That is, you say mentally, that it is a good place. But suppose we put another question and ask, Would you like to go now? Oh, no, you say, I don't want to go now. Well, when would you like to go? Oh, when I die. What does this mean? It means simply that you do not want to go to hell. Heaven is as unnatural to a man as hell, and an unrenewed man would be miserable in heaven, and if he could would quickly get out again. Ah! my friends, if you knew what heaven was, it would be the supremest moment in your history if summoned to go there. A man made ready would say: Oh yes, let me go at once! But the natural man, while owning it is a good thing, will not give up anything for God's supper, nor for heaven. Many sell their souls for less than a farm, or a bale of merchandise, or five yoke of oxen, and are found eventually in hell, as the man of chapter xvi. 23.

Man's proclivities are all to earthly things; he is an earth dweller; and an earth dweller, if he continue to be such, is a man that will make his abode

in hell, for man has forfeited earth and cannot possibly hold it. Yet, alas, "There is *none* that seeketh after God." Are you an exception to this? By no means! But you may say, Well, does God seek after man? Yes, there is in Him the infinite,

GRACE THAT SEEKS.

Think of this!

It is, however, necessary to accept the truth in the end of Luke xiv. as to our natural condition, or we shall never consider ourselves suitable subjects for the grace set forth in the next chapter. Savourless salt! that is just what we are. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. What an awful picture of that which had savour at one time! Alas for Judaism then! Alas for Christendom now! Alas for you, unless you own it! Yet though savourless salt is a very unsavoury truth, it is a very salutary one.

Luke xv. gives us the bright, the other side of the picture. There were two classes then gathered round the Lord. The publicans and sinners on the one hand, the Pharisees and scribes on the other. The first said, as it were, "We are savourless salt, we have nothing for God; but has God nothing for us?" None have ever taken that place before God that He did not manifest His grace to them! But the Pharisees and scribes murmured at Him, and cast in His teeth as an epithet of opprobrium

the saying "This man *receiveth* sinners, and eateth with them." This witness is true, and the Lord Jesus Christ, although in glory now, binds on His brow, as one of His greatest glories there, this very epithet,—This man *receiveth* sinners, and eateth with them! Dear reader, do you know what it is to eat with Him?

If a man will give up nothing to get to heaven, God, in the Person of

THE SON, GIVES UP ALL TO SEEK AND SAVE
THE SINNER,

and to bring him there. Let us look at it.

The Lord then relates this parable to them. It is one parable in three parts, and sets forth not only the grace that seeks, and the grace that receives sinners, but also the fact that the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead are all active in their salvation. The sinner himself also is looked at in the three ways indicated above. In every part of the parable we find the two classes, viz.—the lost sheep, and the sheep that did not know themselves to be lost; the lost piece of silver, and those that were not lost; the lost prodigal son, and the respectable elder brother, who, in his own estimation, had never left the father. That which was lost, represented the publicans and sinners; and those that were not lost, the Pharisees and scribes, who had never come down to own that they were savourless salt. Unless you learn that such is

your case, you will never know the grace of God and the ministry of reconciliation.

If the triune God is occupied in the salvation of sinners, it proves that man is *lost*; and he is lost in the three ways, like the sheep, like the piece of silver, and like the young man who went away from his father. The sheep is a soul-being; it has body and soul, and is led by its senses. It has a soul, in common with a man, and the soul is the sensuous part of the creature. To the soul belong the affections and desires. Old Isaac illustrates this when he said, "Make me savoury meat, such as my soul loveth." The piece of silver has body only, but is valuable in itself, and bears the image of the reigning sovereign. A man has body, soul, and spirit. The spirit distinguishes him from the beast, and to it belongs the will and the intelligence. Now, it is worse to be lost as a *man* who has body, soul, and spirit, than as a piece of silver, or as a sheep. In

THE LOST SHEEP

Eastern shepherding is in view, and such a thing was never known to an Eastern shepherd as that a sheep should get back to the fold. The sheep were led and counted out in the morning, and at night they were penned up for fear of wild beasts. If the shepherd misses one sheep, he leaves the ninety and nine *in the wilderness*—not in the fold—and goes after the lost until he finds it. This is blessed: He never gives up once He is on the track, until He finds His object.

The shepherd seeks the missing sheep which had wandered away and away, nibbling some little tuft of green grass here, and some tender young shoot of the furze-bush there, until it got so far away that it was impossible for it to come back. The shepherd follows its track, over the mountains, guided by a little bit of the fleece sticking on a thorn bush, and a few drops of blood on the ground, marking the track of waste and destruction the poor sheep had followed. So Christ, the blessed Saviour, came down from heaven, and as the Shepherd, follows the track of the lost sinner, that track of waste and destruction over the mountains of sin. On and on He goes, yea, He went down *under* the mountains of sin, and put it all away, ere He could reach His object.

The shepherd seeks the sheep

UNTIL HE FINDS IT!

Happy work that! and he lays hold of the sheep, two forelegs in one hand, and two hindlegs in the other, and throws it across his shoulders. It was not, maybe, a very comfortable place for the sheep, but it was a very secure one. Many a kick and many a struggle, and many a bleat the silly sheep may give, to try and get on to its feet again; but it is on the shoulders of Omnipotent strength, and the Shepherd means to bring it safely home. And it is as secure on His shoulders as though already there. But where does He take it? Does He take it back to the fold? Ah, no! It is not mere

restitution. Not the gospel of relief only. It is excess! The sheep had lost the fold, but he gains the Shepherd's home; he is secure for heaven, secure for eternity! Far better that than restoration to an earthly fold! "

Yet it is natural to man to live on earth: it is not natural to him to go to heaven. Never a man appeared in heaven till Christ went there. You may say Enoch and Elijah were there. Well, we don't know exactly where they were taken; but Christ said, "I go to prepare a place for you," and that place was not prepared for man until *He* went there.

Joy!

As surely as the sheep is on the shepherd's shoulders, it is brought safely home with joy. The joy of the sheep is not mentioned, but the shepherd calling together his friends and his neighbours says, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost." The joy is the joy of Christ the Shepherd, and of heaven in fellowship with Him, and it is over one sinner that repenteth! Think of all heaven being occupied with and rejoicing over a man who would give up nothing for heaven! Nothing for God! But see the other side. The blessed Son of God gave up everything for His lost sheep! Now we come to

THE LOST PIECE OF SILVER.

Here the sinner is not looked at as a soul-being like the sheep, but as that which has body only.

Yet he is lost equally as to his body, and as to his soul. His soul should have been subject to his spirit, and his desires towards God, his body being for His glory. But fallen, his spirit becomes subject to his soul; his desires go out to anything but God, and his body is dishonoured as the vessel of sin. The piece of silver just dropped out of the purse, its very inertia carrying it farther and farther away, until it rolls into the dust in some far corner of the house, and there it lies, equally lost with the sheep. Nor may it be hoped that it will ever find its way back to the purse whence it fell. But the woman lights a candle, and sweeps the house diligently; she is earnest, and interested in her work. Now this woman with the light figures the Holy Spirit, the second person of the Godhead, who, Christ's work being accomplished, comes down into this world to bring to light the lost sinner. Nor is this far-fetched, for the woman in Scripture is an unseen power in a house; she is not the prominent person there, she does not say, "I this," "I that," but "My husband, &c."; she keeps in the background herself, and puts her husband forward. It is, however, soon known upon entering a house if there be a woman in it, although she may not be seen. Here the woman with a light, this unseen power, searches for the lost piece of silver

UNTIL SHE FINDS IT.

She is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew xiii. we have a woman without a light, who hid

leaven in the meal. It is still a spirit, but all is dark and hidden there. It is a wicked spirit. Perhaps you do not believe in this unseen power. You may say, I believe in nothing I cannot see! This is a mistake, my friend. You believe in steam, yet you never saw steam; what you see is vapour, *i.e.*, steam mixed with atmospheric air. If you look at the gauge glass of a boiler, the space above the water, where the real steam is, just looks like a vacuum, but the engineer knows this is filled with steam. Again, you never saw wind, but you have seen its effects, and you believe in it. You may have seen the path of a cyclone, or a tornado, which lays everything in its devastating track, level with the ground, whether the trees of the bush, or the houses of a town. So you may have seen the effects of the Holy Spirit's work, though this is not seen in devastation, but the opposite. Have you never seen a blasphemer converted? Have you never seen a neighbour, your own brother even, converted? And do you not believe in the Holy Spirit? No dead soul is wrought upon, no lost sinner is brought to light, apart from the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now there is inherent value in the piece of silver, and it is stamped with the image of the reigning sovereign. So the sinner is valuable in himself to God even as to his body, which was made in the image of God, as His representative here—though a defaced and fallen representative now. We must look to Christ for the image of

God. The woman seeks the lost piece of silver until she finds it, and she finds it when a ray from the light is reflected back from some abraded portion of the silver, an abrasion sustained in the fall ! So the Holy Spirit is seeking now to bring to light the sinner. The moment when a soul is wrought upon and recognises the effect of the fall, is the moment when the light of the candle falls upon it. The sweeping and search continue until the lost piece is found, and this goes on in the house. Then, when found, there is joy again, but it is much more specific here than in the first case, "joy in the presence of the angels." Not the joy in heaven generally, so much as the joy of the triune God specially.

IT IS GOD'S JOY !

You cannot have a more wonderful thought than that. He, the blessed God, who does not need you to make Him happy, comes down to seek you,—and we read of the joy, not of the sheep or the piece of silver, but the joy of God, when the one or the other is found. If it is as a *sheep*, a soul-being, alive in sins, led on and on, like a poor drunkard ; or if as a piece of silver, a being dead in sins, although intrinsically valuable, the very inertia of his being carrying him farther and farther away, —the joy of God is alike over both.

G. J. S.

(To be continued.)

A GERMAN REBEL'S CONVERSION.

(Extract from a Letter to the Editor.)



GERMAN by birth, I came out to South Africa in 1881, after having served my year as volunteer at Dantzic, with the only object of making money. When here two years, being clerk in a country shop, I was travelling, and happened to come to a solitary farm. After breakfast the owner of the farm had the Bibles brought, and asking if I liked to stay for their reading, to which I consented against my will, read the 64th of Isaiah, and 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags' (ver. 6), went down into the bottom of my soul, thank God!

"Self-righteous to the utmost, I could not bear that statement, and got so vexed with that gentleman for hurting me so, that I purposed never to cross his threshold again. For eighteen months I did so; having to pass that way occasionally I took always another road, not to touch that place again.

"However, I could not get rid of the sentence mentioned, and each day it seemed to sound louder. I began to realise the truth of it, and became as wretched as a prodigal in a far country can become. At last I could not stand it any longer, saddled up my horse, and rode the six hours' distance straight to the man who had caused this wretchedness, as I supposed.

"When I told him that he was the cause of my unhappiness he said he was 'very glad,' which almost drove me to despair. When I asked him what I should do to get rid of this wretchedness, he said, 'Nothing, young man, you can do nothing.' I was overwhelmed with his answers.

"Sitting down, in my sorrow and anguish, he then said, 'It is all done, you have just to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work.' I could not understand it. Dear Mr G. W. G——, who was there visiting that family, spoke to me too, but I could not find rest, and went back to my home in much sorrow. But they were praying for me, as was my dear godly mother at home, and about a week after my visit to my father in Christ, light broke upon my soul. Ah, what Light!

"All the people around me who knew me thought I had become mad. Now God, in His mercy, has kept me these fourteen years, and has never allowed a cloud to come over my mind as to His salvation.

"Excuse me for writing at such length, but I know your heart will rejoice to hear how God sent a rebel from Germany to a Karoo farm to be saved."

E. S.

[N.B.—No excuse needed! Such testimonies to God's abounding grace will be welcome from any part of the globe. I should like to hear of your conversion, dear reader.—Ed. G. M.]

THE HEART HEALED.



OD'S ways of reaching the soul are wondrous, and infinitely varied; and the means He takes to bless, and bring the heart to Himself are oftentimes strange.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 8-11). His loving thoughts express themselves in words which are indeed as rain to thirsty soil.

The value of His Word in reaching the soul is indescribable, but the circumstances which give opportunity to the sowing of the Word are sometimes strange indeed. Truly, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8).

Thirty-three years ago I was Resident Physician in the old Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, now pulled down. The winter session was in full swing, and the wards under my charge were crammed. But I had one day to take in an extra patient, whose history, and conversion, are indelibly printed on my mind.

A well-known Edinburgh physician called one day about noon, and asked if I could receive a patient, suffering from typhus fever, in whom he was deeply interested. He had known her from childhood, and little more than a fortnight before she had been married to a young Edinburgh artisan. He had lately started in business, but had prospered so much, that he felt warranted in taking to his side the bonnie lassie, who had long been the object of his heart's affection.

Amid the congratulations and rejoicing of friends they were married, and began their honeymoon thus auspiciously. Within three days the bridegroom fell ill. The doctor alluded to was called, and in a day or two more pronounced the illness to be typhus fever of a very grave kind, and on the fourteenth day after the marriage his patient succumbed.

The young bride waited day and night on her husband; from him contracted the same malady, and, three days after his interment, came under my care.

The above history, I need scarcely say, awoke my deepest sympathies. Assuring him that I would

receive, and do all that I could for his patient, the doctor hastened away to have her at once transferred from her desolate home to the Infirmary ward.

She arrived early that afternoon, and shortly after admission I was at her bedside. The fever was only in its initial stage, so her mind was quite clear. She had a very winsome, attractive face, but her grief seemed to have turned her heart to stone. The look of stricken, bewildered, agony on her face I shall never forget, and, while giving instructions to the nurse as to suitable treatment of the body, I wondered what words of comfort could be ministered to one who, within one short fortnight, had been a happy bride, an anxious wife, and was now a broken-hearted widow.

I looked to the Lord for guidance, and then said, "Well, Helen, I know all about your sorrow, and so does Another, who can help and comfort you as I cannot."

"He is dead, he is dead," was all she said.

"Yes," I replied, "he is dead, your beloved husband, but I speak of One who is alive. He was once dead, and dead for us. I mean the Lord Jesus, do you know Him?"

She shook her head slowly, and sadly.

"Would you not like to know him?"

"Yes, but I have never loved Him."

"True, but He has loved you, and now in your sorrow and distress He wants to do two things, to save your soul, and heal your broken heart. When here upon earth He said, 'The Spirit of the Lord is

upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me *to heal the broken-hearted*, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord' (Luke iv. 18, 19). He spoke these words when He was here upon earth, amid human misery and sorrow. He came to heal the broken-hearted, as well as to bring deliverance to the captives of sin, and He does both wondrously.

"He is the same Jesus to-day as He was then, the only difference is this, that since He spoke these words, He has died—died for sinners, died for our sins, borne them on His own body on the tree, and met all the claims of God in respect of them. We are told that 'he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and as it is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many' (Heb. ix. 26-28). Having borne all our sins, and their judgment too, He died, but God has raised Him from the dead, and He now speaks from glory, and this is what He says: 'Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and of hades'" (Rev. i. 17, 18).

"But I have been a great sinner."

"True, and He is a much greater Saviour."

"But I have not loved Him."

"Quite true, but He has loved us."

"Do you think He loves me?"

"Well," I replied, "do you believe He died for you, sinner though you be?"

"Yes, I believe that."

"And would He have died for you if He had not loved you?" This question she pondered a while, and then replied—

"No—no, He surely loved me, if He died for me;" and tears, which had refused to flow till this hour, rained down her cheeks, as the sense of the Lord's love to her entered, melted, and healed her poor chilled and broken heart.

The stony look of agony on her face was dispelled. She slipped into an atmosphere of peace and rest in the sense of the love of Jesus.

I needed not to say any more, but I did say: "Let your heart get all the comfort of this—the One who has loved you, and died for you, is alive for evermore. Your heart will never be broken because of losing Him, for He ever lives, and He ever loves. The one you have loved on earth you have lost, through death, but the One who voluntarily died for you now lives in heaven. Jesus will be your undying Friend."

She softly muttered, "Thank God, thank God, I see it all, He loves me, and He ever lives; my heart is comforted," and closing her eyes, now fixed on a risen Man in glory, she seemed, and she really was, a totally changed being when I left her.

The fever ran its course wildly, and Helen swam for her life indeed, as it got to its height, and delirium, by day and night, had to be contended

with. The form it took was very touching. For many days she spoke of none but Jesus, and her broken utterances were expressive of rest and contentment in the sense of His love.

Then came a moment when "Where is He? I have lost Him," was frequently on the lips, and the hands were put out, as though to seek, and find a lost object. To my great joy the crisis of the fever came on the fourteenth day. She fell into a sound slumber, and when she awoke next morning, conscious, and I said, "Well, Helen, how are you?" her answer was, "I have Him! I have Him!"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! I have had a horrid kind of nightmare. I thought I had lost my Saviour, my Jesus, but, thank God, it was only a dream. I have Him—my Jesus," and again tears rolled down her cheeks.

She made a good recovery, left the hospital in due time, and I often saw her afterwards. While mourning rightly the loss of her husband, the healing, consoling power of the love of the Lord always kept her spirit bright, cheerful, and restful.

In the experience of eight and thirty years I have never seen so sweet an instance of the power of the charming name of Jesus on a stricken soul. He saves, and He satisfies; He succours, and He sympathises; such is Jesus the Saviour.

Dear reader, do you know ought of His love and sympathy? Are you passing through sorrow? Has death robbed you of some tenderly loved one? Live not in the past, nor seek to find comfort in

memories of bygone days. Turn now to Jesus, hear His voice. If saved, pillow your head on His blessed bosom of love. If unsaved, come, and let Him wash all your many sins away, and then lead you likewise to pillow your head on His blessed bosom of unchanging love.

W. T. P. W.

THE HYPOCRITE.



“**H**ERE is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Prov. xxx. 12), and of this generation or race we read frequently in Scripture. They exist among us at the present day, and lest the reader should be one of them, I propose to show in this paper some things at least that mark the hypocrite.

HIS TRUST.

We read in Job viii. 14, 15: “Whose trust shall be a spider’s web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.”

Just think of the folly of trusting your soul to what Scripture compares to a spider’s web! And yet this is what men are doing daily.

They reject the Bible, the Word of God, and the Saviour it tells of, and trust their eternal interests to some theory of evolution or the like, that man

has spun (like the spider's web) out of his own brain. They will not have salvation through the precious blood of Christ; the Rock of Ages is nothing to them. Of such Scripture says, "He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." What an awful awakening after death, when the hypocrite finds himself lost, and that he trusted his soul to—a spider's web!

HIS HOPE.

Next we read in Job viii. 13, "The hypocrite's hope shall perish," and in Job xxvii. 8, "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" And thus we learn that the hypocrite has a hope, but a worthless one.

Like Felix in Acts xxiv. 26, who hoped that Paul would give him money, and for that purpose often heard him preach, the hypocrite nowadays often attends a religious service, not because he has hope in God, or cares for the gospel, but because he hopes it will bring him in gain, either in money or trade.

But Scripture asks, What is it all worth, even though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? What a solemn thing. A man may gain the whole world, and yet lose his own soul. And, reader, if you lose your own soul, even if you gain what you hope you will gain, it will be a losing speculation.

HIS TRUMPET.

But besides the spider's web, that is his trust, and the unprofitable hope, that shall perish, the hypocrite has a trumpet. We read of it in Matthew vi: 2: "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

We also find the trumpet in use when the hypocrite prays (ver. 5), and when he fasts (ver. 16).

Now while, through grace, believers on the Lord Jesus Christ have neither the hypocrite's faith nor hope, I fear we do not disdain to sometimes use his trumpet.

What we are as givers, as men of prayer, as servants of Christ, how much we deny ourselves, should never be known. On the contrary, we should hide it (see vers. 3, 6, 17, 18). And I do not see how we can publish it, unless we borrow the hypocrite's trumpet, and it is to our own serious loss in every way to do so. They have their reward!

HIS PRACTICE.

Matthew xxiii. 13 gives me the hypocrites' practice. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for they neither go in themselves, nor suffer them that are waiting to go in. That is, they are a positive hindrance to the gospel.

HIS PRAYER.

Matthew xxiii. 14 tells me why he prays: "Ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretence make long prayers."

In other words, the hypocrite prays simply to gain the confidence of those who have no defender, that he may make gain of them. You see his object is all self.

HIS TEACHING.

Matthew xxiii. 15-22 gives a sample of his teaching. To begin with, he proselytises. To proselytise, I understand, is to argue a person into your way of thinking. This a servant of the Lord is forbidden to do, or even to attempt (see 2 Tim. ii. 24-26), and the sophistry of his teaching is fully exposed in verses 16 to 22 of this 23rd of Matthew—read it for yourself.

HIS RELIGION.

Matthew xxiii. 23-26 gives us his religion. He paid tithes of even the smallest plants in his garden, a tenth went to the priest, but his religion omitted the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. That he was a law-breaker did not trouble him, to have omitted payment of his tithes would. He made much of a little thing (a gnat), he thought little of a great thing (a camel). His is all a religion of externals—the outside of the cup and platter is clean, but inside! nothing but extortion and excess—such is a hypocrite before God.

HIS APPEARANCE.

Matthew xxiii. 27, 28, gives me his appearance before men. He is like a whited sepulchre. He is outwardly righteous, in the eyes of men, but within he is full of hypocrisy and iniquity. What an awful description!

HIS TESTIMONY.

Matthew xxiii. 29-32 gives me his testimony. He bears witness against himself that he is of the same stock, of the same kind of people who killed the prophets. It is impossible for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, so neither can those do good that are accustomed to do evil (see Jer. xiii. 23), and it is the same evil heart that killed the prophets that beats in their children.

HIS DOOM.

The Lord may well ask, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 33). Thus we have the awful doom of the hypocrite brought before us.

His trust is a spider's web.

His hope is worthless, and shall perish.

His trumpet is sounding constantly, not for God, but for men.

His practice hinders souls from being saved.

His prayer, although long, is only for show.

His teaching is false and full of sophistry.

His religion is straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel.

His appearance is like a whited sepulchre.

His testimony he is too blind to see is against himself.

His doom is the damnation of hell.

Reader, beware! You may not be a hypocrite, but beware lest you use his trumpet, pray like he does, follow his practice, or adopt his teaching.

May the Lord deliver us from hypocrisy in every shape and form.

W. M.

"IT WAS ALL SETTLED LONG AGO."



HAVING called to see an old man of eighty-three, who had known the Lord for many years, after speaking to him a little about the One whom he loved, the state of his health, &c., he commenced to narrate to us a few of his

bygone experiences. As we left his cottage, struck with his practical remarks, we thought others besides ourselves might profit by them.

He first told us about a poor ignorant neighbour, who was fast failing in health. Knowing that the old man was a Christian, he asked him one day to come into his cottage and *make a prayer* for him.

Being many years delivered from the systems of men, and having learnt the vanity of *ready-made prayers*, &c., he gladly responded to his neighbour's request, but added, "If I can't come and pray for

you *without being a machine*, I shouldn't be any good to you at all." And following him into his little home, he poured out his heart to God in earnest prayer to bless him.

One day our old friend himself fell ill, and the minister of the parish, a kind, well-intentioned gentleman, of good social standing, called to see him. Commencing to speak to him about his state, in case his illness should end in death, he received an unexpected reply to the effect that the question of his soul's salvation *was all settled long ago*, that he knew he was saved, and was assured that if death were to overtake him, he would be with Christ for ever.

His surprised visitor suggested whether it were not presumption to talk in that kind of way?

"Ah, sir," replied the old man emphatically, "the reason you say that is because you follow your own thoughts, whereas I take this blessed Book for my guide," putting his hand on the Bible which lay beside him.

"But it is impossible for any one to *know* he is saved; you must keep the commandments of God."

"*But I do know*; and though it is quite right for us to keep God's commandments, which ones do you mean, sir? Do you refer to those which you read aloud every Sunday, and to which the people reply, 'Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law'?"

"Yes, you must keep them."

"But *you* don't keep them," said the old man

decidedly; "at least, if you do, *you are the first one that ever did.*" No, sir, we are not under law. We are saved by faith, not by works. And Christ said to such that the end of the commandment is love, and that we should love one another."

His visitor seemed thoroughly puzzled, and after kindly ministering to the old man's temporal needs, rose to go.

A short while after, he called again, but the patient having recovered, he had returned to work, and he only found the wife at home. Expressing his fears about the state of her husband's soul, he thought to find sympathy from her, but was still more surprised to hear the same clear and decided testimony as to her salvation, and the assurance of it from her lips also.

A little later the old man, who earned his living by labouring on farms, was thatching a rick when the minister went by on horseback. Bidding him "good day," he expressed his glad surprise that he had recovered so quickly from his illness.

"Well, sir, it was the Lord's doing. Both my neighbours, who were ill at the same time, were taken away. But He raised me up. Still, if it had been otherwise, and I had died, *I know I should have been with Him for ever. My salvation was all settled long ago.*"

The positive way in which he had spoken about keeping the commandments, and his personal

* Our Lord Jesus Christ, of course, excepted.

salvation, seemed to puzzle the minister more than ever, insomuch that a few days after he called again on the wife, and inquired whether the husband had anything against him?

"Oh, no, I can answer for him, sir, he has nothing against you. I don't believe he has enmity or hatred in his heart against any one."

"Well, by the way he spoke, I thought it must be so. But upon considering it, I thought perhaps he was not quite clear in his mind after his illness."

"The fact is," concluded the old man, as he narrated in substance the above, "when you come to yourself, people who are not converted think you are out of your mind!"

He then spoke further of the Lord and his joy in Him, adding that, although his eyesight was failing, he carried a lot of Scripture in his heart, and fed on that, when he did not get anything fresh. "But," said he (for we had reminded him of several precious truths in the course of our visit), "you have given me some fresh meat to feed upon."

The Word of God ever abides true: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). Whether minister or layman, high or low, rich or poor, there is no way of salvation for any but through faith in Christ, and His precious blood. It is not a question to-day of the righteousness of man, but of the righteousness of

God. He is not now demanding from man a legal obedience to the ten commandments, but pardoning and justifying in righteousness all who have failed to keep them, but who trust in Christ's finished work. All who take the ground of the law are necessarily under the curse attached to disobedience, for where is there a sinner who keeps it? As our old friend said to his visitor, "If you do, you are the first one that ever did."

No, dear reader, commandment-keeping, though right in its place, as that in which the Christian, justified by faith, delights in by the Spirit, *never was* a title to heaven, and *never will be*. God's Word is plain. Salvation is "not of works" (Eph. ii. 9); "not by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus iii. 5); "not according to our works" (2 Tim. i. 9). If it were so, why did Jesus die? "Now Christ is the end of the law for righteousness *to every one that believeth*" (Rom. x. 4). Blessed be God, what man could not do He has done. God sent His Son. He magnified the law, and made it honourable. And He laid down His holy, sinless life, for all. God is glorified in Him, and on the ground of His death and bloodshedding, is ready this moment to pardon and justify every one that believeth.

The great question for you, reader, as for all, is, Have you judged yourself before Him? And have you believed on His Son? The moment you trust in Him from the heart, His precious blood will cleanse you whiter than snow. Then the Spirit

will shed God's love abroad in your heart, and henceforth it will be your delight, not to break the least of God's commandments, but in His power to walk in them. Have you believed? Could you say in the hour of weakness, and with death right before you, like our old friend, that all was settled long ago, and that you know you would be with the Lord for ever if you were taken from this world?

E. H. C.

THRICE LOST.

(LUKE XV.)



N the two parts of the parable we have been considering, we see the grace that *seeks* the lost, while in the third we have

THE GRACE THAT RECEIVES.

This last is as active and positive in its endowment of the returning prodigal, and shows that all is of grace from first to last.

Now a man has body, soul, and spirit. The spirit is the highest part of his being, the seat of the will and the intelligence. The soul is the seat of the affections and desires, which should have been subject to the spirit; but in the fall things were reversed, and the spirit became subject to the soul, which desires other things, and the subser-

vient spirit plans for the fulfilment of them. For what have we here in the parable of the prodigal? A man who plans deliberately his withdrawal from the Father—unlike the lost sheep who was led astray by his lusts, or the lost piece of silver which tumbled out of the purse: he did not love the Father, nor the restraints of His house; he wanted to enjoy his portion of goods without the Father, and in a few days he gathers all together and takes his journey into a far country, and there dissipated his property, living in debauchery. But at the first step over the Father's threshold he was morally at as great a distance as when he was wallowing in the sensualism and the iniquity of the far country. At once his back was towards the Father's house, and his face was towards the far-off country, and the hell that lies beyond. He had exercised his will, had used his intelligence, had laid his plans and had carried them out. It is

LOST MAN

we have here. He had lifted up his eyes to heaven, as a man is constituted so to lift them, but not, alas! to learn God's will. The difference between a man and a beast is that a beast looks downward, while man was made to look upward; but think of a man looking upward to God like the prodigal, in order to plan his departure from Him, or only in order to defy Him. "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?" man says in the pride of his being, dressed in a little brief

authority, like Pharaoh of old. Or like the nineteenth-century man who, deliberately refusing His grace, will presently lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

This young man reached the far country, and there, away from the Father, wasted his substance in riotous living, and he found the old adage true, which runs—

“’Tis a very good world that we live in,
To lend, or to spend, or to give in.”

But an end comes to all that, for a mighty famine arises in that land, and he begins to be in want. God often sweeps the scene with the besom of destruction in order to bring a man to himself, like this prodigal: and then he finds the other couplet true—

“But to beg, or to borrow, or get a man’s own,
’Tis the very worst world that ever was known.”

Having spent all, he now tries to get satisfaction by going farther away still, and joins himself to a citizen of that country. Now he is in a far worse case, for not only has he lost all he had, but is himself now a bondslave, and finds the rigour of the rule of his master. He finds it a land where no man gave! though it is but swine’s food he seeks now. Dear friend, have you ever found this world a place where no man gives? Not one single desire can be fully satisfied here! So the prodigal found it! All his desires were thwarted and frustrated! “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." The light of the candle had fallen upon the piece of silver; the Holy Spirit had wrought in the heart, the man was born again, had new-born desires, but realised his perilous condition—he was convicted. I perish! he cries. Thus the first effect of being born again is to make a man miserable, to bring a soul to this, "I perish with hunger." People think, if they were only born again, they would be happy; but this does not follow at once. Now every one must come to himself at some time or other. Dear friend, *you* must come to yourself either in time or in eternity. The prodigal came to himself in time, and obtained all we find here.

In the next chapter we have one who came to himself *in eternity*. Alas! it was too late then! He got not so much as a drop of cold water to cool his parched tongue! That was the elder son—the scribes and Pharisees.

But if you have already come to yourself, I believe I am commissioned of God to present to you all that this young man obtained from his father. Notice his progress from this time on. First, he made

A GOOD RESOLUTION.

"I will arise and go to my father." People say, "The way to hell is paved with good resolutions,"

and there is truth in this. The Old Testament is the record of four thousand years' broken vows, and broken resolutions! Look at a drunkard for a particular instance; he makes resolution after resolution, and then goes on as before, till that man's way to hell is paved. He drinks heavily overnight, and awakes with a bad headache, resolving never again to touch drink. No sooner does he leave his house, even before he is over the pavement, than he is met by a boon companion, who says, "Come along, Jim, and have a hair of the dog that bit you yesterday!" All his good resolutions are at once dashed to the ground, and he follows like a sheep led to the slaughter.

But the difference in the prodigal's case was, that having been convicted of sin by the Spirit, he made his resolution in the Spirit's power, and carried it out. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son, make me as one of thy hired servants." But he had not yet gauged the Father's love. The lad said, I will go; I will make a confession; I will prefer my request, a humble one. But while carrying out his resolution, and making his confession, he could not possibly say his prayer in the presence of the Father's love. Now, if the Spirit of God has touched you, you will make the resolution this man did, and carry it out; "He arose and came to his Father." May God help you to do this.

NOW HE WAS CONVERTED.

Conversion means to be completely turned round. His face now was towards his Father, and his back to the far-off country. The Spirit of God has brought him to a sense of his condition and completely turned him round. A man may be converted more than once—Peter certainly was—but he cannot be born again more than once, nor will that new birth be finally ineffectual. Between the far country and the place where he met his Father there was plenty of time for the exercises that souls go through,—the backing and filling, the doubting and fearing, the hoping and rejoicing; now a momentary gleam of hope and a few steps forward; now as many backward in despondency, as he looks at his filthy condition.

But when he was a great way off the Father saw him. Indeed He had never lost sight of him.

THE FATHER'S HEART,

and the Father's eyes had followed him in all his wanderings. And now that his true condition was forced upon him, He had compassion upon him—that is, He felt for and suffered with him, as though He said, Poor fellow! see there he comes! Not only so, but He ran to meet him also! We do not hear a word of the prodigal running toward the Father, and had it depended upon him, he would have been a long time in shortening the distance that separated them, if ever he accomplished it. But the Father ran to meet him; having compassion

upon him. And this is God the Father's way, bridging at once the whole moral distance between Himself and the returning prodigal. Christ's work of redemption and seeking is done; the Spirit's work based upon it, and as'sent of Him, has begun in the soul,—and in these two we have the grace that seeks; and now here we have the Father's work, which sets forth the grace that receives.

I was once asked to preach on board a Queensland steamer. I did not expect to be asked, so I had not thought about it, but reflecting that it was likely that there was a prodigal on board the steamer I spoke on Luke xv. There *was* a prodigal right before me, and he was weeping all the time; what touched him most was the thought that the Father had never lost sight of him. I believe that the Lord spoke to him that day. This thought has melted many a stout heart before and since then.

The prodigal had all the rags of the far country upon him; but the Father fell upon his neck, and the warm, glowing kiss of affection was imprinted on his cheek. This kiss is

THE KISS OF RECONCILIATION.

Can not you feel it now, believer? Does it not thrill you now? Well do I remember when it was imprinted upon my cheek! God sees the returned prodigal in all the value of the work of Christ. He sees also the work of the Holy Spirit in Him. He can kiss him. From this point we get the ministry of reconciliation all the way along as applied to

the prodigal. It was not that God was angry, and needed to be reconciled. He needed what suited Himself and has it now in Christ, in whom He sees the prodigal. But I, in the power of that kiss, now come into the joy of this, and am reconciled to Him. When the prodigal felt his Father's kiss, then his heart was fully reconciled, all enmity is dismissed, for the man who was at enmity is gone, and he is assured there is no want of reconciliation in the Father.

Then good-bye to his fears, his doubts, which were all driven to the winds by that kiss! and even to his proposed prayer to be as one of the hired servants. How could he say this with the Father upon his neck and kissing him! Fathers kiss their sons, not their servants; the Father needs the service of sons, not that of hirelings; and there are thousand thousands who minister to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand who bow before Him. He has plenty of servants, and so now He says to His servants, "Bring forth

THE BEST ROBE

and put it on him." If the elder son had been there (which he was not), he would have said, "Stop! stop!! There is some mistake here. Do not put that robe on him! Look at him!" Had it been so, the Father would have taken no notice, save to say emphatically, Put it on HIM! And of him it went. THE BEST ROBE.

Now, God clothed all His works with suitable

robes. The angels He clothed with strength, the earth with verdure. Satan was the sum of beauty in heaven. Man was His masterpiece and His image down here; but he fell, and God sought him, having in reserve 'a better robe for him, as thus returning, than any before were ever clad in. Bring it forth! God says, and he who was in rags and in ruin now stands before God in righteousness, conscious that all questions have been settled, and in the recognition that he is before God in Another, and well satisfied to have it so. Reconciliation is thus manifest in righteousness. All that man is as man has for ever passed away from before God, and the state of the returned prodigal is that of one who ascribes the glory of it all to Christ. He alone is worthy. Thus within and without all is Christ.

G. J. S.

(To be continued.)

ALL OF GRACE.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved."—ROM. x. 9.



It was small and simple, a cottage-meeting in the country. Over and over again had the precious gospel story been told out within those walls, the preacher walking many miles to conduct the meeting. It was a hard place, and little fruit had been seen; but still the few who were

interested in the Lord's work went on, knowing that God had said, "My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 11).

On this particular night a stranger had taken the meeting. He spoke faithfully, as in the light of eternity, and as he went on, one young man, who went regularly to the meeting, was deeply convicted. The Lord had often spoken to him before, and he had tried repeatedly to turn over a new leaf, but this night, as the Word reached his conscience with living power, it seemed—to give his own words—as if he was being "shaken over hell." On former occasions he, along with some other young people, had sought to wile away the time by laughing to each other, and sometimes quietly making fun of the preacher; but now he sat with bowed head, trembling. At the close of the meeting, the preacher spoke personally to an old man, the head of the house in which the meetings were held, who, alas, was seeking to be justified by his own works. The young man listened to all that was said, and then went away with some of the Christians; who, seeing he was anxious, again sought to put the gospel before him, but although he was now in dead earnest to be saved, he could not see things clearly, and at last started for home alone.

Our young friend had about a mile to go to the farm where he served. On the way he had to

pass a wood, and by the time he reached it he could go no farther. He had put it off so often, that it seemed to him as if God were giving him his last chance: he thought it must be now or never, so he went into the wood and got down on his knees: he meant to pray, but he had never really prayed in his life, and he could not think how to begin; no words would come. As he knelt there, however, one verse of that old hymn came before him—

“Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling!
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

He repeated it right through, and as he did so the truth flashed in upon him. He saw that he had been altogether on the wrong track. He had been trying to work his way to God; but now he realised that Christ alone could save; and there and then, by faith, he laid hold of that Blessed One for salvation. He rose from his knees with the burden of his sins gone, and again started for home, but this time with the conscious sense that he was saved.

Before this, when he had tried to be a Christian, he had always kept it quiet, lest he should break down, and make a fool of himself; but now he was so happy that, meeting a companion before he had gone far, he sat down with him at the wood-side, and told him all about it, pressing him to have the matter settled too. It was easy then to

go home to the bothy, and confess to an infidel who was lounging in bed. Of course it made a stir when the news got abroad that Z—— was converted, as he had generally been at the front in any kind of devilment that was going; but through grace he was enabled to go on, in spite of the opposition, and although it is now over seven years since that eventful night, "having obtained help of God," he continues until this day.

Now, dear unsaved reader, we would address ourselves more particularly to you. Our desire in penning this "record of grace" is, that you too might "taste and see that the Lord is good." We would, however, add a word of warning. Do not, we beseech you, trifle with the mercy of God as Z—— did. It was five years from the first time that he was conscious of God speaking to him until he gave in, and all that time the Lord—who is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. ciii. 8)—bore with him; but we cannot promise that He will bear with you five years, nor even five days. The Holy Ghost saith, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 7, 8). The devil's time is to-morrow, which never comes. If you are wise, you will take God's time, which is the only safe time. That time is NOW.

"Only trust Him! Only trust Him!

Only trust Him *now!*

He will save you! He will save you!

He will save you *now!*"

A REPORT OF TWO COUNTRIES.



It is a strange sight to see thousands of men and women leaving their homes, employment, and country, and enduring all kinds of hardships, to reach the cold and uninviting region of the Klondike. They go from all parts of the world, with their eye and heart turned to one spot, which nothing short of death will divert them from.

And what has awakened this tremendous excitement, and aroused this feverish desire in all parts of the world?

Simply this—a report has reached them, a report which they have firmly believed, and they have started out in quest of that of which they have heard.

And what is the report?

It is that gold is to be found in that cold, cold region; and on the strength of that report they will encounter and overcome every difficulty, and surmount every obstacle, in order to reach that land, and possess the much-desired gold of which they have heard. Long journeys are taken by sea and land, over mountains clothed with snow, in regions where storms are fierce and cutting, and through places where but few thought of going before.

Ah, but a report has reached them; they have believed it; it has stirred their whole being;

live or die they must go, and seek with the thousands the nuggets of gold.

Strange, is it not, that for what is so small, and if found, can be so easily lost, and often when possessed brings so little real pleasure, that people will endure so much?

And yet *another report* has reached them which has made no such impression; it has fallen unwelcome upon their ears. It is the report of a land that is fairer than day, of the golden city above, of joys immortal, of bliss untold, of glory unfading, where the inhabitants are clothed in purity, and shall bask for ever in the uncreated light of the presence of their God and Father.

No long distance by land or sea is needed to reach that country, no snow-capped mountains are to be crossed, no blasting storms to face, nor marches to make, *with an uncertainty at the end.*

Is it not strange that the inhabitants of this sorrow-filled, sin-blighted, death-stricken world, are not all excitement to reach this land of bliss and purity, where no sorrow reaches the heart, no sin blights, where none are stricken down by the hand of death, and the inhabitants thereof shall no more say, "I am sick"?

Why this apathy? this indifference? this contempt of such a report? Is it not true? Does it not come backed by proper authority?

Ah, yes; One has come from that land, from that country so bright and so fair. He has come from the region where all is light; from the glory

of God has He come; and though divine, has clothed Himself in human form, so as to convey to us in human speech the *report* of that land so bright and so fair, where saints immortal dwell, and where God fills the whole scene with His own light and happiness.

HIS NAME IS JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

What authority could be higher? what proof stronger? No uncertain sound drops from His sinless lips. No maybes, no perhapses, no per-adventures. All is absolutely certain.

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28).

What a visitant!—the Son of God.

What an object!—to suffer, bleed, and die.

And the result: to open up a way to the Father, and to that heavenly land of which He spoke.

He "suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

Now He can rightly say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John xiv. 6).

. And to those who believe the report, He says: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will

come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 1-3).

As we think of the way this report, brought by the Son of God Himself, is treated by the multitudes, and of the way in which they turn to the mere trifles of earth, are we surprised at the prophet's plaintive words, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. liii. 1).

Sorrow fills us as we see them choosing the things lighter than air, before the "eternal weight of glory" of which the Son of God speaks. We feel a little as the prophet Jeremiah did when he said, "I am black; astonishment hath taken hold of me," when we see them facing death itself in order to obtain a little of the "gold that perishes," and passing by, as a thing of nought, "the gift of God, which is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).

"Who hath believed our report?"

Have you, reader? It has reached you, brought you by the Son of God, and repeated by God the Holy Ghost, but have you believed it? And has the arm of the Lord been revealed unto you?

Or, in other words, *Are you saved?* Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you bound for that heavenly country where all is of God? Have you bidden this poor world, in your heart, farewell? Are you of that company who are waiting for God's Son from heaven.

As to this scene, the shadow of death has flung

itself across it; in it there is no unalloyed joy or pleasure; nothing abiding; the stamp of death is on all. All is blasted by the breath of sin: "And the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23).

Samuel Rutherford said, "My nest hung in no forest of all this death-doomed shore." And why? He had believed the report of that other land, brought by the Son of God, and he was waiting the word, "Come up hither," to leave it for ever. He has gone to his rest; he is with Jesus in Paradise.

The report of the heavenly country is clothed with divine authority, and it comes to us in the absolutely certain words of the Son of God; and when believed, it fills the soul with peace and joy, and the heart with the deep, deep longing to be there.

Oh, my reader, believe the report, and join the host of God, who are waiting for God's Son from heaven, and whose business here on earth, until He come, is to serve the living and true God.

"We're travelling home to heaven above,
 Will you go?
 To sing the Saviour's dying love;
 Will you go?
 Millions have reached that blessed shore,
 Their trials and labours all are o'er,
 But still there's room for millions more
 Will you go?"

THE OLD VERGE WATCH.



HIS old verge watch is very troublesome, I can't depend upon it," said an old man to a watchmaker one day; "yet I prize it very much, as it belonged to my father. Could you put it in thorough-going order?"

After having carefully examined it, the watchmaker replied, "Well, sir, I could not make a satisfactory job of it, as the verge principle (escapement) is in such a bad state; in fact, that part of your watch is past recovery, although in almost every other respect it is in fairly good condition; but I should, if I were you, have it converted into a lever."

"Convert my old watch into a lever? What do you mean?" said the old man.

"Well, I mean take that part of your watch out which is in such a bad state, viz., *the verge escapement* (or principle). You understand, sir, that your verge watch derives its name from the principle (or escapement) within. Very well, substitute for the old principle taken out, an entirely new *lever escapement*. By doing so, I convert your watch from a *verge* into a *lever watch*; although the same mainspring drives it, yet it is now a *converted watch*."

Now, dear unsaved reader, I need not pursue this conversation any further,—but let me ask you,

Do you not see some analogy between that old watch and yourself? It had a principle, that was past recovery; by nature so have you,—you are a sinner, and as such have a principle within you which is enmity to God. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. viii. 7); also, “*There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God*” (Rom. iii. 10, 11).

To return to the old watch. Suppose the watch-maker had doctored the old principle up as best he could, and polished the outside case,—in fact, made it like a new watch,—yet, in spite of all his labours, it would still have been a verge watch, although we might now call it a *re-formed* verge watch.

My dear reader, you may have tried many ways to improve your “heart, which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Further, you may have, as it were, polished the case (improved your life externally), by many fancied good works, prayers, &c., but let me tell you solemnly, except you have been “born again” and *converted*, you have still nothing within you but that principle which is enmity to God.

Oh, unsaved one, *reformation* will not do. You need *conversion*. “Ye must be born again” (John iii. 7). I would plead with you therefore to—

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

His work is finished, there is nothing left for you to do. *All has been done.* God has been glorified about the question of sin. Salvation is *all of grace*, thank God. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. xi. 6).

"It is finished, yes, indeed,
Finished every jot;
Sinner, this is all *you* need;
Tell me, is it not?"

Take a lesson from the watch, my dear reader, for you see all the skilled labour that could have been put upon that verge principle in the old watch, still left it *a verge*. So *with you*, all your efforts, prayers, &c., still leave you with a nature *at enmity against God*,—in fact, *still unsaved*.

Listen to the glorious news the gospel brings. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Oh, dear friend—

"Believe this wonderful love,—
Believe this wonderful love,—
The gospel *is free*, God sends it *to thee*,
Believe *this* wonderful love."

THRICE LOST.

LUKE XV.



HAT we have already seen in this blessed parable does not exhaust its teaching.

The prodigal is now kissed and clothed; but that is not enough for God, though the prodigal might think it so, and there is a tendency in every heart to limit the grace of God in the reception and investment of a prodigal. God is doing good to sinners, and He must have a fuller manifestation of what is in His heart than this; so He says further, "Put a ring on his hand." This, I believe, sets forth

DIVINE APPROVAL.

When Ahasuerus would show to wicked Haman a mark of his royal approval, he took his ring from his hand and gave it to him. Afterwards Mordecai was clothed in royal apparel, set upon the king's horse, with the crown royal upon his head, and it was proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." Then the ring that Haman had worn was given to Mordecai, who was to seal with it any writing that he pleased; and that which was written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse. All the administration of the kingdom was thus put

into his hands, and he was made the second man in the empire. This was the suggestion of Haman, supposing that he himself was the man.

Joseph also had the king's ring given to him, and was made to ride in the second chariot, and all were summoned to "bow the knee" before him. That, I believe, is what God does for us whom He has taken from the lowest depths of iniquity. He has linked us with Him who is His Son, in relationship with Himself, and in the administration of the kingdom, raising us thus to the very highest place of creature dignity.

I think it is clear that in this sense "The Church of the first-born ones" (Heb. xii. 23) will occupy the place that Satan falls from. For Satan was God's masterpiece, as we find in Ezek. xxviii., where it is said of him, under the figure of the king of Tyrus: "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty . . . every precious stone was thy covering. . . . Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so." His was the highest place of all created beings. But he falls by successive stages from his high place, until he is engulfed in the lake of fire! This is the end of beings who stand before God on the ground of responsibility.

On the other hand, an earthly, fallen, thrice-lost creature, taken up in grace, is invested with all that divine love can furnish him with, all that makes him suited to heaven, and is eventually raised to heaven. We shall have the very highest

creature-place in connection with Him who is the Son of God, and this as the outcome of God's counsels of love.

Further, the Father says: "Put shoes on his feet!" This indicates figuratively that he was to be made

PERFECTLY AT HOME

in the Father's presence. When Moses—observer of God's ways—turned aside to see that great sight why the bush that burned with fire was not consumed, he heard a voice from the midst of the bush saying, "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Moses, blessed man! was not at home in the presence of Jehovah! He had to take off his shoes.

So Joshua, when he went to the Angel with his sword drawn in his hand, saying, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" heard eventually, "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy!" Joshua was not at home in the presence of the Captain of Jehovah's host. He had to put off his shoe! But the Father will have the returned prodigal at home in His presence. He will put shoes on his feet. He must be made at home in His presence. He does not want him to be uncomfortable there. It is not mere deliverance and patronage. A slave thus liberated and patronised would feel perfectly miserable at the table of his patron; he would rather be

a servant still; and this had been the prodigal's thought, but it was not the Father's. All that was necessary to put him at his ease is furnished him, and he is thus prepared to feast with his Father. The feast is spread in the Father's house, which, in Luke, is moral and present. We are put into the enjoyment of it by the Spirit sent from the Father. Then comes

THE FEAST.

“Bring hither the fatted calf and kill it.” This is the death of Christ as a peace-offering—that which furnishes food and joy for God and man. This, like the robe, had been in reserve; and though more plainly set forth in Old Testament type in the sacrifice of the peace-offering, is now brought into full light. Man finds his portion in the One in whom God had ever found His delight, and Who had always delighted with the sons of men.

“And let us eat and be merry.” God has His portion, and we have ours, though this merry-making is chiefly the Father's,—“This my son was lost, and is found,” though others share in it; there is, however, but one Father, and there is no joy like His. “And they began to be merry.” When does this merriment end? There has been no cessation of it! There never will be! The returning prodigal is the occasion of all this heavenly, divine, eternal joy! Wonderful God! The blessed (happy) God indeed!

They make merry in heaven; the Father's joy is there; it is in

THE FATHER'S HOUSE.

But they make merry on earth also, if they hear what is going on in heaven. To this end we need the Spirit's power, that we may listen daily at His gates, and be led up into eternal life. When in Victoria, at some distance west of Melbourne, where there is a difference of about twenty minutes in latitude, I was standing in a telegraph office talking with the lady operator. The instrument kept up a continuous rattle, in what to me was an unintelligible jargon, but which was all plain to her. Presently the noise ceased, and there came a regular beat—tick, tick, tick—like the ticking of a clock. "What is that?" I asked. "That is the ticking of the Melbourne town clock," she replied. "How can that be?" I said. She explained: "It is necessary that all the telegraph offices in the colony should keep Melbourne time, so at one o'clock all messages cease, and the wire is switched on to the pendulum of the Melbourne Town Hall clock, and the tick of that clock is heard in every telegraph office in the colony." "Oh then," I said, "you hear what is going on at headquarters once a day at least?" "Yes," she replied. "And what about heaven?" I asked, for she was a Christian. And may we not ask, What about heaven? Do we hear from the Father's house every day? Once a day is not enough for

us, unless it is all the day long. In such a case a Christian is raised above all the difficulties of this scene: he is sensibly embraced in the arms of the God of love, as his Father and his God, and makes merry in fellowship with that Father.

To sum up, we may notice that the prodigal, who was born again and converted before he reached the Father, entered gradually into the realisation of the following seven blessings afterwards, viz.:—1. The Father's heart, which he now becomes conscious was ever for him. 2. The kiss of reconciliation. 3. The robe, indicating that the reconciliation is on the ground of righteousness. 4. The ring of Divine approval. 5. The shoes, making him at home in the Divine presence. 6. The feast of the fatted calf. 7. The Father's house. God invests the sinner with all that was in His heart for him, with all that suits *Himself*. The sinner would say, Hold!—*enough!* at any stage; but God says, "Give him this, give him that, give him all that has been reserved for him from eternity;" and it is to satisfy His own heart, and to make us meet for heaven and Himself.

Now a word as to

THE ELDER BROTHER.

He was in the end in just the same state of soul as the prodigal when he left the Father's house. The prodigal wanted his fling without his Father—so did the elder brother. I think, said a man to me once, that the Father treated that young man

(the elder brother) very badly. Indeed, said I, did it ever occur to you that the Father entreated him to come in? But the merrymaking of the Father in grace was not to the mind of a pharisee, as the very statement above quoted proved. For what did the elder son say? He did not care the snap of a finger for his Father or His joy. All he wanted was to surround himself with his own companions, and enjoy himself with them, and so he answers: "Lo, these many years do *I* serve thee, neither transgressed *I* at any time thy commandments, and yet thou never gavest *me* a *kid* that *I* might make merry with *my* friends." He wanted to make merry with *his* friends and shut the Father out! This is evident from the use of that big *I*, and *MY*, and *ME*. It was himself he had before him, and not the Father; and this was exactly the state of the prodigal at the first.

Now, dear reader, all that, in the parable the Father had for the prodigal, God has for *you*, if you adopt the prodigal's resolution and come to the Father. Accept it all! Say not at any stage, Hold! enough! Go on! go on! If you have been touched by the Holy Spirit, arise and go to the Father. He awaits you; receive the kiss, the robe, the ring, the shoes, partake of the fatted calf, the merriment of the Father's house, which never has ceased and never shall cease. That merrymaking enjoyed by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in company with the angels and all those

who, having been thrice lost, are now more than thrice saved, will be enjoyed by them for ever.

Thus is the thrice-lost sinner invested! Thus is he brought to God. On the other hand, the one who never recognises himself as lost is divested of all that would enable him to enjoy himself apart from God, and lifts up his eyes in hell being in torment!

G. J. S.

A BLUEJACKET'S CONVERSION.



WHEN I was a boy of fourteen years of age—the eldest of five—my mother, who had been ill for several years, one afternoon, just previous to her passing away to be with the Lord, called us all to her bedside, and asked each one of us individually to meet her in heaven, and I remember well that each one promised to meet her there.

Several years had elapsed, when I joined the British Navy, having a desire for the sea, and to see foreign lands, which I thought would satisfy me, being at the time ignorant of God's Word, which says, "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, neither is the ear filled with hearing." I then spent five years in a wild reckless life, always being the first and foremost in the devil's work, forgetting all about my promise to my mother.

Take courage, mothers, and pray for your boys.

One night when asleep in my hammock, the Lord caused me to have a dream. It was this:—

The world was coming to an end, and I was not saved; the moon and the stars were shooting daggers of fire at me, particularly one large blue star, and when it burst the world was at an end. The devil was behind me to seize me, and to take me to hell for ever. Just at that moment I was awaked by one of my shipmates. He cried out, "Oh, Bill, what's the matter?" for I was making such a dreadful noise in my dream that it aroused all my shipmates, and they sat up in their hammocks wondering whatever had happened to me. As I awoke, I exclaimed, "Oh, thank God! it is only a dream." Just then my duty called me on deck, and as I stood there gazing on the water and the heavens around, there came a dreadful feeling over me. My flesh crept, and my blood ran cold; the ship, the heavens, and the water, were coming together to crush me. I ran down the ladder to the lower part of the ship, fell on my knees with my face to the deck, and cried from the depth of my heart and soul, "*Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!*" There and then I believed that Jesus had bled and died for sinners; the burden rolled away from my heart, and I got up singing,

"Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away."

My shipmates said I had "religion on the brain"

and "would go mad;" but I exclaimed, "I have not religion on the brain, but Christ, God's beloved Son, in my heart—for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," and I preached unto them Jesus Christ. Some said I would "stand a week," others said "one month," but through God's mercy fourteen years have passed away since then, and still free grace keeps me on the way to glory.

On the night following my conversion I had another dream. I dreamt that the Lord Jesus Christ was coming in the air, and I went up to meet Him; and instead of being afraid at this, I was singing praises unto Him that loved me and washed me from my sins in His own blood. Just before I met Him I awoke, and was disappointed at finding myself still in this scene, having thought that I was in the glory, to be with Himself for ever.

Now, unsaved reader, I warn you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to flee from the wrath to come. God is offering you a full and free salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

"Jesus for your choice is waiting;
Tarry not; at once decide!
While the Spirit now is striving,
Yield, and seek the Saviour's side."

TWO DEATH-BEDS.

SCENE I.



HERE he lay dying, with death and eternity staring him in the face. He had been spoken to previously about his soul, and at the mention of the name of Jesus he only scorned. Seeing he refused everything that was said to him, the speaker left saying, "You refuse the only Name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved. God has declared there is none other. He who bears that precious name, and He alone, has power to save. Is he your Saviour?"

Shortly after he was heard to cry out in agony of soul, "I'm dying, and I'm damned." He asked entreatingly of some one in the room, "Have you no word of comfort for me? I'm dying, and I'm damned!" And with these words upon his lips he passed into eternity. Where? Let us draw the veil over this solemn scene, a warning beacon to all such rejecters of Him, who is God's salvation.

SCENE II.

A woman lay dying—alas! Christless. She was visited by some Christians, who spoke to her of "Jesus"—the Saviour. At the mention of His blessed name she was seen to start; again and again they repeated it, with the same result. At last she seemed to swoon away; they stood round her bed repeating that precious name of "Jesus."

Presently she opened her eyes and exclaimed, "Precious name! Tell me more of Jesus." Gladly the sweet story of His love was poured into her ears, in answer to her request to hear more of "Jesus."

Say, dear reader, is He really precious to you? Does that name speak to your heart of One to whom you owe everything? "Jesus!" What memories does that name carry with it to the Christian's heart; telling of the One who came from glory's highest heights to Calvary's deepest depths, and shed His precious blood to save him. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth" (Cant. i. 3). At the name of "Jesus" every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to God the Father's glory (Phil. ii. 10). God has decreed it. Bow to-day, sinner, and confess Him as your Lord and Saviour, and salvation is yours (Rom. x. 9). E. E. N.

PHARAOH'S COMPROMISES.*

(EXODUS iv.-xii.)



IN the fourth chapter of Exodus Moses gets his commission: "Thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me" (vers. 22, 23). Now mark, there is relationship. If a believer in the Lord Jesus

* Extracted from "Handfuls of Purpose."

Christ, you are no longer looked at by God as a poor sinner. You are no longer a slave. What is the message that Moses has to carry? "Israel is my son." It is a wonderful thing to wake up, in the very day of your conversion, to the truth of sonship. "Let my son go, that he may serve me." That is the point. God comes in, and He says, I must have My people all to Myself. If you have just been brought to know the Lord, what a wonderful thing to find that God's heart beats toward you as a son, and He looks for you to enjoy sonship. Do you?

Chapter five gives us an added privilege, as we hear the Lord say, "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." What does the Lord want with you? A feast. You are called to a feast now, but you must get clean out of Egypt for that. And just as Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (ver. 2), so will Satan hinder the young convert from making a clean break with the world if he can do so. The first thing you find out is that you are a sinner, and the next that you are to be a worshipper. You can never worship in the world, nor can the song of deliverance ever be sung truly in Egypt. Sinners can go through a form of worship. But spiritual worship is a question of the truth and enjoyment of the Father, and there must be disassociation from what is of the world and of the flesh, for that

to be known. Hence we can understand Moses and Aaron's words, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God" (ver. 3). Three days' journey in the wilderness. That is a good long distance; it leaves the world fairly behind. You will find three days abundantly in Scripture. But Pharaoh will not have this, and immediately increases their burdens and their work. It is very instructive. As long as we were going on easily doing the devil's work he left us alone, but the moment the chains were felt as it were, oh, how he put the pressure on (vers. 4-19).

This action of Pharaoh is just a figure of the way in which the devil, when he sees a soul seeking to get free, immediately binds the chains more tightly round him lest he should escape to Christ. Oh, thank God, if you have passed through this misery, and are free. Perhaps you are saying, I thought I believed the gospel, and yet now I am no better than I was, and I am far from happy. Do not faint, nor let Satan drive you back. It is a good thing for us to learn, at the start, our utter good-for-nothingness, and powerlessness. That is what the soul must pass through. You have no power, and Satan has a great deal.

But God's purpose must be carried out, and "He that is for us is stronger than he that is against us," hence in the next chapter the Lord speaks again (chap. vi. 1-8). Pharaoh still keeps them in bond-

age, but to the children of Israel God sends a lovely message. Mark the seven "I wills." Seven in Scripture is always the number of spiritual completeness. (1) "I am the Lord, and *I will bring you out* from under the burdens of the Egyptians." That is good. They were feeling those burdens. (2) "And *I will rid you out of their bondage*, and (3) *I will redeem you with an outstretched arm*, and with great judgments; and (4) *I will take you to me for a people*, and (5) *I will be to you a God*. . . . And (6) *I will bring you in unto the land*, . . . and (7) *I will give it you for an heritage*: I am the Lord" (vers. 6-8). It begins with, "I am the Lord," and it closes with, "I am the Lord." His "I will" never fails, and faith always reposes on God's word. I recommend you to take God's seven "I wills" to your heart. I think I hear you saying, "I have had a good many doubts." You will never have any more if you hug those "I wills." God will not fail of His word, and His purpose He always carries out. Your redemption and mine does not depend upon what we are, it depends upon God. We could not help ourselves, and we cannot do aught for ourselves. Leave all with God, and peace is the result.

How blessedly God spoke here to encourage His people. But did they hear Him? We read, "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage" (ver. 9). The pres-

sure of the enemy was so great that they became hopeless. If you have never yet learned what deliverance is, then let me encourage you to wait on God, and listen to Him. Do not struggle. Satan is too great a foe. Let God deliver you. In these chapters you will get the way in which you are delivered from the righteous judgment of God on the one hand, and the power of the enemy on the other hand. Are they to go or not? is the question. Of course Pharaoh says he will not let them go, and then God brings in His power to effect His purpose. The various plagues I do not touch on, but in the eighth chapter I want to show you the wiles of the devil. Pharaoh, conscious of weakness, begins to make compromises, hoping still to keep his slaves. The first compromise he proposes is very interesting. "Go ye, sacrifice to your God *in the land*" (ver. 25). Where? "In the land." Do it in the land, says Pharaoh. Could they sacrifice to God in Egypt? Impossible.

What is their answer? "And Moses said, It is not meet so to do, . . . for we shall sacrifice the abomination (the idol) of the Egyptians to the Lord our God; lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?" (ver. 26). No, we cannot worship, or be really for God in the midst of Egypt, *i.e.*, the world. "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us" (ver. 27), is the answer of faith. Now that is a very fine

statement on Moses' part. It is a principle of immense value for your soul and mine, that if I am going to have God, and be for Him, I must do without the world. You cannot have the enjoyment of His love, if you want to go on with the world.

This firm reply of Moses leads to compromise number two on Pharaoh's part, "I will let you go that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go *very far away*" (ver. 28). Ah, how wily Satan is. Don't you be too out and out, he says to a young convert: "Ye shall not go very far away." Ah, how many a young saint has the devil tripped up with this kind of word. Do not go very far. Do not be an enthusiast. Listen! The further you go from the world the better, and Satan will never put his hand upon you again if you once get fairly out of Egypt. If you once get fairly into the wilderness, thank God, he will never place his foul hand upon you again. Never, no, never!

But Pharaoh does not yet let them go. God again steps in with deeper judgments, and at length Pharaoh says, "Go, serve the Lord your God; but *who are they that shall go?*" (chap. x. 8). Moses is very clear about who shall go. "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go: for we must hold a feast to the Lord" (ver. 9). All they loved and all they possessed were to go. All for God—was Moses' motto. Christian

mothers, converted fathers, do you see this? It is here as elsewhere in all Scripture, the divine principle of "*thou and thy house.*" We are not going to be a divided family, says Moses, and, more than that, we shall take every sheep and every bullock we possess, for all belongs to God. Why? Because redemption puts you upon the ground of belonging to God altogether. I do not think anything could be more plain. This plain reply suggests a third compromise to Pharaoh. First he says, "Let the Lord be with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you" (ver. 9). And then, as if he loved the children, and would save them from evil, he adds, "Not so: go now, *ye that are men*, and serve the Lord; for that ye did desire" (ver. 10). He says, Leave the children. The devil says, Parents, you can be devoted to Christ, but let your children be in the world; and many a parent heeds that suggestion, and sows seed that bears fruit in the shape of worldly-minded and worldly-waysed sons and daughters, who break their parents' hearts in later days.

Irritated by the refusal to leave the children, Pharaoh refuses to liberate his slaves till further judgment wrings from him a fourth compromise, to wit, I will let you have the children, but you must leave the goods with me. "And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the Lord; only let *your flocks and your herds be stayed* (*i.e.*, let your business be in the world, conducted on worldly

principles) ; let your little ones also go with you " (ver. 24). But faith never wavers, and Moses' reply is splendid : " Our cattle *also* shall go with us : there shall not a hoof be left behind ; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God ; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither " (ver. 26). Ah, how firm is this man, that God's people belong to God, spirit, soul, and body. It is very refreshing to see the way this man says, We must be entirely for God. Not a hoof can be left behind. We could not leave an ox behind. Everything must be the Lord's. It is a principle of faith. What the Christian is, and what he has, is all the Lord's. " Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body " (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

When you come to the twelfth chapter you find Pharaoh admitting this principle, as he says, " Go, serve the Lord, *as ye have said*, also take your flocks and your herds, *as ye have said*, and be gone ; and bless me also " (vers. 31, 32). The very devil himself has the sense that the Christian should serve the Lord devotedly. The enemy of Christ has the sense that the Christian belongs to Christ, and that all he has, and is, should be devoted to the Lord absolutely.

" Saviour, we long to follow Thee,
Daily Thy cross to bear,
And count all else, whate'er it be,
Unworthy of our care."

WE WILL SING OF THE SAVIOUR WHO DIED.

(Tune—"Sweet By-and-By.")



WE will sing of the Saviour who died
 — To redeem us from death and from
 hell;
 We'll proclaim His renown far and
 wide
 And we'll join all His glory to tell.

*Praise His name! Praise His name!
 He has purchased our souls with His
 blood;
 Spread His fame! Spread His fame!
 He has saved us and brought us to God.

His is love that is stronger than death,
 Love which neither can change nor decline;
 "I have given My life," Jesus saith,
 "For My sheep—they're eternally Mine." *

We've His Word for our light and our guide,
 And it never can lead us astray;
 If we only keep close to His side,
 He will guard us and show us the way. *

Soon He'll come from on high for His own—
 Oh, what joy will be ours in that day,
 When we sit with the King on His throne,
 And our sorrows have all passed away! *

THE RECEIPT.



AM B—— lived on a "scrub" farm on the banks of the Mary, in Queensland.

He had led a wild life, as so many, in the early days of the colony, had; working hard and drinking hard; clearing, farming, butchering, and doing other things by turns. He had made money, and spent it as easily as he had made it. Drink, that moral and social blight, had been his curse, and the publican's hut had seen many a cheque "knocked down by" Sam B——. He had had hairbreadth escapes riding home through the bush: even good horses cannot guarantee drunken riders from injury from falls, collision with trees, &c. His boy had feared the reckless riding of the one whom he should have been led to respect in everything, and had hidden himself anywhere rather than be mounted before his father in these bouts. Again and again had that father been thrown, and dragged by the stirrup by his frightened beast, at the imminent risk of his life. On one occasion he awoke in the morning lying head downwards on the side of a water-hole, within a foot of the water, where he had been thrown the night before.

But all this had told upon his health, and in later years he had been more steady; had bought a farm, and worked upon the kindly soil, which had repaid his efforts, and he was tolerably com-

fortable ; but, in this world as well as in the next, "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap." His health failed him, and he lay upon his bed, from which he never got up.

Whilst preaching in the neighbourhood, I had been told of him by some neighbours interested in his spiritual welfare, and pulled up the river to his landing-place, and found him slowly dying. Conscience had begun to make itself heard, and his past life, with its iniquities, was all before him, but darkness covered him as to how all was to be blotted out, and dread as to how he should stand in the presence of Him before whom he expected shortly to be summoned oppressed him. All this he did not attempt to conceal.

Presentations of the gospel in ways that reach some failed in this case, he being quite unable to read ; and his darkness remained unbroken. Thinking over his case before the Lord, and what he had himself told me, I said one day, "Sam,

YOU KNOW WHAT DEBT IS?"

"Yes," said he.

"And what a receipt is?"

"Yes, I've had plenty of them in my time."

"Well now, if you were in debt, and could not possibly pay, and a friend came forward and paid the debt, handing you a receipt, would you fear the creditor?"

"No, of course not, the receipt would settle it anywhere."

“Your sins, then, may be compared to a debt. You have incurred by them the displeasure of God, who demands satisfaction, and it must be rendered to Him, or you cannot escape hell.”

“Ah! but can a receipt be had for *that* debt?”

“Yes,” I said, referring to the parable of the two debtors (Luke vii. 41, 42), “but the debt must be owned, and the fact acknowledged that you have *nothing* to pay; give up all attempts at compounding with your Creditor. Your debt is ten thousand talents, and your assets *nothing*, then there is free forgiveness.”

“But the receipt, what’s that?”

“Well, ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.’ He undertook to pay the penalty; He endured the wrath; He died the death, and He sustained the judgment you deserved. His blood, His death, was what paid the debt, but God raised Him from the dead, declaring to all that He, the Creditor, was satisfied with the work of His Son, and He took Him up to heaven, and gave Him a place at His right hand. This is really

THE RECEIPT—JESUS RISEN,

ascended, and seated at God’s right hand. But the Holy Spirit has come down, and declared God’s satisfaction in the work of Christ, and caused it to be written in this Book (the New Testament), so that this may answer to a *written receipt*, which any poor sinner, who owns to God his condition and helplessness, may hold in his hand, and have the

blessed sense of security which it alone can give; and it cannot lie nor can it change."

This Sam seized upon with the avidity of a soul who needed it, as a drowning man clutches the life-buoy thrown to him, and he was at peace.

Thinking over it afterwards, my fears were aroused lest he had too easily entered into peace, so on the next visit I thought I would test him. He was reminded of his sins and past life, of the inflexible holiness of God, whose purity could not be sullied by sin, of the impossibility of a sinner in his sins ever finding a standing-place before this holy God, and of the hell that awaits all such.

Quiet attention and recognition of the truth of the statements made gradually gave way to a nervous excitement as he saw his reality was questioned, and raising himself up on his left elbow, with his right forefinger he touched several times the New Testament which lay unopened upon my knee, and said, "Well, I can't read, but if you read in that Book, you'll find that

JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR SINNERS,"

and fell back again upon his bed.

Happy Sam, he had got the receipt, and he clutched it steadily to the end, which was not long in coming.

His farm and prosperity were left. He had worked hard for it of late years, but now he had become entitled to blessings of another character

that he had not wrought for, and shortly he was divested of that which made care for the one necessary, and entered more fully into the other, though he awaits yet the full enjoyment of those spiritual blessings that were made his, feeble believer as he was, in common with all who rest on Christ for salvation.

His funeral in the bush cemetery was romantic. The horses of the cavalcade that followed the body, composed of the farmers and settlers for miles up and down the river, were "hung" on the post-and-rail fence of the cemetery, or to the gum trees that grew within and without, and the men stood around as we committed his body to the grave; stalwart and strong they were, though with traces of hardship and endurance that mark ordinarily the conquerors of the soil in new countries, and with marks also of that sympathy that knits men's hearts together who have shared common dangers and won common victories. Some that stood around that grave had found the peace Sam B—— had so recently found; others knew it not. Some have passed off the scene, while others still remain. The day will declare how many really trusted Christ for salvation.

And you, my reader, have you made the receipt your own? This is faith's work.

The value is in the blood.

G. J. S.

THE RED SEA ; OR, "SAVED." *

(EXODUS xiv.)



HERE is a very striking comment in the New Testament upon this passage in Israel's history. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (Heb. xi. 29). It is the striking contrast between the pathway of faith and the pathway of nature—the pathway of the man of the world, in plain language.

God's Word always describes things exactly as they are, even in a figure like this, and an unestablished soul will find in this 14th chapter what absolutely answers to its own experience.

We learn, through these figures and types, that which God has for the blessing of our souls now in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. You must understand that to-day everything is taken out of type, and all is found in a Person in glory. Nevertheless the types are all designed by God to teach us precious and wondrous truths. There are four outstanding types of the Lord Jesus in Israel's history. First, the slaying of the lamb; secondly, the passage through the Red Sea; thirdly, the brazen serpent; and lastly, the passage through the Jordan. They are four figures of Christ's death, and they all teach totally different truths.

* Extracted from "Handfuls of Purpose."

God is holy, hates sin perfectly, and cannot put up with it in anybody, not even when it was laid on His own blessed Son, who bore it vicariously on the cross. It must be judged. But the lesson of the Red Sea differs greatly from that of the blood upon the lintel. In that case it does not go beyond the truth that God, as a judge, is kept out. If, through grace, you have been led to trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the very holiness and the righteousness of God make it absolutely impossible for Him to judge you. I may be quite clear as to that, and know my sins are forgiven, but still encounter real soul-difficulties. What about Satan's power? Although Israel was perfectly safe as far as God was concerned, they were by no means assured as far as Pharaoh was concerned. It was a question as to whether those people really belonged to God or to Pharaoh. The Red Sea settled that point.

There is a remarkable scripture in Isaiah, where it speaks of Israel in a day to come, when God will again deliver them. "For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and *the God of Israel will be your rereward*" (Isa. lii. 12). In Exodus xii. they were like a lot of timid, frightened creatures, flying from an angry foe. Being "thrust out of Egypt" (xii. 39), they went out with haste, and "it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled" (xiv. 5). They went out for what I may call dear life. They fled for refuge, fearing the pursuing foe. By-and-by it

will not be in haste, for they will have learned then, that it is not a question between themselves and Pharaoh, but a question between God and Pharaoh as to whom they belong.

Perhaps some one is saying: "I thought I was converted, but now I do not think I can be, for I get into a great state of fear and doubt at times." You will find great comfort in the way in which the truth is brought out in this chapter. The moment a believer is under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is sheltered. And the same blood that shelters him sets him apart to God. Hence you belong to God, spirit, soul, and body. You are not your own, for you are bought with a price (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). You belong to the Lord, but you are still in the world, and God would lead you out, as He led Israel out of Egypt. "He led them forth by the right way" (Ps. cvii. 7). "It came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, *although that was near*; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up by five in a rank out of the land of Egypt" (xiii. 17, 18).

They might have got up to the land in eleven days' journey or thereabout (Deut. i. 2). But why were they not led that way? They were not yet fit for war, and the Lord said, If they meet the

Philistines on the road, and see war, they will return to Egypt, so He led them round by the way of the wilderness. They had never seen war, nor did they see it till they had seen God's power. I will tell you what they did see. They saw "the salvation of the Lord." He loves to teach you first, what the triumph of Christ is, how completely and absolutely the enemy's power has been broken. You have to learn this, that you cannot deliver yourself. Weakness marks us, and weakness was confessed by them as "they went up by five in a rank" (xiii. 18, *margin*). Do you know how—forty years afterwards—they went into Canaan? It was "marshalled by five" there too (Josh. i. 14, iv. 12).

What is the meaning of five? In Scripture five is the numeral that is always connected with weakness, *e.g.*, "Five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?" (John vi. 9). What good were five? I do not doubt that five is the expression of weakness. And what God has to teach us is, that in ourselves we are the expression of utter weakness. We have no strength either in the commencement or end of our journeyings, but we do not learn that all in a day. When they were just going into the heavenly land, they got in by fives. You have no strength either to get out of Egypt, or to go into Canaan. God must be our strength, and is so when we are conscientiously weak. "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. xii. 10).

This statement as to the five comes up first when they were to go through the Red Sea, with crystal walls on either side—their lateral defence from the foe. When they come to Jordan, what do I find? The “five in a rank” is maintained, though, as you know, there was not a drop of water within thirty miles of them (Josh. iii. 16). As they went through the Red Sea the waters were a wall on the right hand and on the left. Who could go in there? Nothing but faith. Nature might attempt it, and did, but only to meet judgment. It is a very serious thing to try, in the power of nature, the path of faith.

But we read that Pharaoh “made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them, . . . and he pursued after the children of Israel” (xiv. 6-8). The whole power of the enemy is in exercise to hinder their escape, but every single bit of that power was broken by God in the moment of the deliverance of His beloved people. God led them on, and “brought them forth also with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble among their tribes” (Ps. cv. 37). Look how secure they were. “The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: he took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people”

(xiii. 21, 22). Have not you too heard him say, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20)? He led His people then, and He leads His people now, if only they will let Him.

God first brings them down to the edge of the sea (chap. xiv. 1, 2). He must teach us, as a practical thing, our own weakness. You ask, What is the meaning of the figure of the Red Sea? It is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, and our sins. I never shall be clear of the enemy until I know a risen Christ. Many a believer goes all his days saying, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24). You will never be delivered till you get your eye upon a risen Christ, and know that in His death and resurrection you are connected with Him. That is, that what is true of Christ is now true for you. By grace I am united to Christ. In figure I learn that the death and resurrection of Christ was for me. If He died, I died. If He is risen, I am risen. I must accept death, as the judgment of God upon man. But what liberty, what blessing for your soul, when you see all this true of yourself in Christ's death and resurrection.

We do not learn that all in a minute, but if we do learn it we can truly say, Oh, happy man that I am, for I have learned through grace, what the love of the Lord is, and what the victory which He has gained for me. Romans vii. is the experience of

many a person, who is really a believer, and hence a child of God, but it is the experience of an undelivered soul. The delivered soul says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Who shall deliver me?" is the piteous query of the undelivered, and no doubt there is many a person who is going through that experience. I quite admit it is experimental. You must know it in your own soul. And you are not delivered till you are delivered. Do you understand that? When are you delivered? When you give up trying to deliver yourself.

Israel went through the Red Sea on dry land. Dry land is where Christ is. Christ in resurrection, Christ in acceptance, and life, and glory before God. Christ the Victor. That is dry land for a Christian to-day. I am in Christ. I am not in Adam. That is what I understand by "dry land." Every hindrance is gone, and all the power of the enemy is broken.

"The Saviour *lives!* no more to die!
 He lives, our Head, enthroned on high;
 He lives triumphant o'er the grave;
 He lives eternally to save!

He lives to still His people's fears;
 He lives to wipe away their tears;
 He lives their mansions to prepare;
 He lives to bring them safely there."

(*To be continued.*)

DO YOU KNOW?



READER,—Do you know that you are known? There is One you could not enlighten as to the thoughts and acts of your whole life. In the secret depths of its hidden springs and motives, it lies naked and opened unto the eyes

of Him with whom we have to do. Will you carefully weigh this fact? It only needs to be realised in order to arrest and arouse you, as to *how* YOU stand in relation to God. A merchant was once thus awakened, and he owned to the writer that "it was a deep delusion for any man to think that he was not perfectly known by God, because God knew all about him."

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known *me*. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. . . . Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Ps. cxxxix. 1-5, 12).

When you get into the knowledge of this solemn truth, the first sense in your soul is the feeling of fear; but God would not be God, if He did not fully know us, and this feeling of fear is the just consequence in view of His holiness.

For the Word of God clearly shows that "there is none righteous, no, not one." We are inclined either to shirk this searching and sweeping statement, or practically deny it; but it is of supreme importance to face the truth, which He who knows us testifies of us, so I ask you to ponder deeply the following weighty statements from the Word of God:—

"There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. iii. 10-18).

Having now beheld your character in the light of the holiness of God, it is a matter of the deepest concern to understand the groundwork of peace with God as made known in Scripture.

In Romans iii. 25 we read: "Whom (Christ Jesus) God has set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood." Observe the expression "through faith in His blood." The blood is the witness that the life has been surrendered, or given up. It is here represented as the basis of righteousness of God in acting in grace towards the sinner. God Himself has laid a righteous ground on which He can meet your sinful condition in perfect consistency with His holiness. The Holy

One could not bless you and pass by sins. But this He can do through the judgment of sin in the cross of Christ, having there secured the harmonious repose of all His attributes. Thus, the cross clearly and conclusively shows that God did not compromise one of His attributes in order to redeem and bless man.

I beseech you, therefore, reader, in view of the discovery of your true condition, in the presence of a Holy God, to meditate on the wondrous fact of the death of Jesus Christ. He, in love, took upon Himself the judgment which was wholly due to you—the judgment of God on the cross. What a truth! He, who knew no sin, God made Him sin for us, and He—Jesus—bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Thus God, who was the offended One, has, in matchless grace, and at infinite cost, brought salvation, full and free, to you, sinner. But you get the good of it, not by works of righteousness, nor merit of any kind, but alone by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—risen and seated at the right hand of God, a Saviour for all, therefore for YOU.

READER, DO YOU BELIEVE IN HIM?

“In Christ I now learn that I’m made
Partaker with saints in the light;
Perfection divine
In Him is made mine,
Who dwells in the glory so bright.”

PEACE WITH GOD: DO YOU ENJOY IT?

NEED AND DANGER.

DANIEL WEBSTER being once asked what was the greatest thought that ever occupied his mind, replied, "My individual responsibility to God."

That every man is responsible to God, and *must meet Him*, the Scriptures

plainly testify.

This thought is not very pleasant to those who are living in their sins, and hence not prepared to face the tremendous issues involved. But whether or not the solemn fact remains.

Dear reader, with all the earnestness of my soul, and with sincere affection for yours, I desire to ask you, If the Lord from heaven were suddenly to appear, or if death were to make an unexpected call at your door, *are you quite ready?* Consider!

Do not put the question from you; for it demands the earnest, undivided attention of every man, be he prince or peasant, learned or illiterate, and therefore it demands yours.

Think of a man sleeping five stories high when the cry of fire was raised, and he suddenly waked up to find every way of escape cut off but the window of his bedroom—would he be unconcerned? Would he not soon cry for help? And if the fire-escape was placed at his disposal, would he not be

thought a madman if he did not *at once* avail himself of it?

Oh! dear reader, if you are not saved you are like the man in the burning house. The means of deliverance is brought close to you, *delay not a moment*. Escape for your very life, while now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

But you may be awakened to a sense of your danger, and feeling the burden of your sins; your cry may be like that of an officer, who being aroused to a sense of his true condition in the sight of God, used to pray until the sweat would stand like beads upon his forehead, "Oh, that I had a telegram from heaven to say my sins are all forgiven." Then let me point you to the word that was brought home in power to his soul—"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43).

You reply, "I have always believed in Jesus, since I was able to lisp His name, and yet I have not the assurance that my sins are forgiven."

Hold, friend! Think of what you say. Mark God's words, "*Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*" You cannot divorce these two. God has joined together, believing and receiving; therefore keep them together and know the happiness of the man of whom David speaks when he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed

is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2).

THE DIFFICULTY SETTLED.

Thank God you need not give anything to enjoy this great blessing, nor does God ask anything from you, save truly to own what you are before Him, a guilty sinner, who has no title to anything but His condemnation, and wrath on account of your sins. Do you take that place? Are you ready to have inscribed upon you, as a true description of your state, Guilty before God, Condemned already?

There are but two ways of meeting God. One is in grace, the other in judgment. If you meet God in grace *now*, you will be justified from all things and saved from coming judgment. If you meet Him in judgment, you will be banished from His presence for ever—"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. i. 7-9).

Be assured God is not against you, though He hates your sins. Jesus did not come to make God love us, but to express the compassion that was already in His heart toward us. "*God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet*

sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). God did not require to be reconciled to us, as some in the darkness of their minds suppose, but we, as rebel sinners against His righteous throne, needed to be reconciled to Him. "For if when we were enemies; we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10).

How then could this be possible so long as the question of our sins remained unsettled? Could a holy, righteous God pass over our sins consistently with His revealed character? Impossible. But that He might justly pardon, He gave Jesus, who came in love and gave Himself on the cross a sacrifice for our sins, and by so doing has met the whole question of sin to God's entire satisfaction, proved by His raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand (Heb. x. 12).

Let me illustrate what I mean. Suppose a dispute has arisen between two nations. One of them has trespassed on the other's territory. Every means possible is used by the aggrieved nation to effect a reconciliation, but all to no purpose: nothing is left but to declare war, and the sword is drawn, that the nation whose rights have been invaded may maintain its ground. Is it not plain that before a reconciliation could be effected *that which caused the breach must be settled?* And before peace could be proclaimed, peace must be made.

"That is very clear," you say.

Is it not equally clear that, as the result of peace having been made and proclaimed, it would be the indisputable right of those nations to enjoy peace?

"That is very plain also."

Mark then, dear reader, what these verses say: "And *having made peace* through the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20), He "came and *preached peace* to you that were afar off" (Eph. ii. 17). "Therefore being justified by faith, *we have peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

Three blessed, soul-establishing facts are brought before us in these verses:—Peace made. Peace preached. Peace possessed.

On the cross Jesus made peace. In resurrection He came forth in triumph and preached peace. At God's right hand in glory bright "he is our peace." He sits there because His work is done; and God being perfectly satisfied, it is the privilege of every believer to rest in the full enjoyment of what has been accomplished for him, and to know that "As he is, so are we in this world" (1 John iv. 17).

What a place to be in by divine grace! Accept the testimony of God brought to you concerning Christ and His finished work, and *you* will be in it. By receiving it you make it your own, and thus show that you believe in Him. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13).

THE HINDRANCE TO ENJOYMENT.

Many believers have not *settled* peace, because they confound the work of the Spirit of God *in* them with the work of Christ *for* them; they often look within themselves for what are called *evidences*, such as perfect love and a pure heart; and because they do not find these they get down-cast, and perplexed, and lose their enjoyment.

This will not surprise any who have learned what the flesh is, which remains unchanged in every believer. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." The flesh can never become spirit, or join with it. A gardener might as well think to change a nettle into a rose as for a believer to think that by any kind of culture—moral or religious—he could change the character of the flesh. Flesh it is, and flesh it will remain until death ends our history, or the Lord comes to change our body. But God has *condemned* it in the death of Christ, and has thus set it aside judicially for ever. With all reverence it may be said, God could not improve it: and if we as believers set about to improve that which is so far past mending, our efforts will only end in failure. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*" (Rom. viii. 3). Now what He con-

demns He does not afterwards take up again, and we should imitate Him in this respect—it will secure our blessing and joy.

The solemn but important testimony of Romans vii. 18 is, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), *dwelleth no good thing.*" When this is truly learned there will be nothing expected from it, and hence no heart-breaking disappointment.

If our eternal salvation rested upon what we are, or the evidences we find in ourselves, it would have been all over with us long ago. Thank God it is not so. It rests alone on the solid immovable foundation of Christ's finished work for us, and God's perfect satisfaction with that work, fully testified in His Word.

Hence we may confidently say

"That which can shake the cross
 May shake the peace it made ;
 Which tells me Christ has never died,
 Or never left the grave.
 Till then my peace is sure :
 It will not, cannot yield ;
 Jesus, I know, both died and rose—
 On this firm Rock I build."

SANCTIFICATION NECESSARY TO PEACE.

In 2 Thessalonians ii. 13 we read, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." And again in Hebrews x. 14, 15: "For by one offer-

ing he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." (And note, in this connection the Holy Ghost is not a witness inside to our feelings, but *outside* in the testimony of the Scriptures, the unchanging Word of the living God. The inside part we have in Romans viii. 15, 16.)

These scriptures present sanctification in two aspects—

Sanctification by the Spirit.

Sanctification by the work of Christ.

One is a moral operation wrought in us, the other is a work done for and outside of us; one fits us personally to enter and enjoy God's kingdom, the other clears us of our guilt and sets us before God without a cloud. How blessed! Well may it be said, "What hath God wrought?"

But it may be asked, Is a person fully sanctified and fitted for God's presence when he has believed the gospel, and received the Holy Spirit? Let Scripture answer, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (that is *fit*) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12).

Is it then denied that sanctification is also a progressive work? By no means. To do so would be to go right against the plainest Scripture teaching.

In John xvii. the blessed Lord prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And Paul says in Ephesians v., "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." And other passages might be quoted.

As long as we are in this world we require the ministry of the Lord Jesus on high, to remove from us everything that would defile us, or hinder our spiritual growth, and thus be a barrier to our enjoyment of the place into which we have been brought by divine grace (John xiii.; 1 John ii. 1).

In His rich grace the blessed Lord has charged Himself with us all the way through.

He has served us in the past—He gave Himself for us (Titus ii. 14).

He is serving us in the present—He lives for us (Heb. vii. 25).

He will serve us in the future—when He comes for us (Heb. ix. 28; Luke xii. 37).

Our redemption will then be complete. We shall be out of the reach of all that would defile, or hinder our full enjoyment of His unbounded love; out of all the sorrows and trials; and brought into all the joy and delight of the Father's house, to go no more out, but feast our souls for ever in His own blessed company.

Until that happy moment, Lord Jesus, keep us!

"Oh to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee."

GOD'S UNIVERSAL COMMAND.



LET me draw your most earnest attention, dear reader, to a requirement of God, which, alas! is painfully overlooked on all hands, but which is, nevertheless, of primary moment and of universal obligation. It is more than a requirement; it is a plain and positive command!

Yet it is not one of the ten which go to form the well-known Decalogue. It is not a prohibition against the commission of any particular sin.

Nor is it an appeal to love God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself, which is, I may say, the Decalogue presented in a positive way. It is not a law limited to a certain nation, nor a bond of relationship between God and a certain people. No, it has its application to every soul throughout the wide world; and I wonder, my friend, whether you have personally rendered obedience to it.

That you should do so is of eternal importance. Your salvation from hell, and your acceptance into God's everlasting kingdom hinges upon your response or otherwise.

It is God's call to repentance. I quote the words: "GOD NOW COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT" (Acts xvii.30). Let us patiently take these words in their order and examine them:—

"GOD,"

to whom you are responsible, and against whom you have sinned. Your Creator, the omniscient and almighty Ruler of all, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," and He who, withal, spared not His Son to the death for sinners, and has raised Him from the dead in proof that the atoning work of Calvary is sufficient. Yes, God

"Now,"

at a time when He has shown by that death and resurrection the way of present pardon, and peace, and reconciliation, and when He has therefore spoken as never before. No prophet's voice could equal that of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; no moment of time could out-value that wherein sin was borne and its awful curse endured. The cross stands alone; it was the event of supreme importance for fallen man. And therefore, on the ground of that wondrous and finished work, God now

"COMMANDETH"!

It is no mere appeal, no gentle behest, no passing call! It is a command! It carries authority; it demands attention; it silences opposition. God's present command makes itself heard at the eternal peril of the disobedient. If 'to disobey Moses' law meant certain death, how much worse a fate shall befall the offender in this case? This voice speaks from heaven! It is universal, and hence God now commandeth

“ALL MEN,”

Jew and Gentile alike, men of every clime and country, of every rank and station; the king, the captive; the wise, the ignorant; the rich, the poor; the priest, the people—all, without one single, solitary exception. It is the bounden duty, the strongest and most unalterable obligation, of all men to yield to this command. Submission, the fullest and most absolute, must be rendered, and that

“EVERYWHERE,”

from palace to hovel, and from court to cottage, in the streets and lanes of the city to the highways and hedges, on the ocean wave or the bleak moor-side—not one corner of this sin-blasted and rebellious earth but must see the effect of obedience to this all-embracing command

“TO REPENT.”

Yes, to repent! Explanation is not needed. We all know what this means. Theological definitions might only bewilder and lead us away from the scent. A naughty child knows in its conscience the philosophy of repenting. He requires no lengthened tutoring in the art of confessing his offence.

No explanation is given in the verse I quote. God commands repentance! That is quite enough; and believe me, woe betide the soul that refuses to cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner”! Yes, a thousand times woe!

And why? Because we read that, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3).

Friend, have you repented? Pause, I beg of you—for, if not, you shall certainly perish! Repentance is absolutely necessary.

God chose that Athens, and its famous court of Mars Hill, should be the earthly source of this command. That proud, intellectual city! It was she who first heard this command to repent.

And did she repent? Well, the response given at the moment was deplorably small. Pride made it so! Ah! that wretched pride of intellect, or position, or wealth, or morality. What a curse it is!

Friend, your soul is at stake! God commands—do you obey!

J. W. S.

"THERE is but one way into the holiest of all, and that is a blood-sprinkled way. It is vain to strive to enter by any other. Men may attempt to work themselves in, to pray themselves in, to buy themselves in, to get in by a pathway of ordinances, or it may be of half-ordinances, half-Christ—but it is of no use. God speaks of *one* way, and but one; and that way has been thrown open through the rent veil of the Saviour's flesh. Along that way have the millions of the saved passed, from age to age. The one sacrifice of the cross is divinely sufficient for all. God asks no more, and He can take no less."

C. H. M.

"THE SHORTEST ROAD TO HEAVEN."



"ELL me truly, Dr N——, is there no hope?"

"It would be unkind to deceive you, Mrs W——. Your son has but a short time to live. Probably he will not see another day."

Mrs W—— and the doctor stood at the window of the sick-room, looking out on the morning sunshine. The sick man—in the last stage of consumption—lay in bed at the farther side of the large room—asleep, as they thought.

But Ralph W—— was not asleep. Though he lay with closed eyes, he was quite awake, and heard distinctly his mother's question, and the doctor's answer.

As soon as the doctor had gone he started up, his face flushed, his eyes blazing with excitement and horror.

"Mother," he cried, "come here. It's not true. Say it's not true. I can't be dying. It's not possible that I'm never to get better. . . . I've been ill a long time; but summer is coming, and warm weather and bright sunshine, and I'll get strong, and fly around again with the best of them."

A violent fit of coughing checked his breathless utterance. Recovering, he grasped his mother's hands, and peering into her agonised face, cried—

"Mother! I'm not dying, am I?"

"Oh, Ralph, my son, my son!" she moaned, "I thought you knew."

"Knew! knew I was dying! How could I know? What has a gay young fellow like me to do with death? . . . I love life; and health and strength; and fun and frolic; and sports and pastimes; . . . and drinking, and betting too, if you like; and dashing young men and pretty girls. . . . Oh, mother! I want to be among it all again, and enjoy myself. I don't want to die."

"Calm yourself, Ralph; you distress me so," his mother pleaded. "My dear, dear boy, I cannot bear this." Then, as a racking cough shook his whole frame—"Shall I call nurse, dear?"

"No, no," he gasped. "Stay with me, mother. I don't want any one else now. I will be quiet."

He was very ill. At the best he could only speak in short, painful whispers, unless he was much excited, when his voice became almost strong. He lay still for a few minutes, his mother's hand clasped in his. Suddenly, springing up in bed, he seized her arm, gazed into her face, and almost screamed—

"Mother! what will become of me when I die! My soul, I mean. Good God! It never struck me till this moment that I had a soul. . . . And after death the judgment," he cried, tossing wildly back among the pillows, "and the great God is the Judge, . . . and oh, my soul! I am not fit to appear before that bar. . . . Tell me what to do, mother. For mercy's sake, tell me what to do. I'm dying! I'm

dying! There's nothing before me but the blackness of darkness. I'm lost, lost, lost! for ever, and for evermore."

Pausing a moment for breath, he continued—

"Why do you stand there looking so grief-stricken, and urging me to be quiet, as if I were a child crying for a toy? No time to be quiet now, mother, with an awful eternity staring me in the face. *You* should know what to do. *You* should have prepared me for this. . . . And now I think of it, I never heard you mention the name of God, except in the praises of the sanctuary that your beloved parson makes so much of. . . . *You* did not tell me about God when I was a little chap; you never taught me to say a prayer. You never told me that one day I would lie on a death-bed, with all the sins of my vile, wicked, godless life pressing me down into the awful darkness. . . . Mother, oh, mother!" he wailed, "why didn't you?"

Mrs W—— sank on her knees by the bed-side, and burst into tears. Her son laid his wasted hand on the bowed head, and in a gentler tone, said—

"But perhaps you did not know, poor mother. Perhaps no one ever taught *you*. Never mind; don't cry. . . . But I wish you would send for some one who knows."

"Oh, my Ralph! I've been an erring, sinful woman," she sobbed. "There has been no God in my life, boy. But if I had known I would live to endure this——" Then, calming herself with an effort, "Shall I send for Mr P——?" she asked.

"No," cried Ralph, passion darting from his eyes, "don't send for yon sleek old fellow. What does he know about it, or about me either? . . . I've gone to his church once in a while to please you—to keep up appearances, as you said. I've given him money for his blessed church decorations, and let him feast at my table as often as he pleased. . . . And what has he ever done for me? Smiled in my face, called me his 'dear boy,' his 'generous young friend,' 'a support to the church,' and all the rest of it. . . . And he *should* have told me that I was a vile sinner, standing on the very brink of hell. . . . Did he ever try to save my soul? He did not take the liberty of hinting that I had a soul. And as for *sin*, he would have been inexpressibly shocked had any one dared to associate the name of young W—, of F—, with anything so vulgar. . . . Only the poor are sinners in his eyes. The rich can do no wrong. I don't want *him*. There's a young fellow, minister down in the parish church—M— is his name. He is the right sort. He will understand. And yet he does enjoy life too. Can ride a horse, wield a golf club, handle an oar, play cricket, and sing a good song with any man going. Cycles too—rides one of the best machines in town, and at a pace that none of us can touch, and yet, I'll be bound, he knows the way to heaven. . . . Send for him, mother, and give me my medicine. I'm dead tired. I'll be still for a bit, and save my strength for Mr M—'s coming."

Mrs W— attended to both his requests. For

a long time there was silence in the sick-room, where she continued her anxious watch. The invalid, utterly exhausted, fell into a troubled sleep, from which he awoke about noon.

"Has Mr M—— come?" he asked at once.

"No, dear! He has cycled over to N——, but is expected home by mid-day, and his sister promises that he will come as soon as he returns."

"That's all right, mother. He is sure to come. He knows me. Once we played together in a cricket match. Our side won, and I was wild with excitement and enthusiasm. We two had got a bit apart from the others, and I was laying it off to him in great style—triumphant over our victory. M—— looked me straight in the eyes, and said, 'W——, what a splendid Christian you would make!' . . . And he seemed as if he would have liked to say more, but I swore, and told him to mind his own flock, that my shepherd was the Rev. Silas P——, and *he* would be ready to promise me a front seat in heaven any day, if I gave him another hundred or two for his precious Church Extension Scheme. . . . M—— looked vexed, and walked away, and I thought no more of the matter till now."

Shortly after Mr M—— arrived. Mrs W—— went downstairs to meet him, and was struck by the noble, manly appearance of the athletic young minister. He was fresh from a twenty-mile ride, and looked the picture of health and youthful vigour. There was comfort in the few words of

sympathy which he addressed to Mrs W——, and a kindness in the glance of his clear blue eyes which won her confidence at once.

They went to the sick-room. Ralph had been working himself into a frenzy during the few minutes of his mother's absence. He was sitting up in bed, propped by numerous pillows. Great beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead; his dark eyes flashed wildly, and the hectic flush burned on his cheek. As soon as he saw Mr M—— he stretched out both hands to him, and in a voice quivering with anxiety and terror, cried—

“Mr M——, I'm dying. I've only a few minutes to live. *Show me the shortest road to heaven.*”

The minister took the almost transparent hands in his, and laid the sufferer gently back among the pillows. Looking steadily into the poor emaciated face, he said quietly—

“Your very wish to know, Mr W——, shows that you have taken a step in the right direction.”

“Yes, I understand,” he continued (checking the dying man's excited interruption, for he saw the end was approaching, and that little strength was left for argument,) “I know what you would say. I know what your life has been—how you were given health, talents, riches, influence, and the power to do much good, and now on your death-bed your eyes are suddenly opened, and you see the past in all its hideousness—with its sins indulged, time wasted, talents misspent, riches and influence put to improper uses, and no thought given to the

God who has done so much for you. . . . God knows too, my friend. He knows all your weaknesses and sins far better than you do yourself. And yet He has no thoughts of anger towards you. He is a God of love, Ralph, and is yearning over you now with a love greater—far greater than you can comprehend. . . . ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ . . . Jesus died for such as you. He loves you with an infinite love. It is not His wish that you should perish; and for Christ’s dear sake, the Father is willing, yea, more than willing, to forgive all the sins of the past, and to receive you now, if you will but look away from your own evil self, and yield your heart to Him. Trust Him, Ralph; throw yourself entirely on His mercy, and He will not fail you.”

“It’s too late, M——; too late.”

“It is not too late, my dear friend. The gates of heaven opened for the penitent thief, when life was as nearly over for him as it is for you. A drowning man does not refuse the rope that is suddenly thrown to him, because he had given up hope of being saved. Do not despair, and do not harden your heart now. Surely you cannot reject the Saviour, who is so earnestly pleading for your love, in the last brief minutes of your life!”

Mr M—— then prayed, with all the earnestness of his heart; prayed that this soul might find peace even at the eleventh hour; prayed for help

to direct the dying man's thoughts; and for the power of the Spirit to show the sufferer the Lamb of God, and to break down the barriers that were steeling his heart.

"It's no use, M— —," Ralph said sadly, when he had finished. "I understand in a way, but I'm nearly through. My powers fail—my brain refuses to work. I cannot fix my thoughts as I could in the morning. . . . I see nothing before me but the awful blackness, and oh! M——, I do not want to go down into the darkness. I long for light. . . . My whole soul cries out for the light—call it heaven or call it God, or what you will."

A prolonged fit of coughing ensued, and the watchers saw that death was near. The invalid was now much exhausted, but the minister, by bending over him, was able to make out his feeble utterance.

"It's no use for me, M——. . . . I've missed the way to heaven. . . . I can't see . . . only an eternity of woe. . . . Warn the others—T——, and D——, and N——, . . . and all yon young fellows in the team. . . . Tell them about me. . . . Tell them not to put off till the end. . . . They'll make splendid Christians, M——. . . . They are not bad fellows, though they are a bit wild. . . . I was not worse than the rest. . . . But I forgot about *death*. . . . I was too busy with this world's pleasures . . . to think about your God. . . . I never sought the way to heaven. . . ."

A brief period of unconsciousness followed.

When Ralph again opened his eyes, he looked longingly at his mother, then at Mr M——, whose hand he still clasped.

“Too late for me, M—— . . . but . . . mind the others . . . and . . . my . . . mother.”

A shuddering sigh, and Ralph W——’s soul passed to its account.

Reader, do you know the road to heaven? If so, are your feet treading in it?

The Lord Jesus said, “I am the way.” Do you know Him? If not, let the foregoing terrible, but true tale appeal to you.

G. A. T.

FOR EVER.



“T’S awful to think that it is for ever.”

These were the words of a young man who had just left a gospel meeting. The preacher had been pressing upon his hearers the realities of eternity, and this young man being unconverted, these

two words “for ever” set him athinking.

Has the reader ever considered these two words? They are well worth pondering, whichever way we look at them. If this should meet the eye of one who is going on, careless and heedless, to destruction, we would like to put a question to that one.

Have you ever calmly considered that the road you are on will end in the "lake of fire," and it will be "for ever"? What a terrible thought! Without God! without hope! "For ever." On the other hand, did it never strike you that you are missing something which is really worth having?

"Remember, two paths are before thee,
And both thy attention invite ;
But one leadeth on to destruction,
The other to joy and delight."

As a sinner, you deserve what lies at the end of the road you are on at present; but "God who is rich in mercy," having found a ransom in Christ, His well-beloved Son, can now say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit." That blessed One having settled the whole question of sin, God can, and does, now offer to every sinner who will receive it a full and free salvation, and it too is "for ever."

That milk-and-water sort of gospel that we hear proclaimed in this day—"Saved to-day, and lost to-morrow"—is not God's salvation. He saves "with an everlasting salvation." "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it; and God doeth it that men should fear before him" (Eccles. iii. 14). What a contrast between the two. For ever in the glory of God, singing the praises of the One who loved you, and gave Himself for you; or for ever in the lake of fire, bewailing your own foolishness in being there.

“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa. xxxiii. 14).

Dear reader, if you have never faced the matter before, face it now before it be too late. Plant your foot firmly down, saying, in answer to that last scripture we have quoted, “By God’s grace, not I.”

A. C.

OUR OLD SCHOOLMASTER.



Once had an old schoolmaster, and an excellent tutor he was; and yet in spite of this not one of his scholars ever passed their examinations, but every one failed. His rules were perfect, his discipline most rigid—in fact, nothing escaped his keen eye, but every transgression and disobedience received its just recompense of reward. He was up early and late with his dull pupils, but try how he would he could not get them to obey him, or learn the lessons he vainly sought to teach them.

If he flogged them, they did no better, and though the highest awards were offered them if they would only do what he told them, not one of his troublesome pupils ever earned one single prize. Not one good-conduct mark was ever placed against their names, but black mark after black mark stood out

against them, the truthful witness to their bad conduct. Consequently they were ever in disgrace, and the long-looked-for vacation never arrived, neither were the wished-for holidays ever enjoyed. The poor scholars were for ever shut into the dreary bondage of trying to do that which was never done, and of seeking to please the old schoolmaster, while their ways were ever displeasing to him, because they always would do the very opposite to what he bade them.

And oh! how irksome to us did the old schoolmaster at last become, ever standing over us with his dark frown and severe threats as to what the result of our disobedience would be. We feared and dreaded him, and would gladly have thrown off his authority over us had it only been in our power, but that was an impossibility. And worst of all, we learned that he had entrusted to him the power of life and death, and that not one of his pupils had ever gained the former, but that all were subject to the latter. Shall we tell you his name? His name is

LAW!

“The law was our schoolmaster up to Christ”
(Gal. iii. 24, R.V.).

We shall never forget the day when deliverance came. It was just at the moment when despair had seized upon us, when effort after effort had been put forth to meet the demands of the old schoolmaster, and every one had failed; we had tried to do good, and found only evil present with us,

had done our utmost to conform to his rules, but in spite of every resolve to do the right had only found ourselves doing the wrong (for we inwardly delighted in what the old schoolmaster required of us, but, alas! found ourselves utterly powerless to carry it out), and all we could see before us was hopeless condemnation.

It was just at that moment when the joyful tidings reached us that there had been One who had met all the requirements of the old schoolmaster, and because of His perfect obedience He was able to take upon Himself all that was due to us, as having failed to do what we were required to do. In His great love He took our place, suffered the condemnation which was our due, bore the curse of a broken law which rested upon us, and, blessed for ever be His name! *died in our stead*, that we might be for ever set free from the old schoolmaster. The stripes which should have fallen upon our guilty backs fell upon His, and with His stripes we are healed. He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification; and since He has been raised from the dead, a perfect clearance—or justification—from all things is ours, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses (see Acts xiii. 39).

We own that the old schoolmaster was perfectly just in all that he required of us, and just, too, in condemning us, since we were guilty of disobeying him, and breaking his commandments; and we gladly own, too, that we are for ever set free from

his bondage and condemnation, since "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. iii. 13). Christ's death on the cross is that which has set us for ever free—free to live to God, and to Him who has been raised from the dead? that we should bring forth fruit unto God (see Rom. vii. 4). And now we can take up the language of faith, and say, "I through the law, have died to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 4).

Is it, then, that since we are no longer under the old schoolmaster that we can lightly esteem his claims? No, indeed! "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" We own that we have died to the law in the death of another, that is Christ ("Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ"), so that by His death we are now free, and can reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. vi. 11).

Reader, do you know this blessed deliverance? Would that it were known throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, known by those who, Sunday after Sunday, pray—

"Incline our hearts to keep Thy law."

Ponder well these words: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse . . . But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God it is evident: for the just shall live by faith" (Gal. iii. 10, 11).

The old schoolmaster can only pour out his anathemas over your guilty head and condemn you utterly. What folly, then, to seek for justification at his hand, since he holds there your just condemnation! "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). Think, dear reader, of how you stand in relation to God and a broken law, and tell us if you know of any way in which deliverance can reach you, other than the way of which we have spoken? No, before one could be set free the old schoolmaster had to be satisfied, and the grace of the gospel is told out in that *Christ died for sinners*, and thereby righteously we go free, who believe on him. The old schoolmaster has been silenced, and can no longer condemn, for He who was delivered for our offences has been raised again for our justification, so that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This the old schoolmaster could never have given us, for "the law was our schoolmaster up to Christ, *that we might be justified by faith.*" On this divine principle it can be possessed, and on no other, even as "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

If you, dear reader, are in possession of peace with God, through the knowledge of a perfect justification, then you can join with us in telling others, that since "faith is come, *we are no longer*

under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children (sons, R.V.) of God, by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 25).

In the presence of the grace of God the old schoolmaster must retire. He has seen his dread sentence righteously executed upon our divine substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ, and what more has he to say? And since he is silenced, the blessed grace of God can freely flow out toward us, taking us out of the place of condemnation where we were, and putting us *in Christ Jesus*, where there is "no condemnation," but where His full, free favour rests upon us. Oh, it is blessed to know that this is now our place before Him, "for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. viii. 3, 4).

May this be the reader's privilege to know and enjoy, so that you may be able to take an everlasting farewell of the old schoolmaster, and thus walking by the Spirit, under the rule of Christ risen, meet all his requirements without being under his bondage.

"Not the labour of my hands
 Could fulfil the law's demands;
 Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears for ever flow,
 Nought for sin could e'er atone,
 But Thy blood, and Thine alone!"

"I WANT TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD."



E will give you a short but true account of a scoffer's conversion.

J. A. was a bright intelligent young man, of the village of M. D., full of life and energy, but "having no hope, and without God in the world." Moreover, he scoffed at divine things, and took pleasure in ridiculing those whom he knew to be Christians. But the God he turned from had a purpose of grace towards him. A serious illness laid him low, and month after month he was bed-fast, growing weaker and weaker, in much pain, the doctors giving no hope of recovery.

It was then that his past life rose up before him, and the thought of having to do with God, and of spending eternity *somewhere*, pressed upon his spirit.

The question of his sins unforgiven, and the just claims of a holy God upon him as a guilty sinner, was raised in his soul, and he became deeply anxious to know the way of salvation, and as he expressed it, "*I want to get right with God.*"

Christians visited him and pointed out the way of life, but the difficulty which continually revolved itself in his mind was, "How can a holy and righteous God justify me from all charge of sin, *consistently with His righteousness?*"

He, however, kept these thoughts to himself,

feeling unable to express them, or to tell the exercise of soul he was passing through. Having heard of his illness, a Christian friend called to see him, and in the course of conversation about his soul's interest, quoted Romans iii. 25, 26, dwelling on the way which God has Himself provided for justifying the believer.

His attention was at once arrested, and he listened eagerly while the truth was unfolded to him, how "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," God has a *righteous ground* upon which to clear or justify the sinner, who believes, from all charge of guilt imputed against him. He explained what had troubled him, saying that knowing God to be a God of *love* and *grace* only made him more unhappy and hopeless, because he had sinned against Him *as such*. But now through the verity of God's Word, light broke in upon his soul, and in a moment, as in a flash of this blessed divine light, he saw that all the righteous claims of a holy God were not only vindicated by the death of Jesus, but God Himself *glorified* thereby, even more than if he had never sinned at all!

Settled peace thenceforth took possession of his soul, and after-visits found him resting confidently and happily in the sure Word of God. The Spirit of God has since led him on in the truth, and awakened a desire to learn more of the mind and will of God. Doubtless many anxious souls are seeking to solve the important question which God, in mercy, brought before J. A., and in His rich grace

opened out to him unto salvation—how “*he can be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus,*” and that “*to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness.*”

Friend, you may not scoff, nor be religious either, but we would ask solemnly, “*Are you really right with God?*”

Oh, think of your past life, of those sins of yours! Think of God’s holiness, and of your having for certain to *spend eternity somewhere!* But think of the love and grace of God to meet you in all. May His Spirit shine into you, and put you “right,” as He did J. A., ere you drift under Satan’s power to where your hopeless but certain anxiety could but torment you in darkness for ever!

J. N.

THE RED SEA; OR, SAVED.

(EXODUS XIV.)

“**A**ND the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, and against Baal-Zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They

are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in" (xiv. 1-3).

Pi-hahiroth is part of God's ways with us, to teach us the utter uselessness of the flesh. A young convert often says, "Now I am going to do good, and I shall be a different person, and I shall live a different life." There is a great deal of self-confidence about us until we learn we can do nothing, and that God must do everything. It is a very remarkable thing that the meaning of the word Pi-hahiroth is "The gate of liberty." When you have the sense, I have not one bit of strength to deliver myself, it will be all right with you. So was it here. Pharaoh's servants told him that the people fled; he thereupon made ready his chariots, and went after them with a high hand (vers. 5-8). So the devil is determined to follow and overtake you. He is not going to let you be the devoted servant of the Lord Jesus, if he can help it.

We read in verse 9 that Pharaoh overtook them, "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid" (ver. 10). The condition of Israel much resembles the doubts and fears that have gone through our souls, and their next words show that their hearts and ours are exactly alike. Do you know that you have a heart that could actually take you back into the world, even supposing you are converted? "And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us

away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness" (vers. 11, 12). When they were on the road to Canaan, what unbelieving language! Could we so speak? Did your heart never say in hours of pressure and temptation, After all it is a pity I professed Christ? If so, my friend, you will yet be sorry that you indulged in such unbelief.

I think God let Israel pass by Pi-hahiroth that they might learn how He can open "a gate of liberty," and that they might taste the triumph of His deliverance. God, and God only, could deliver them. That was the point (ver. 13). Moses' answer is splendid. Hear what he says: "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (vers. 13, 14). They were to see God's salvation that day. What is God's salvation? The blood of the Lamb has met all His claims, His power has crushed the power of the enemy absolutely, and His people are brought to Himself, just to enjoy Him. That is salvation!

"Stand still," was the word heard that day. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold

your peace." Get into your soul the wonderful fact that Christ has gone into death, and tasted death as the judgment of God upon man, on the cross. He has gone into death, and come up out of it, and there He is alive before God, and by faith now walking in His footsteps, you go through on "dry ground" into resurrection scenes. There is no death or judgment for you. It was all exhausted by God's beloved Son.

But to know this you must "go forward" as Israel was bidden to do (ver. 15). They obey, the "pillar of fire" forming their rearguard, for "the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night" (vers. 19, 20). As they started the light was before them, and the light drew them on. But what is the next thing? They have a backward look for a moment, and they find that between themselves and the foe, God has put Himself. He seemed to say—Come on, Pharaoh, you may touch them if you can, you may put your hand upon them if you can. And were they safe? Indeed were they. They were safe under the shelter of the blood, but now they are to learn that they are *saved*. I am *safe* when under the shelter of the blood of the Lamb, I am *saved* when the

power of the enemy is broken, and I learn that I am before God in all the value of the work of His beloved Son.

The angel going behind them was most gracious. If the light had been in the front the rear would have been in terror. Fancy six hundred thousand of them, and only five abreast. The first five would be saying, We are all right, but the last five are not very safe. But God comes in between the last five and the enemy, and oh, how safe were all, as the light of God beamed over their heads. The electric light of our day is dim to the light God's host had that night. Everybody saw the pathway perfectly plain. That is clear.

Young Christian, this is your God, the God that loves you. That is the kind of Saviour who has come to take up your case, and to carry you out of this world right into glory. Do you think there is any chance of Satan getting you? No, no! See what follows. "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea *dry land*, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the *dry ground*; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (vers. 21, 22). Their way is opened. What lay before them? I see them marching forward, and what is it to? Apparently to certain death. Another step, and they go into these black dark waters of death. They accept death, and find it

to be life and liberty. You must accept death. The waters of the Red Sea, or Marah, or Jordan, all tell one truth. There is only one way for my soul getting to God, and that is through death. I have to accept the death of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ for me.

What a wonderful sight as they step out now; they hear the word "Go forward," and lift their foot to put it down on what seemed impossible to bear them—water. It is the acceptance of the sentence of death. Now for us the wonderful truth is that Christ has gone into death, and utterly annulled it. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

And now you ask me, How can I apply this truth to myself? Well, they were to go in, every one of them. There was not one of them that had not got the sense, I will have to go into that sea. But when they came to the spot, what was it? "Dry ground." The step was taken in the energy of faith, for we read, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned" (Heb. xi. 29). The latter clause of that verse is very striking. You will find there are people who seek to occupy the place of the children of God. We live in a day of

great imitation. All unreal souls should remember that every Egyptian was drowned in that sea. It is only faith that can tread that pathway, and faith went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground. I doubt not Pharaoh thought, I shall now get at them. His great object was to overtake and to destroy, God's to deliver and save, and how safe they were as they went through these immense walls—crystal walls—reared by God. Just so we taste the wonderful love that let His Son pass through death and judgment for us. And now He is risen, and we are risen in Him.

I do not doubt that the truth unfolded in type in this chapter finds its New Testament answer in Romans vi. and vii. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (vi. 10). It is our privilege to reckon that which the Lord Jesus passed through as ours. It is all ours. His death and resurrection were ours, and His victory over every enemy was for us.

In our chapter the way God checks and overcomes the enemy is very interesting. Pharaoh gets a solemn warning as the lynch-pins of his wheels all fly out, and receives an unexpected check by the taking off of his chariot wheels. The effect is electric. "The Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians

said, *Let us flee* from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians" (vers. 24, 25). The tables are completely turned. It is not God's people fleeing now, but their enemies who fly. The former are on resurrection ground really, while death and judgment overwhelm all their foes, for "the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and *all the host* of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained *not so much as one of them*" (vers. 26-28).

Some of our learned infidel friends would fain believe, and try and persuade us to think that Pharaoh was not there personally. The 136th Psalm clears away that fog of infidelity, for it says, the Lord "*overthrew Pharaoh* and his host in the Red Sea; for his mercy endureth for ever" (ver. 15). Let all doubters look at that lovely little commentary, or summary of God's ways in mercy with Israel. It is all God, you see. I believe that proud king came to his end there. I love to think how completely Satan has been overthrown, because Pharaoh is the type of Satan. God's thought is to bring His people out of this world. If you are a worldly Christian, do you think you will have the enjoyment of the Lord? No! you may have the sense that God will never judge you, but you are not clear of Satan, and you will have doubts and fears, because you have never cleared out of Satan's territory—the world.

What God wants is that you should give up the world. There were two men that gave up Egypt in this chapter, Moses and Pharaoh. Moses gave up Egypt voluntarily, "By faith he *forsook* Egypt" (Heb. xi. 24-27). Pharaoh gave it up because he could not help it. He came under God's judgment, like many another sinner who has had to give up the world by death cutting him off from it, and having nothing for eternity, he has lost all—his own soul included. Where are you and I in this matter? Are our hearts clear of the world, and set on Christ, and on the things of Christ? That is where they ought to be.

The next thing we read here is, "Thus the Lord **SAVED** Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses" (vers. 30, 31). Salvation is a very big word in Scripture. When I am "*saved*" I am clear of the enemy, and I am out of this scene in spirit and heart. I am a delivered man, in resurrection surroundings. When Israel looked, and saw all their enemies dead, they doubtless said, There is no road back to Egypt. The road was closed in. And my dear fellow-Christian, if you fancy you have found a road back, you are a very wretched man. You are not really back, you can never belong to it again, and you must come under God's judgment — governmentally.

You are a person to be pitied. Oh, learn what it is to be with Christ on the sunny banks of resurrection.

Of the Christian it is said, "And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 10). It is a fine thing for the Christian to see this, up far above the angels there sits a Man, and I am in Him, and He is the delight of the Father's heart. He is in a sphere of heavenly joy and blessedness, and I am complete in Him. It is only faith that touches that sphere. He has died, and He has risen, but He has died and risen for me, and now He has taken, as Man, this new place before God, and that is my place.

Oh, how freely must Israel have breathed that morning! How prepared, too, were they to sing a song that morning, when they saw all their enemies dead on the sea-shore. God loves us to sing. A Christian is looked upon as a person who sings. And we may well sing. They saw that morning every enemy gone, and deep, rich, solid peace filled their souls. Now where were they? In the wilderness. What had they there? Two things. They had God, and the sand. There was not even water or bread. They were to learn God, in that wilderness. And that is what we have to do. We have to learn the grace, the love, and the sustaining help of the Lord, while withal we have to learn what we are ourselves. They began with God, and God was everything to them. So is He to us if we will only let Him be what He is.

THE SEAMSTRESS AND THE ACTRESS.



LOOK into this small room with one occupant. The hand of poverty is here; but it is the abode of a child of God—a young sewing girl. It is her closet for prayer, as well as the spot for plying her needle. When employment fails she kneels, in pious trust, to her Heavenly

Father. One morning she had been thus engaged, with unusual earnestness, when there was a knock at the door, and in stepped a creature full of life and gaiety, with a large bundle.

"Can you sew for me?" asked a dashing young girl.

The question was met with a smile.

"It is just what I have been praying for," said she.

The bundle contained rich dresses, and rich materials for more.

"I am an actress," said the young visitor; "I am under engagement to play in Philadelphia, and these dresses must be altered, and these must be made at once. I will pay you handsomely."

"I do not know about this work," said the sewing girl. "It is true I have been praying for work, and am in much need of it, but I do not know about doing this," she said hesitatingly.

"Why?"

"Because it seems that in doing this work I

should be serving the devil instead of the Lord Jesus," she answered meekly.

"But did you pray for work?"

"Yes."

"And has not this come in answer?"

"It seems so, and yet I feel as if I ought not to do it."

"Well! what will you do about it?"

"I will ask my Heavenly Father. Will you kneel with me?"

She poured out her heart to God, and prayed that she might not fall into sin, urging her petition with childlike simplicity, not thinking of any effect which her prayer was having on her visitor, until, in the agony of her spirit, the latter threw her arms around the neck of the suppliant and cried, "Oh, do not pray any more about the dresses, but pray for me!"

The poor seamstress was taken by surprise, and now prayed that if her visitor was not in earnest she might be made so, and then and there give herself to the Lord Jesus, to be His for ever. She prayed that she might be convinced of the sinfulness of her present manner of life, and forsake it.

They rose from their knees and looked at each other in silence.

"I shall not let you do this work," said the actress; "no one shall do it."

"What will you do?"

"I will leave it as it is."

"You have an engagement in Philadelphia?"

"I will write to the manager that I cannot play for him, and I will pray for him."

"How long have you been connected with the stage?"

"Five years; and I have followed it with an enthusiasm that swallowed up my life. But I shall quit the stage for ever. I will not put my foot on it again."

"What will you do with these things?"

"I will keep them in their present state. They shall remain as a memento of this hour and this room, and of God's mercy in arresting me here!"

"What will you do now?"

"I know not what, but I will do all for Christ, and ask counsel of Him."

She then expressed her gratitude to the meek sewing girl for her faithfulness to her principles, and to her. So they parted.

Often they met afterwards for conversation and prayer, and for acknowledgment of their obligations to the Saviour. The faith of the converted actress grew stronger—she admired the amazing goodness of God in snatching her as a brand from the burning, and went on her way rejoicing.

She is now in one of the Eastern States, has made a public profession of her faith, and joined herself to the people of God. She writes often to her young Christian friend, the sewing woman, in Twenty-ninth Street, New York, and the sewing woman is often seen at the prayer meetings in that city.

In a letter received from the converted actress, she says that she is a wonder to herself; that she loved the stage so well she did not suppose it possible that she could leave it. But now she finds Christ infinitely more precious—that she is truly happy—that her peace is like the flowing spring, ever-flowing—that her gratitude knows no bounds—and that her desire grows stronger continually to do something for God.

The dresses remain as they were, memorials to her of God's mercy and love, and she intends to keep them so to her dying day.

Work pours in on the young sewing woman, and her needle is kept flying. Her Heavenly Father will never forsake such a child.

And what of the actress? She writes:—"My old associates sneer at me and call me crazy; but I have been enabled to draw two from the stage—one a dancer, the other a ballad-singer. They are seeking Christ also. I will do all I can to save them. Pray for me, that I may have Christ with me, and then I shall not be afraid to act for Him."

Reader, is not truth stranger than fiction? Canst thou doubt the wonderful, all-conquering power of divine truth?

"Oh, let thy years be spent,
Thy life to Me be given,
Time's fetters all be rent,
Then endless bliss in heaven;
Bring thou thy worthless all,
Follow thy Saviour's call."

A VICTIM OF SATAN SAVED.



HE Son of God, Jesus, visited the land of the Gadarenes, and a certain man out of the city met Him. The poor fellow was in a most deplorable condition. Satan for the moment had got complete possession of him. Four things are said about him. He had devils long time, wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs (Luke viii. 27). What a striking picture of man's moral condition before God; of yours, dear reader, if you are not saved.

The whole world lieth in the wicked one: every sinner is under the power of Satan. We have no clothing before the eye of God, no righteousness in which we can stand before Him. Neither have we a house, or any other place of shelter, where we can flee for refuge in this world from the coming storms of judgment threatened in the Word of God. And where do we dwell? In a place of tombs. Death reigns. Graveyards abound. Sinners are dying in their sins daily. How terrible is the fall of man! Satan's victims, morally naked, shelterless, in a death scene, and never knowing for a single moment when God's summons into eternity may come. And after death the judgment! *The judgment.* The just and inexorable judgment of God. The sure sentence, *eternal woe!* Sinner, *beware!*

Now this poor devil-possessed sinner met Jesus. What a meeting! The Son of God, as man, walking and acting in the Spirit's power, and a man completely under the power of the devil, possessed by demons.

"When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, most high? I beseech thee, torment me not" (ver. 28). How little he understood yet what was in the heart of that blessed One! He dreaded torment from the One who came to save. What have I to do with Thee? He would sooner have met any one than the Son of God, when under Satan's power. So is it with every awakened sinner. For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him. It is the awakened sinner, the new-born soul, that dreads contact with the blessed Son of God. The first ray of light in his soul has shown him his sin. With a bad conscience, he dreads torment, and looks upon the Lord as a judge. He has not yet learnt the grace and love that fill the heart of that precious Saviour.

Now men had already done their best for this poor slave of Satan. But all their well-meant efforts had proved utterly useless. He had been kept bound with chains and fetters, but he burst them all, and was driven of the devil in the wilderness (ver. 29). And to-day, in modern Christendom, what are we surrounded with? All kinds of human effort to keep the sinner in order. Moral

and religious fetters of all kinds are produced in human forges to restrain the works of the devil in men, and yet society itself is horrified at the awful outbursts and terrible effects of human passion, fomented by Satan and the many demons at his beck. Do what he may, the first man, though kept bound, again and again breaks loose from all restraint, and pursues his course of evil, driven by his powerful foe. Man in his own strength is powerless against his mighty adversary.

“And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion.” To-day, He asks *your name*. What is your reply? Be honest. Can you reply, “Christian”? You hesitate. Perhaps you are a “professing Christian.” Does that relieve your soul from fear? No. You know you have not inward peace. What is the worth of mere profession in His presence? Nothing. If not real, what is it but hypocrisy? Do you think He does not see through it? Then come out in your true colours, if you would be delivered from torment, and know Him as Saviour. What is your name? You hesitate. We will tell you, “*Sinner*.” Yes, sinner; a sinner under judgment, lost. But blessed be His name, His mission was not to damn but to save. He came from glory to save the lost. He is a Saviour in glory for the lost to-day. He died for the lost. His precious blood was shed for the lost. He is ready to save you to-day. Are you truly anxious about the matter? It is a proof His work is begun in you. Believe on Him who

glorified God in His finished work on Calvary, that He might save such as you. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). Your name is Sinner, and His name is Jesus, a Saviour. *Dost thou believe on Him?*

Now the devils, in obedience to the word of power of the Son of God, went out of the man, and entered a herd of swine, which led to their destruction. And what became of him? He was found delivered completely from Satan's power, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. The demon-possessed one was delivered, the naked one was clothed, the homeless wanderer in his right mind, and the death-surrounded one at rest and peace, in the presence of the Lord of life and glory.

What a striking picture is all this of what the Lord will do for you, if you own from the heart your true state before Him, and believe on His name. He will deliver you from the power of Satan, and set you completely free. If the Son shall make you free, then are you free indeed. Naked in your sins before God, He will put them all away for ever, and clothe you with righteousness in Himself. "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). You, a poor sinner, wandering in this world, without shelter from the coming wrath, will find yourself in your right mind, clear in your soul as

to your everlasting salvation, a happy saint of God. And you who are in a scene of death, and yourself ever exposed to it, surrounded with mourning, and funerals, and graves, will find yourself a possessor of eternal life in Him, passed out of death into life, at perfect rest, in liberty, filled with joy in His presence, and henceforth rejoicing in Him as Saviour, with all fear of torment banished for ever by His perfect love. In which state now are you?

Now the people who saw what the Lord had done were greatly afraid, and besought the Lord to *depart from them*, but the man delivered from Satan besought Him that *he might be with Him*. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him" (ver. 39). The works of grace and power of the Son of God fill the natural heart with dread. Man likes God at a distance. The light of His presence is too strong for him. It exposes him to himself and others. And a bad conscience cannot bear that.

But how different with him who is the happy subject of grace and power! He is drawn at once to his deliverer. His chief happiness henceforth is to be where He is. He will shortly be with Him in the glory, for He is coming quickly. But meanwhile many are sent back to witness for Him. And where is the testimony to begin? In the

home circle. Very likely this poor man had grievously sinned in that same circle, and had come under the discipline of God. The Scripture is silent as to that. But that is where the Lord sent him to witness. But filled with gratitude, and knowing that Jesus was God, for who else could have wrought such a work of power on his behalf, he filled the whole city with the good news. God turns lost sinners into evangelists, to make known the riches of His grace!

Reader, *are you saved?*

E. H. C.

“BUT OH, IT IS BLOTTED OUT ABOVE.”



ANY hearts in Minneapolis of late were made to rejoice in the conversion to God of one of Satan's most devoted followers. It has been an exhibition before the whole city of what the grace of God can do, and that God is willing and able to save the vilest. None need despair with such a case before their eyes. And what the man himself said of God's gracious dealings with him is given, in the hope that God may use it in blessing to others.

The words are transcribed from the *Minneapolis Times*, 5th December 1898.

“The words of John W. Arctander, whose conversion has excited the deepest interest, were

listened to with rapt attention, for he told how he found peace with God. The repentant man came forward slowly. All eyes in the dim hall were fixed on him. He stood silent for a moment, and then began in a low tone:—

“My friends, I suppose many of you have asked why I am here to-night. Nearly fifteen years ago, when Pastor Skogesberg preached most eloquently to sinners in this church, as he still does, I was by chance attracted here one Sunday evening. I came here with a friend, and sat in a seat downstairs near the door. A young lady came down the aisle, and stopped in front of my friend. She said to him, “Have you found Jesus?” “What!” he said, “I didn’t know He was lost.” I laughed. I laughed wickedly. I shall never forget the look of terror in her eyes. It was followed by sadness. I shall never forget how she shrank back from her Christ-like work. Her eyes have pursued me for many a night since. I beg God to forgive me. It is a special dispensation of Providence that I should now stand here thus in this church, where I was so blasphemous fifteen years ago. I am here to apologise, to confess.

“You all know how wicked I have been. I have mocked God and His people. I now beg you all to pardon me, as the Lord has done. There never has been a greater sinner. I have taken pride and pleasure in posing as a blasphemous man. The thought is enough to crush me to the ground. First in the cup, first in carousal; the first in

wickedness; the worst of examples to young men. I can hardly muster courage to ask forgiveness. *But oh, it is blotted out above.*

“Sunday night, some weeks ago, I was accidentally drawn to a meeting of the evangelists (Messrs Crosby and Hunter). I went Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, but the meetings had no perceptible effect on me. On Sunday, two weeks since, I worked all afternoon preparing an argument. I was to make it in the Supreme Court of St Paul. Evening found me very weary. I don't know what it was, but something drew me toward the church. It was about eight o'clock, and I thought I might go in for a few minutes. As I stepped in the doorway Mr Crosby was singing “Peace, be still.” There is something so soothing about that song. After the service, Mr Hunter invited those who could to stay. I started for the door. There was a good seat in front, however, and the thought struck me that I might just as well stay. When Mr Hunter was through, he asked all those who wished to be converted to rise. I wanted to, but I felt that I did not want to bad enough. I did not rise. Mr Hunter said that if there was any one present who was a member of a church and not right with God, that person should step forward. I did, but a terrible fight was going on within me. I saw immediately in front of me a woman of the world who, I knew, would publish all kinds of stories about me the next day. I hesitated. Mr Hunter was approaching me. He

looked into my eyes, but said not a word. I then rushed to the altar as if I was going for my life. Those few steps I first took forward made the hardest walk of my life.'

"Mr Arctander then told of his terrible unrest. He was seeking peace, and could not find it. He wanted comfort, and tried again and again to pray, but could not do it. The Monday night following his experience in the church he came back to town very late. He had been to St Paul. He went to the church, but it was dark. He found the evangelists there, however, and Mr Starkey. They all knelt down and prayed. It being the night of the blizzard, Mr Arctander could not get a car. He therefore went to the West Hotel. All night long he tried to pray, but could not. His efforts are best described in his own language:—

"I know not why, but I could not pray. I could only say, "O God." I blew out the light; but no help came. My efforts were in vain. I then fell asleep, and did not awake until morning. The wind was howling outside, and snow was falling and drifting in all directions. Then something strange happened. There was a bright light in the corner of the room. I saw in the light the figure of a man with long white flowing robes. His face expressed sorrow and meekness. His eyes were wonderful—wonderful. I saw a tear stealing down His pallid cheek—a dewdrop that looked like the gem on the morning rose. He stared at me with unutterable pity, and raised His

hands. A little drop of blood trickled down His arm. It was my Saviour. Then I heard a soft voice saying, "Peace, be still." The figure faded away, and I heard, "Peace, be still." A calmness came over me, and I was happy.'

"Mr A. appeared happy, and he looked as if he wished to share his happiness with others.

"In closing he said: 'They say that misery loves company. Then how much more will not happiness love company. O friends, do not say, "I'll wait." There may be no to-morrow.'"

The story of this dear man's conversion is illustrative of how the grace of God can reach down to the very gutter of sin, and lift the sinner out, and cleanse him in the blood of Christ, and fit him for God's service here, and His glory hereafter. It tells also of the persevering love of the Good Shepherd, who went after the lost sheep until He found it; and, as in the case of Cornelius (Acts x.), of the infinite pains God was at to save one poor soul from hell. Grace not only saves from hell, but transforms a man here; and he, whose associates were fellow-followers of the devil, is brought into the very best company on earth (God's people), and privileged to stand forth as the honoured witness of God's grace here, and to be to the glory of that grace in the glory of God for ever.

Reader, what God did for Mr A., He can, and will, do for you if unsaved. Go to Him, tell Him all, trust His Son, and His blood will cleanse, and His grace will save you.

E. A.

THE SERPENT OF BRASS.*

(NUMBERS xxi. 1-18.)



THE truths connected with "the serpent of brass" and "the Jordan" give us two aspects of the death of Christ. Each presents the truth in an entirely different way, but still a way in which it is of the last importance for our souls to get hold of. I think in the serpent of brass we have the wonderful truth of how God gets rid of me, for Himself, and in the Jordan, we have the truth of how I can get rid of myself, in my own experience.

The purpose of God for Israel, as given in the book of Exodus, was that He would bring them out from Egypt, and bring them into a good land and large, a land flowing with milk and honey. It is an immense thing for the soul to ever deepen in the apprehension of God's purpose, and that, no matter what comes in, God's purpose will not be frustrated. Spite of all the opposition of Pharaoh, and spite of the many compromises that Pharaoh suggested, God brought them out, and spite of Israel's failure in the wilderness, He brought them into Canaan.

First of all comes the truth of the blood on the lintel, redemption by blood. That is the aspect of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ by which we are secured from God's judgment, as sinners, and we

* Extracted from "Handfuls of Purpose."

feed on "the lamb roast with fire"—the sufferings and death of Christ—our souls entering into that which is expressed in His death.

Then we have the passage of the Red Sea. That is the truth of the death and resurrection of Christ for us and our sins, the power of the enemy absolutely broken, God's salvation manifested, and the people brought to rejoice in it. The Red Sea I believe, is the death and resurrection of Christ for our sins, as for ourselves also. And it is a great thing for a young soul to see this, that I am clear of the enemy's land, that I am brought right out from that land by death and resurrection. You touch the same truth in a certain way when you come to the Jordan. It is a great thing for my soul to see that I am before God in connection with Christ, dead and risen. It is what you get in the Epistle to the Romans. I believe, what the Red Sea teaches me, as well as the Epistle to the Romans, is, that I am taken *into* death to escape all that was against me. By death—Christ's death viewed as mine—I escape everything that oppresses me as a man in the flesh. In Romans v. you escape from association with the first man—Adam—death breaks the link; in chapter vi. you escape from sin as a master; and in chapter vii. you escape the condemnation that is connected with an infringed law.

It is very striking to notice that you see Israel as a company *go into* the Red Sea, but you never see them come *out*. They did come out, but it

does not say they did. I think the reason is this, that when you come to the Jordan, you do not read of them *going into* the Jordan, you see the ark going in, but you see them *come out*. The fact is this, the Red Sea and the Jordan coalesce. To bring them *out* of Egypt and to bring them *into* Canaan was God's purpose.

But, you say, the wilderness came in between. Yes, but that was not part of the purpose of God. It was in His ways, but His purpose was to bring them *out*, and bring them *in*. The forty years in between became the occasion of learning what they were, and gave occasion also to learn God's ways of grace. If you look at the eleventh chapter of Hebrews you will be struck with this. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." That is, nature could not walk in the pathway of faith. And what is the next word? "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (vers. 29, 30). You have no mention of Jordan. Why? Because the journey through the wilderness, with Jordan at the end, was not the path of faith, it was the path of failure. When God recounts the history of the life of faith, you have the Red Sea and the fall of Jericho put together. They go side by side, and the forty years in the wilderness is not as much as mentioned.

Well, delivered by the sovereign grace of God, and brought out of Egypt as we have seen, it took

them forty years to enter Canaan. Their journey was divided into four stages. The first, with which we are all pretty familiar, is from the banks of the Red Sea till they come to Sinai (Exod. xv.-xix. 1, 2). In that stage of their journey they were under pure sovereign grace. If they come to Marah, where the waters are bitter, God turns the bitter water into sweet. When hungry, He gives them bread from heaven. If they say, We are dying of thirst, He smites the rock, and out comes water. If they have an enemy to meet, there is Moses interceding for them on high, and Joshua leading them on to certain victory in the valley below. There we have the energy of a risen Christ, by the Holy Ghost, leading God's people to victory.

The first stage takes you to the middle of the book of Exodus. The latter half of the book is occupied with the instructions connected with the setting up of the tabernacle, in which God was to dwell. Leviticus gives to us the manner of their approach to God. Christ is presented in all these types and figures as the basis of all worship. That is the great subject of the book of Leviticus.

When you come to Numbers you get the itinerary of the people of God through the wilderness. The twenty-first chapter is really in the last stage of their history. They are getting toward the close of their journey when the story of the serpent of brass comes in. To connect our subject I will glance briefly over the early part of the book.

The first ten chapters of the book are occupied

with marshalling them, and getting them ready for the journey. The book of Numbers opens with, "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt" (Num. i. 1). The first thirteen months, the first stage of their journey, was occupied in getting from the Red Sea to Sinai, where you know, in fatal folly, they put themselves under law. They abandoned grace and took upon themselves the responsibility of walking before God, consenting that their blessing should depend upon their own behaviour. We have all, however, to learn as we pass on, that the only secret of blessing is the grace of God, in connection with His purpose.

Well now, in the first ten chapters of Numbers, I repeat, you learn the way in which God marshalled them, gathered them round about Him, and how He Himself was in their midst. When you come to chapter x. you read, "And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony" (ver. 11). That is, in twenty days they are all put in order. God was then in their very *midst*, but Moses, like the rest of us, wanting something down here for the eye to rest on, as a guide through the wilderness, turns to Hobab and says, You be eyes for us. "Come with us . . . leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp

in the wilderness, and thou mayest be unto us instead of eyes" (Num. x. 29-32). The child of the desert refuses to be their guide, and in tender grace the Lord says, I shall go before you, and the ark of the Lord becomes their guide. The pillar of cloud had been their guide before, but the Lord, in His beautiful grace, now goes before them Himself. "And the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them" (ver. 33). This was beautiful grace, beloved friends, in meeting failure.

And now you come to that which is a very sorrowful bit of their history. The second stage of their history was very short, but very eventful. It embraces chapters x. 11-36, xi., xii., xiii., xiv., and xv. They reached Kadesh very quickly (see xii. 16, xiii. 26). It was only an eleven days' journey from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea (Deut. i. 2), but there was an immense amount of dreadful failure in those few days. In the eleventh chapter you find them saying, "But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (ver. 6). That is, in plain language, they got tired of Christ. Ah, beloved, are any of us tired of Christ? Do I want something besides Christ? That is the first failure.

The end of the chapter shows that the Lord gave them quails, in answer to their murmuring, and then dealt with them in His government (vers. 31-34). "He gave them their own desire; they were not estranged from their lust. But while

their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel" (Ps. lxxviii. 29-31). You will all, I am sure, be struck with this comment of the Spirit of God, in the Psalms, upon this scene. I believe really what we want we get. If I want flesh, God will give it me, but discipline and leanness of soul with it. The hand of God in government was upon them here really. It was not like the first case, in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, where they asked, and God gave them quails. Then they were upon the ground of pure grace, but now, being on the ground of responsibility, He acts differently. There it was sin met by grace, here it is sin judged in government.

Then in the twelfth chapter of Numbers the priest, Aaron, and the prophetess, Miriam, rise up against Moses, who was king in Jeshurun—God's representative. When you come to the next chapter they send out spies to see what the pleasant land was like, and to see by what way they should go (*see* Deut. i. 22-25). I quite admit God permitted the spies to go, for He did not thwart Israel in their unbelief. Hence He said, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel" (Num. xiii. 2). They sent up these spies, and as unbelief always brings trouble to the unbeliever, I daresay you have noticed that this mission was the way Arad knew that Israel were coming, and

went out to fight against them (*see* Num. xxi. 1). Unbelief always brings sorrow. The next thing is that when the spies come back the congregation will not believe what is told them.

First of all the report is very good, and the bunch of grapes—taking two men to carry it—attested the goodness of the land, and then they said, "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature" (ver. 32); that is, the land did not give plenty of provision. Caleb and Joshua stood up for the truth, and were nearly stoned (xiii. 30, xiv. 6-10). "They despised the pleasant land" (Ps. cvi. 24) is the next step. They did not want to go on. It is like a heart now that does not want to go to heaven.

The consequence is, they say, "Would God that we had died in Egypt, or would God that we had died in this wilderness. And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt" (chap. xiv. 1-4). Let us go back, they say. Oh, could you suppose it after all the grace shown to them? But, beloved, we know what our own hearts are. Have we never wished to turn back? Ah, every heart in this hall knows how often there has been a turning back. God's answer was this. You say you wish you had died in the wilderness—you shall die in the wilderness. "As for you, your

carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness, and your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness" (xiv. 32, 33). Says God, You will have to die, only it will take you forty years to do it, "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years" (ver. 34). They must know death.

Then the fifteenth chapter comes in. Did you ever study the fifteenth chapter of Numbers? It is a beautiful chapter. Why? Because God's purpose shines in it as clear as ever, spite of the sin of the people. It opens thus, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you*" (ver. 1). Ah, it is lovely! I get the Lord giving directions as to what shall be when they get into the land, as though there had never been a murmur or any failure. It is a gem, that chapter. It comes in as the expression of how God's purpose is never upset. No matter what the people's sin is on the road, God carries out His purpose regarding them. A perusal of the chapter will let you see how beautifully the truth comes out in that way. That chapter takes you to the end of the second stage of Israel's journeyings.

And now in the third stage the Lord makes them wander for thirty-eight years in the wilderness,

and when you come to the twentieth chapter you will find that they have got back again to Kadesh. If you trace their journeyings you will find that they consist of aimless wanderings up and down the peninsula of Arabia, from Kadesh (xii. 16, xiii. 26) to Kadesh (chap. xx. 1), and no real progress made. What a picture of many a saint now, who has rebelled against God, and never really got on in his soul.

In this third stage you have the rebellion of Korah (chap. xvi.), which leads God in grace to manifest who is His priest (chap. xvii.). The only way in which a feeble people can be brought right through the wilderness to God's Sanctuary is by grace and priesthood. Oh, how much we, as Christians, owe to the priesthood of Christ! How we are maintained by that blessed One! In the eighteenth chapter you have instructions as to the maintenance of the priests, and in the nineteenth chapter you have the story of the red heifer, or how, in the wilderness, defilement can be met and cleansed.

And then, when you come to the twentieth chapter, again there is no water, and there it is that Moses and Aaron break down, because they did not glorify God. God bade Moses go and speak to the rock. He was told by God to "take *the* rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of

the rock" (ver. 8). He was to take the rod of priesthood. It was not judgment that was to be expressed, but grace through priesthood. It is priestly grace that puts a heart right, always. "And Moses took *the* rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with *his* rod he smote the rock twice" (vers. 10-12). That was not the rod the Lord bade him take. He smote it with the rod that he had smitten Egypt with, the rod of judgment. That is a figure of the death of Christ, undergoing the judgment of God. There can be no repetition, even in type, of that. God's answer was this: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (ver. 12). Thus, you see, Moses and Aaron break down on the road, and the latter dies (ver. 28). Then the next thing is that there is opposition on the part of Edom, and Israel, humbled at last, gives way.

And now in the twenty-second verse of chapter xx. they begin the fourth, and last stage of their journey, which occupied about one year or so. Then in the twenty-first chapter we have another outbreak of evil, and the story of the serpent of brass. It is very simple, but I do not think that

we learn its truth at the beginning of our Christian pathway. Oh, you say, is it not about the new birth? Well, it is connected with it in John iii., but there is something deeper than merely meeting the need of a poor sinner. What comes out here is, that the flesh is incurable and incorrigible. They murmured, "and the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died" (ver. 6). But then as they turned to the Lord, and owned their sin, He bade Moses make a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole, and when a bitten man looked upon it he lived (vers. 5-9). There, in type, is the wonderful truth that Christ, who knew no sin, was *made sin*. It is the spring of a totally new life. Our Lord, in the third chapter of John's Gospel, connects it with eternal life, and I do not doubt that the things that are in figure in this chapter are brought out in the doctrine of John iii. and iv. The first man is incurably bad, cannot be mended, and must go from before God's eye. He must go in death, in judgment, that is the point. That is to say, there is nothing in you or me that will suit God. All that we are must go in death, and there is brought in that which is entirely and absolutely new. It is Christ, as Son of Man, lifted up, in John iii. 14, 15, and, as a consequence, through faith in Him, not only new birth, but eternal life, and in the fourth of John you have the water springing up to eternal life, *i.e.*, life in the power of the Holy Ghost rising to its source—the Father—in worship.

Look again for a moment at the serpent of brass. The thing that did the mischief was the fiery serpent, and what cured them was a look at a fiery serpent. Sin brought in death, and only by death is sin put away. Sin in the flesh is incorrigible, incurable, and ineradicable. What then can be done with it? God tells us: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, *condemned sin in the flesh*" (Rom. viii. 3). That is the serpent of brass. What I am, as a man, has been utterly condemned in the cross of Christ, and absolutely set aside from before God in death. It has gone from God's eye in the death of His blessed Son, an immense thing for the soul to see. Why? Because until this is learned, there is self-confidence, and an endeavour to improve the flesh. Hence, very often, we have to learn by very painful and prolonged practical experience and failure what a poor good-for-nothing thing man is. When I learn the truth of the serpent of brass I find that God has got rid of me, in the cross of His Son, and only Christ remains.

You do not get the serpent of brass until the close of Israel's wilderness history. It is a long time before we learn that God has set us aside, and aim to set ourselves aside. Oh, what battles and struggles have souls gone through in trying to get rid of the flesh. I see here, with deep relief and thankfulness, that aspect of the death of Christ in which all that I am, as a man in the flesh, is gone,

and that I am replaced by the Man of God's heart,
the Man out of heaven, the Lord from heaven.
And it is He in the energy and power of the Spirit
of God that leads the soul on. W. T. P. W.

JOY IN HEAVEN.



HERE is joy in heaven to-night!
And the angels of God look on,
But yet not theirs is the deep delight,
Though their praise swells loud at the
glorious sight
Of another repentant one!

The joy must be Thine, O God!

For Thou art the wondrous source
Of that river of love so deep and broad—
A river which none can fathom or ford,
Which has flowed by Calvary's cross!

And the Shepherd has found His sheep,
The sheep that had loved to roam,
And oh! it had gone so far astray,
But He tracked its footsteps all the way,
And rejoicing, He bears it home!

Saviour! we hear Thy voice,

Saying, "Rejoice with me!"

And our hearts are filled with Thine own deep
bliss,

And we share Thy joy in a scene like this—

'Tis the joy of eternity!

E. S.

LIGHT AND GRACE.

(Read JOHN viii. 1-12.)



N the first chapter of the Gospel of John, the Lord Jesus is presented in the glories of His own Person, and, among others, we have this record of Him given, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." It is in the character of the "light of men" that He is specially brought before us in this interesting eighth of John.

The first chapter says, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." What a wonderful thing it is for us to stand in the presence of the One who in His own person brings to us life, light, grace, and truth. The eighth of John deals clearly with light and with grace, for if there were not grace, none could stand the light. The light is most wholesome and blessed, because it shows things exactly as they are; but when the light has done its work on the conscience, what remains? Grace and truth!

We have Moses and Jesus in distinct contrast in this lovely narrative, and nothing is more important for the soul than to see the difference between law and grace, between Moses and Christ. What can the law do? Teach me to live. But if I do not live right, what does it do? It condemns me. And can I say I have lived right? God says,

"*All* have sinned." If I have sinned, then, what can Moses do? He can only condemn me. Has he no mercy? None. Has he any grace? Not an atom. Truth he has, but it is the truth of my ruin and my guilt, and the certain judgment that follows.

If we have to do with the law, it can only condemn. The law when it came in, brought with it blackness, and darkness, and thunderings, and words that the people could not understand, so that Moses himself, the mediator of that law, said, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. xii. 21). He knew what that law was. The apostle Paul speaks of it as "the ministration of death," and "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. iii. 7-9).

We have, in John viii., the beautiful contrast of Christ, in grace, dealing with the one whom Moses must have condemned. The scribes and Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus. They little thought they were bringing her to the place of blessing, the presence of Jesus. Have you ever, my reader, known what it is to be in the presence of Jesus? alone with Jesus? Perhaps you feel you would be afraid to be alone with Jesus. Then this scripture just meets your case. What was it for this woman to be alone with Jesus? Only blessing. And what will the moment be when you for the first time get alone with Jesus? Absolute blessing to you. If you have never been alone with Jesus, you have never reached the spot of absolute blessing.

You need not be afraid of being alone with Jesus.

He has only grace and truth for you, and if you knew the blessedness of thus being in His presence, you would not avoid it another hour. The scribes and Pharisees brought in this wretched culprit, and they wanted the Lord to take the judge's seat, and give the verdict. He would not do it. They, in the wickedness of their heart, wanted an occasion against Christ, and they thought they had placed Him in a difficulty, because if He stood up for Moses, He would deny His own character, for He had been going through the land preaching grace.

They thought He must either side with Moses, or go clean against him. If He sided with him, He set aside His own teaching, while, if He said, "Let her go," they thought they would then have it to say, "You are an opposer of Moses, and of the law, and therefore an unrighteous man."

Observe the Lord's reply to these tools of Satan. "Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not" (ver. 6). Christ is never in a hurry to abash even bold, daring, impious souls who come to Him as these did. He is never in a hurry to show before others what He sees is their true state. So He stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.

It was His own finger that had written the law He had given to Moses (Exod. xxxi. 18). His own finger, too, wrote the sinner's doom on the wall in Belshazzar's hall (Dan. v. 5). In this scene He is writing in the dust, as though He would show that

He would go down, where He has gone down, into that very dust, the dust of death, to rescue the guilty sinner. There is one more place where He writes, and that is on "the fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. iii. 3).

The Lord is not writing on the tables of stone now, nor is He yet writing your doom, my unconverted reader—nor is He even writing in the dust; He has done that, but He has not given up writing—He is writing now on the fleshy tables of the heart.

These scribes thought they had caught Jesus in a trap. "Master . . . what sayest thou?" they ask. What does He say? "He that is without sin among you let him first cast (not a stone, but) *the* stone at her" (ver. 7). .

What the Lord says is this—It is only the sinless hand who can wield the sword of the law. Who was sinless in that company? "You want to make me a judge," says Christ, "but I have not come to judge, but to *save*."

What took place? "They which heard, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (ver. 9). Why did the eldest go out first? I have no doubt the younger waited for the elders to cast the stone first. But that day they had got into the presence of the Lord, Moses' Lord, the One who spake from Sinai, and out all go, beginning at the eldest, for here was the full

light of God, saying there must be reality. Their consciences convicted them, and to save their characters before men they all went out, and "Jesus was left alone," and the sinner, the guilty one, alone with Jesus.

Do you not think this woman's heart must have trembled as these, her accusers, brought her in, knowing what her sin was, and knowing the sentence of the law? But when Jesus was so slow to condemn, what would she feel? She would think, "Surely I have a friend here." And then, when every one else had gone, and He was still stooping down, not even looking at her, what might this woman have done, when the last of her accusers had gone out? She might have gone, too. But does she? No, she remains.

Every enemy was driven out by the light of His presence, and her soul was left alone with Christ, alone for the first time in her history with perfect righteousness, absolute holiness, with Moses' Lord, alone with God, alone with Love.

Why did she not fly? Ah, surely she felt, here is the friend of the guilty sinner, of the self-condemned soul, such as I am. Does He make light of sin? Oh, no! no! When this soul is left alone with Jesus, what does He do? He says, "Woman, where are those thine accusers?" You may feel you have plenty of accusers, that the devil accuses you, and your conscience accuses you. Quite true, but if you get into the presence of Christ, every accuser vanishes, and He shows that He did not

come to judge, but to save; not to condemn, but to bless.

He says to her, "Has no man condemned thee?" and the woman answers, "No man, *Lord*." She had never called Him Lord before, and Scripture says no man can call Jesus, Lord, except by the Holy Ghost.

Who could have condemned her? He alone could. He is just the One who can condemn; He, in whose eyes the heavens are unclean; He whose eyes follow you everywhere. What will He say when you have to meet Him by-and-by? Will He say then, "Neither do I condemn thee"? No, if you put off a solitary interview with Christ till the judgment seat, you will hear no word like that; but what a word that was to that guilty, but contrite, believing soul. No hand but His *could* touch the stone, and He *would* not. He says, "Cast the stone if you can, but the hand must be sinless that casts it," and His was the only sinless hand, and He says, "Neither do I condemn thee; *go, and sin no more.*"

Is that making light of sin? No, no! Do you think she ever forgot that word? Never. He who only could condemn, met her as a *Saviour*. He did not come to condemn, but to save.

Have you, dear reader, evèr known what it is to get into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the knowledge of your sin and guilt, and heard from His lips words like these? Do you say, "I do not know how I can help being condemned"?

Turn to John iii. 18—"He that believeth on him is not condemned." I suppose when that woman called Him Lord, she believed on Him, and, believing on Him, heard Him speak those lovely words, "Neither do I condemn thee; *go, and sin no more.*" That is, Go now, and live a holy life. Grace gives an object to live for, and grace gives power to lead a new life. "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Wherever there is a soul that simply believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, that soul not merely is not condemned, but has eternal life. I get the doctrine in the third of John, and the illustration of it in the eighth of John.

What is the doctrine? That the soul that simply trusts in Christ, and believes on Him, is not condemned. What is the illustration? A poor guilty soul, self-condemned, but believing simply on the Lord Jesus Christ, and He Himself saying to her, "Neither do I condemn thee."

He that believeth not, is condemned already. You do not wait for condemnation till the judgment day. That is the day of execution. The condemnation has passed already.

Do you ask, "Is this world, then, full of condemned criminals?" No, not full, thank God, for there are those in it who have heard His voice, saying to them, "Neither do I condemn thee." You think you are not condemned, you dream you are free, but it is only a dream; for Jesus says, "He that believeth not, is condemned already"

(John iii. 18). In spite of your dreams of freedom, you are still under condemnation, and the day of execution is near.

Will you, my reader, not come to Him now? Come to the Saviour who welcomes, who blesses. Let His own word win your heart. He 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" (John v. 24). What did that poor woman hear that day? His word. And what did it say to her? "Neither do I condemn thee."

He that heareth, and believeth, *hath*; they are all joined together—*heareth, believeth, hath*.

Have you, my reader, heard and believed; and now do you ask, "How am I to live?" Listen to what Jesus says, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). How will you be able to walk rightly? You have the light of life, you have God's own dear Son. Grace pardon the sinner on the ground of the precious blood of the Saviour, and brings that sinner into the light of life, giving him a new object, a new power, a guide to follow, and light to know the way.

If you get your heart drawn to Christ, you are blessed by Him, get eternal life, receive His grace, His truth, know you will never come into condemnation, and have the light of life all the way along. Oh, what a Saviour He is. Who would not trust Him, and seek to follow Him?

"I SUPPOSE IT'S MY WILL."



"SUPPOSE it's my will," said a man, as he turned away from one who was presenting the gospel to him, and pressing its acceptance.

He had been telling a little of his history, which, as he said himself, was that of the worst man in the Colony. Convicted of mutiny, he had planned and effected the escape of himself and comrades; being taken, he was sent to the Colonies, only to escape again, but was retaken and sent back to the place from which he had escaped. By subsequent good conduct he had obtained a ticket, which enabled him to carry on a school, and it was in the room where this was conducted he had listened to the gospel.

How patient is God, and how marvellous His dealings with souls! God had waited upon this man, and had evidently exercised him lately concerning the state of his soul. He had been to chapel, but did not hear what seemed to suit his case; had attended meetings with like result, but had now been arrested by some plain statements of truth as to God's righteousness, from the Epistle to the Romans.

In that book it is declared that Christ's death has satisfied all the demands of God's righteousness, and enables Him to act according to all the desires of His heart of love towards the believing

sinner who has no righteousness of his own. God has set forth Christ, a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness in the remission of sins, and to declare His justice in justifying him that believeth in Jesus, whatever his past character may have been. And now the resurrection is a proof of the efficacy and acceptance of the work that Christ accomplished, He being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

"I never heard it so plainly put," said he, "nor did I ever before see the righteousness of God in accepting the faith of the believer, and accounting him righteous for it."

"If then you see God's way of salvation, why do you not accept it?"

"I suppose it's my will," said he, as, grinding his teeth, and turning upon his heel, he walked away.

Eternity will show whether this man's will was eventually subdued, and whether the long-suffering of God towards him was in vain. Certainly, with thousands, the deliberate refusal of a plan of salvation, humbling and distasteful to man, but the very glory of God, and which alone sets Him forth in His true character, is the cause of their unalterable ruin, though perhaps they would not admit it so plainly.

Is it so with the reader?

The Lord said of the children of Jerusalem long ago, "I would, but ye would not." Alas! how solemn to think of man opposing and refusing the

desire of God to save him, and turning his back upon a Saviour-God, only to meet that God as a Judge! But this is the unvarying tendency of the will of man.

"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John v. 40).

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7).

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19).

The parable spoken by the Lord Jesus in Luke xiv. shows that temporal things crowded out eternal things, even in minds that admitted the desirability of reaching heaven at last; and the man who said "*I cannot come,*" meant "*I will not.*" The cannot was a moral cannot, for there was no physical impossibility.

Like things absorb souls now—merchandise, a farm, oxen, a wife. They would like to go to heaven, but they cannot come now. They love the gifts more than the Giver, and despise His best of gifts—Jesus, His Son—

"That gift of gifts, all other gifts in one."

They deliberately make their choice, and cleave to the present while the present lasts.

But, oh! what an awakening will be theirs when, the present being past for ever for them, the prin-

ciples of God's dealings with them will be reversed; and whereas He now calls and they refuse, He shall, according to His word, "Laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh!"

Man's will may oppose itself to God's grace, and refuse His offered mercy; but man's will is no match for God's will, and a man may not refuse to enter those gloomy portals where hope is left behind, when he is relegated to that place by God, for refusing to accept what now he despises. How solemn if, like the man spoken of above, you have seen that God is righteous in dealing graciously, you should be constrained to own He is righteous in your eternal judgment.

May the gracious Lord deliver the reader from such an irrevocable doom.

G. J. S.

SOLITUDE.

(Brief notes of a Gospel Address on Genesis xxxii. 24.)



WANT to speak of the solitude of the sinner, and the solitude of the Saviour. I should like to say to you at the very beginning, the day is coming when you will be left alone. To-day you are surrounded by the things of this gay scene—your pleasures, friends, and business—but mark, the day is coming when you are going to be left alone. I know that solitude is not pleasant. Men

don't like it. But, my friend, whether you like it or not, the day is coming when you will be left alone, and, when you are left alone, God is going to speak to you. He is going to speak to you about your sins. The question that will come up for settlement between your soul and God will be the question of your sins. You forget them, and I have no doubt you like to forget them. Is not that what you are trying to do? But God does not forget your sins—those about which you boast, and those that would bring the crimson blush to your cheek—all your sins have gone down in God's Book. The recording angel in heaven makes no mistakes. Your sins, man, have all gone down in God's Book.

But we have good news for you. Thank God for the gospel, the story of redeeming love.

“ Though thy sins be red like crimson,
Deep in scarlet glow,
Jesus' precious blood can make them
White as snow.”

Oh, glory to His name, His blood has cleansing power. Yes, friend, though your sins may be as black as hell's midnight, the precious blood of Jesus can wash them all away. If you come to God in the day of grace, there is blessing for you, mighty and eternal. But, man, if you miss it in time, if you keep from the presence of God in time, if the question of your sins be not settled in time, that question will come up in eternity. Then there will be no Saviour to bid thee welcome to,

His pierced side, no pardon there, no cleansing blood, nothing for you in that day but blackness, darkness, damnation, destruction, yea, the second death.

Oh, friend, wake up to the reality of these things. Look around you, and see the danger that surrounds that soul of yours. We have read that "Jacob was left alone." Jacob was a great sinner, and he was a vagabond. He had sinned against his brother. You have sinned against God, and your sins have made you a vagabond from the presence of God. Jacob was a vagabond, and it seemed as if the sin which had been committed many years ago, was just about to bring upon him retribution. His brother, the one against whom he had sinned, was coming towards him with four hundred men. That plunged poor Jacob into a terrible plight. He saw the judgment coming, and he remembered his sins. It filled his soul with dismay. He was the subject of soul-trouble.

Where is the Jacob of to-night? Look back on those sins of yours. As you think of them, don't they make you shudder? Those dark sins, they will come forth, and they will hound you to the judgment of God. Your sins are behind you, and the judgment is before you. It may be, friend, that before to-morrow morning's sun rises that soul of yours may have been plunged into the midst of eternal judgment. Oh, you know it may be so. If you die in your sins you will be damned through all eternity. It may be that you are just

about to drop over into those dark depths. Thousands are rushing headlong to perdition to-day, as fast as the devil can drive them. Oh, man, are you among that company? God save you! and bless you! and bring you down to the feet of the Saviour!

But in his distress what did Jacob do? He sent a present to his brother. He thinks the present will appease his brother's righteous indignation. You have found out that there is something wrong between your soul and God, and you are afraid to meet God. And what have you been doing? You have been gathering together your presents—your prayers, your Bible-reading, your sacrament-taking, your class-attending, all the good things that you have done, and you think that they will come between your soul and the stroke of divine justice. My friend, you are making a tremendous mistake. Your present is no good, man. It will not satisfy the righteous claims of the God with whom you have to do. Your good works will not screen you from the righteous justice of a sin-hating God. Jacob was not set at rest by the present he sent before him, he was not satisfied, and now he is left alone. Oh, business man, forget your business to-night, never mind the money bags and the markets, look off this poor scene, think not of time, but think of eternity. Get alone with God. There is something of more importance than money-making, and that is that soul of yours. Think of your soul. When soul-trouble came upon Jacob he sent away

his wives and children too, and he was left alone. Forget your friends, and just think of your sins, and get alone in God's presence. You can be alone with God, in this place, with all those people around you. Forget the people around you, and speak to God about your sins, and let God speak to you.

When Jacob was left alone, I read, "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." Very likely God has been wrestling with you too, to break down your pride, and your will. Oh, friend, has not God been wrestling with you? He wants to bring you to the low place that He may bless you. Go down at the feet of the Saviour, and there you will find joy and peace for your soul.

All through that long night God wrestled with Jacob, and has not the wrestling been a dark night to you? Not one ray of light for you. Why? Because you won't give in to the One who wants to bless you. Jacob gave in at last. Jacob the wrestler was crippled. It may be that God has crippled you. You have found out that it is high time you yielded to the Saviour. And when Jacob gave in, the day began to dawn. And so it will with you if you give in. The first grey light of the dawning day will break in upon that soul of yours. When you give in to God who would bless you, He will dispel the gloom of the dark night by the light of His own love.

Then we find that crippled Jacob began to cling to the One who had crippled him. And he said,

"I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Oh, friend, is that the way you are talking? I like to hear a sinner talk like that. If you talk like that, no doubt about it, He will give you the blessing. Jacob went down to the low place. Go down into the guilty sinner's place, my friend. God says to Jacob, "What is thy name?" A straight question that. What is thy name, sinner? Oh, guilty man, what is thy name? Jacob told out the truth. "My name is Jacob." What did that mean? It means a supplanter, and a schemer. He tells God the whole truth. Will you do the same? You are a sinner, ungodly and guilty. I have no need to tell you that. Your own guilty conscience tells you that. Oh, friend, go down into the place of confession, and don't hold out any longer. God does not want to send you away without the blessing. Those people, whose pride is so great that it will not let their backs bend, do not get the blessing. Take the low place, and God will bless you there. I read, "And he blessed him there."

But God did something else. He changed his name. And He said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel." Israel means "a prince of God." What a mighty change. Some of us have got that. We have been taken out of the place of poor sinners, and now we belong to the royal family of heaven, and we are going to bask in the sunshine of the love of the blessed God throughout eternity. Do you think we deserve it?

Ah no, friend, we deserve the solitude of hell's darkness for ever. But hallelujah, through Jesus' precious blood we belong to yonder scene, and we want you to belong to it too. Oh, friend, get alone in the presence of God, and there you shall learn the mighty love of His heart, and you shall know the power of the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what a solemn thing for the sinner to be left alone in eternity. A young fellow lay dying. The darkness of eternal night was settling about his soul, for he was a Christ rejecter. With his latest breath he cried, "Oh! mother, don't leave me alone now." But much as that mother loved her boy, she had to leave him, and alone into the darkness of hell's gloom he passed. Oh, friend, will you go like that? Into darkness, into despair, where no mirth or joy shall ever shine? Woe, woe, woe, *solitude* and eternal judgment!

But God wants not that to be your destiny. God wants to bless you, and He has proved His desire for your blessing. He can bless you because the Saviour has been alone. If the Saviour had not been alone, there would have been no blessing for thee. Where was He alone? He was alone on Calvary. He could say, "All ye shall leave me alone." But not only did the people leave Him alone, but, friend, God forsook that blessed One on the cross. He had to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Jesus was left alone, amid the darkness, and the raging of Calvary's

tempest. Why? That you might be saved. Yes, Jesus tasted the bitterness of death that you might be saved. He went to the cross, dear friend, that you might be blessed. Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6). Think of the love of the Saviour's heart, and the mighty grace of God that could lead Him to the cross, to die in thy room and stead. He drank the cup of God's wrath. There, the work was done, and the judgment is passed and over. His speechless suffering came to an end, and the sinner's Saviour now lives in glory, raised from the dead as the proof of God's perfect and eternal satisfaction in His work. That blessed Saviour will no more be alone, He is going to have a blessed company of redeemed ones around Him throughout eternity. Will you be there?

There is room for you in yonder blessed scene. Oh, come, the Saviour bids you come. The One who died is now upon the throne. He calls you to His blessed side. He has got the grace of God for you. Forgiveness, joy, peace, and eternal rest He will bestow. God, speaking by His servant, says, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, 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." Do you belong to the "all that believe" company, friend? Can you say, Through the death and suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ I have salvation. I have been alone with God, and the question of

my sins has been settled. And now I can look into the glory, and see the Man who died for me upon the throne, and that He is the measure of my clearance from all the judgment. And now, my face is upon the glory, and the joy, and the rest, and the home where my Saviour waits. Can you say that? God grant that every sinner in this place may be able to say that. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

J. T. M.

"IT IS FINISHED!"



OWARD the middle of the eighth century, in his quiet cell in the monastery of Jarrow-on-the-Tyne, an aged monk lay dying. Patiently he had laboured through many a weary month on a translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue. His work was yet unfinished, and around him, on a certain day, may have been seen his pupils gathered, beseeching their master, whom they dearly loved, to rest. It was hard work for the dear old saint, but he would not give up his task until the precious portion which he was translating was finished.

As his sufferings increased, he cried out to his scribe, "Go on quickly, I know not how long I shall hold out, or how soon my Master will call me hence."

With all speed the scribe wrote on, and bit by bit the work progressed.

"There remains but one chapter, master," said the anxious scribe, "but it seems very hard for you to speak."

"Nay, it is easy," replied the dying monk. "Take up thy pen and write quickly."

Amid tears the young scribe wrote on, until at length the last sentence was written.

"IT IS FINISHED, MASTER!" cried the youth, dropping his pen as the task was ended.

"Aye, 'it is finished!'" echoed the dying saint. "Lift me up to that window of my cell where I have so often prayed to God. 'Now glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!'" he exclaimed; and with these words upon his lips, he departed to be with Him he had loved and served so well.

From amid the gloom of Calvary another such cry has been heard. Not that of a departing saint, whose life-work was ended, but the cry of the dying Saviour, the Son of God.

"IT IS FINISHED!" was the loud cry that broke the stillness of that solemn scene. His work was done; sin's dark load had been laid upon Him when hanging on that shameful tree; and only one thing remained, and that was to bow His blessed head in death. "He said, *It is finished*: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost" (John xix. 30).

On high that loud cry has been heard, and God in heaven has given answer to it in raising that worthy Saviour from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand in glory, and from thence the Holy Spirit has been sent to earth to bear witness to all who believe that, on the ground of that finished work, God can now righteously forgive all their sins, and

REMEMBER THEM NO MORE (Heb. x. 17).

Reader, has that cry which echoed around Calvary's hill yet reached your heart? Worse than useless is it for you to seek salvation in doings of your own. "*It is finished!*" "IT IS FINISHED!" "IT IS FINISHED!" tells that all is done.

Rest upon that finished work, and salvation complete and everlasting is yours. Refuse it, and "*It is finished!*" shall never break from your lips, as you suffer for your sins in a never-ending hell.

E. E. N.

ARE YOU READY TO MEET HIM?



HE Lord is coming. Are you *ready* to meet Him? It is a momentous question for your soul; how do you answer it? He came once, according to promise; and He has promised to come again. No man knoweth the day nor the hour.

He is coming *quickly* (Rev. xxii. 20). It is long since He repeated those solemn words. His return

must be near. It may be much sooner than many anticipate. It might be ere you read another of these lines. Again we ask you, *Are you ready to meet Him?*

In Matthew xxv. 1-13, in a striking similitude of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord foretold His own return as the Bridegroom, and what would happen at that moment. He tells of two classes—those who are ready to meet Him, and those who are not. One class goes in immediately with Him to the marriage, the other is left outside. *The door was shut.* Would you be within or without, if it were shut this moment?

Maybe you reply in your heart, "Well, I would like to be ready to go in, and I hope I shall be." What is necessary if your desire is to be fulfilled? Our Lord's own words make it perfectly clear. He compares those who are ready to wise virgins, and those who are not to foolish ones. And the difference consists in whether they have *oil* or not to sustain the light in the lamps which they carry. In other words, *to be ready to go in*, you must become *wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*, and God will give you *the Spirit*, of which oil is undoubtedly a figure (Eph. i. 13).

We live in the midst of a vast profession of Christianity. But profession without reality is nothing worth. If you have nothing more than a profession, you are amongst the ranks of the foolish virgins. And if the Bridegroom were to return this moment, most assuredly you would be ex-

cluded from the marriage. You may be very busy seeking salvation in one way or another—seeking, so to speak, to buy that which is needful through your own religious works. But what you need is to give up all your vain fleshly efforts, and to accept all from God as a free gift. God sells the blessing to all who come to Him, but His terms are, "Without money and without price." There are many active buyers. But it is just in the midst of their fruitless activity that the Bridegroom comes. And notwithstanding all their foolish efforts, they are *shut out*.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of true wisdom. It is a sure sign of the beginning of God's work in the soul. And He never begins without completing. The moment you believe His testimony concerning His Son and His finished work, you become *wise unto salvation*. And He puts His seal on that, *He gives the Spirit*. The Holy Ghost takes up His abode in the believer's body (1 Cor. vi. 19). It is henceforth the temple of His good pleasure, to be controlled wholly by Him. And that man who is indwelt and controlled by Him is evidently among the ranks of the wise. He has exchanged folly for wisdom, and left folly's ranks for ever. He is henceforth among the ready ones. What an infinite mercy to be found among them! "The Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." Note it well. Not those who were hoping, wishing, longing, trying, or seeking to be ready, and, alas!

how many there are on all hands who are characterised by one or the other, but they that *were*. They that *were ready* went in; they that *were not* were left out. The return will be sudden, without warning, in a moment. There will be no time to get ready then. It will be too late for ever. The wise go in *with Him to the marriage*. Blessed hope! They go in to enjoy His blessed and glorious company at that scene of holy joy and festivity, prefigured by the marriage. Once again, dear reader, we press it upon you, *Are you ready to go in?*

Hear the terrible consequences of unreadiness! *The door was shut*. Shut close, shut fast, shut for ever. And all who were not ready were *shut out*. Christendom, content with a mere profession, or running about to get the blessing their own way, is excluded. *Christless Christendom* is left behind at the Lord's return for the judgment of God. "Afterward," continued the Lord, "came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us" (Matt. xxv. 11). "*Afterward!*" How deeply solemn! Have you weighed that awful word? It seems to us to be one of the most solemn words for many in all the Scripture. The waking up of the foolish virgins to the fact that Christ has come for His own, and that they are left behind, must be a bitter moment indeed! But still they buoy themselves up with the delusive hope that it may not be too late after all. They come to the closed door and knock, crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But why

did not they go to Him, and obtain oil for their lamps, *before* the door was closed? They call Him "Lord." But has He not said, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46). Had their confession of His name gone beyond the lip, they would not have been shut out. No man truly calls Him Lord from the heart, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3), and He gives power to do what He says. Such are true Christians—wise virgins—and all of them will go in at His return (1 Cor. xv. 51). But, alas, the Lord Himself foretold of a company who would say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

When the saints of God will have gone in to be with Him, and shall be singing the new song of redemption around the throne of God, *in that great praise meeting* described in Revelation v., the poor Christless professors shall come together outside the closed door *to the great prayer meeting*, when it is *too late*. Thousands of lips will cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But, alas, all will be in vain. It is true, their prayers will be answered. The Lord Himself tells us so. But, oh, how bitter their despair, as He replies, "*I know you not!*" The last ray of hope gone. Had He known them, they would have entered in among the wise to be with

Him at the marriage. He knows His own, and they know Him. To them He has given eternal life. He has made them wise, and they are ready.

The days are rapidly passing by. Your last one will come, whoever you may be. It is not yet too late. The wise are rapidly nearing glory. The foolish are rapidly nearing the moment of despair. You may pass from one company to the other this day, through faith in God's beloved Son. He gives the Spirit, as we have shown, to *every one that believeth*. But the Lord closes this solemn likeness with the words, "Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour" (Matt. xxv. 13). And that day may be this day, and that hour this hour! *Are you ready to go in?* Once that moment comes, and you have failed to be ready, your case is utterly hopeless, and it were better for you if you never had been born. E. H. C.

"PROFIT AND LOSS."



WHAT would it profit thee, covetous soul,
 If the world thou shouldst gain—
 even the whole,
 And be lost at the last, yes, "cast
 away,"
 What would it profit thee? Tell me,
 I pray.

Weighed in the balances what are they worth,
 All the emoluments of all the earth—
 Goldfields of Klondyke, choice vineyards of France,
 Riches of commerce, of art, and finance ?

Fame too, distinction, high honour from men,
 Even if doubled again and again—
 Where is the gain, poor unsaved one, to thee,
 If thou'rt *thyself* lost for ETERNITY ?

Period limitless, measureless, vast,
 While God Himself lives so long will it last ;
 Yea, while He liveth whose years cannot fail,
 Obdurate sinners must suffer and wail.

Ponder this question proposed by the Lord,
 Oh ! to evade it thou canst not afford ;
 Say now, while time lies within thy control,
 What shall one give in exchange for one's soul ?

Ah ! be not ashamed this inquiry to face :
 Of him that rejects the word spoken in grace
 Will Christ at His coming, with glory acclaimed,
 In presence of God and His host be ashamed.

Nay, rather receive it as sent from above
 In goodness, and mercy, and infinite love ;
 Seek God and His riches in Christ all thy days,
 Then thou shalt have profit, and He shall have
 praise.

UNDECEIVED, BUT TOO LATE.



ROBERT A—— and I were in the habit of meeting in the train nearly every Monday morning, and whilst thus on our way to business we generally discussed the Lord's way with us on the preceding day. How often our hearts

were gladdened and our faith strengthened as we were able to tell of precious grace reaching some souls, or of saints being cheered by the fuller presentation of truth concerning Himself.

One of these Monday morning meetings with my friend Robert is fixed on my memory. I met him with my usual salutation; but he—could it be the same Robert I had met only a week since?—he looked so strangely altered. His usually bright and cheery face wore an expression of deepest sadness; his eyes sunken and red; cheeks thin and pale; and brow furrowed with the traces of a great sorrow. The whole man looked to have aged twenty years in a week. What could it mean? I at once made anxious inquiry.

“Oh!” said he, “I have had an awful night. My poor brother John has gone to meet his Maker.”

“Do tell me all about it,” I anxiously rejoined.

“Well, you must know,” said my friend, “that my brother John has been a pronounced and

blatant infidel for many a long year. It was long, long ago, when he and I last met, and then he spurned me from him as a canting hypocrite, and worse, and I could but leave him to God.

"Yesterday evening I was surprised to receive an urgent message to come and see him. I did so at once, and the scene appalled me. He was lying gasping on the bed, an awful look of terror on his poor death-stricken face. He took my hand in his, and between his laboured breathings, said, 'Oh, Robert, Robert, there is a God, and I must meet Him; there is a hell, and I am going there. *There is—there is!!*'—"

"For a time I felt too much shocked to speak, but presently I pleaded the mercy of God, and tried to pray. Words would not come; and even to my broken breathings the heavens seemed like brass. Oh, it was an awful time—a soul hanging between time and eternity. I felt the force of those solemn words: 'Because ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer: they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord' (Prov. i. 24-29).

"Again I took his hand, and tried to point him to a Saviour-God, but his only reply was, as he

seemed to be looking away into distance, 'There is a God, there *is* a God, and I must meet Him; there is a hell, and I am going there. *I am! I am!*'

"Presently he turned more quietly to me and said: 'Robert, there is not a Bible, or one of your kind of books in the house—*not one*; but there are numbers of infidel volumes. Take away every book, and burn them—burn them, mind, burn them. Look after Alice (a young woman, his daughter), and oh, Robert! tell her about God, and burn those books.'

"Thus he passed away with the horror of a misspent life and an awful eternity on him."

Reader, I have only feebly told out this true and solemn story. I have avoided the darker details of this poor lost soul's death-bed; for with many an imprecation on himself and his folly, and many a curse on those who had been his companions in his madness, and with many a regret over his lost, lost life, he passed away into all the tremendous reality of meeting the God he had denied, and into the eternal woes of a Christ-rejector's hell. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

"O sinner, do not slight the call,
Now low before the Saviour fall!
'Tis mercy's day, O bow the knee!
That still small voice yet speaks to thee."

HOW CAN I KNOW THAT I AM SAVED?



ULTITUDES are asking that question, some more earnestly than others, but never can there be a conscience that has any sense of its guilt but would fain know how to be saved.

Scripture says, "Ye may know." Than salvation there is nothing more important. Should a man gain the whole world and lose his soul, he would lose everything.

The value of the soul can be estimated only by the blood of Christ. He died that we might live.

If God, then, should place such value on the soul, and view its salvation as so important, it is no wonder that people, on all hands, should desire to know that they can be, and are saved.

We may thank God for the Scriptures, and for their plain explanation of His way of saving souls. The plan is divine. It is a happy thing to turn away from the many voices that sound on all sides, the innumerable forms of religion that prevail, and apply to the one unerring source of light for the help we need.

First. Who are saved?

Only those, but all of them, who by grace believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Taught their guilt and natural depravity, they have found

cleansing in His blood. The spirit of God has shed abroad His love in their hearts, and they can peacefully cry, "Abba, Father." To them the Scripture has said, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8). Hence they *know*. Their assurance is based on the solid ground of the Word of God. It is independent of feelings. These change and fluctuate—that abides firm.

Second. From what are they saved?

They are saved from sin and its consequences. The judgment of God lay on them on account of their guilt—that judgment has been borne by their blessed Substitute.

Their state was one of alienation, and their mind, being carnal, was enmity against God. Yet for them the Lord Jesus was "made sin!" He not only bore the judgment of their sins, but also Himself, in wondrous grace, underwent the fearful judgment of God against sin, so that they might become "the righteousness of God in Christ." Ah! who can sound the depths of that judgment, or measure the lengths and breadths of the cross!

Third. They are thus delivered from the world, and its prince, and also from the power of death and the grave!

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" As they live in the power of Christ's resurrection, so their life is one of constant victory. They pass through the present course, with its necessary discipline and varied

exercise, as pilgrims and strangers, in the happy consciousness that they have a home on high—the place to which their Saviour is gone, and whence He will shortly come and take them to Himself.

Their whole life is one of simple faith in the Word of God, and is sustained by the High Priestly Ministry of Christ in heaven, and the present operation of the Holy Spirit on earth.

Conscious of many a failure, they value the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous; realising their weakness, they deeply prize the Throne of Grace; knowing the subtilty of Satan, they humbly use the sword of the Spirit; feeling the workings of the flesh, they count on the acting of the Spirit; owning their nothingness, they gladly acknowledge Christ as their all.

Theirs is God's salvation. He is its source; the work of Calvary is its foundation; the Spirit of God is its continuous power; and all is known and enjoyed by faith.

This, dear reader, is how we *know* that we are saved. The conditions are before you. The difficulty may, and will be cleared away for you, if you take the same step, own your absolute guilt, and, in faith, make Christ your *all*.

“Oh, mercy surprising! He saves even me!
 ‘Thy portion for ever,’ He says, ‘I will be;’
 On His word I am resting—assurance divine—
 I’m ‘hoping’ no longer—I *know* He is mine.
 I *know* He is mine, yes, I *know* He is mine,
 I’m hoping no longer—I **KNOW** He is mine.”

"HOW FAR IS IT TO HELL?"



WILD young man formed one of a set who sometimes derived their sport from ridiculing the Word of God.

One day he came out of a public-house, where he had become excited by profane revelry with his godless companions, mounted his horse, and struck into a gallop.

A venerable saint of God was passing along the road. When the young man overtook him, he drew up the reins, and said, "*Venerable sir, how far is it to hell?*"

The old Christian calmly replied, "Young man, at the rate you are going *you will soon be there.*"

The poor reckless sinner struck the flanks of his horse with his spurs, and dashed off on a wild canter. After passing a short distance, his horse stumbled. He fell over its head to the ground, but rose not again.

The old Christian reached him only in time to hear one faint groan, and all was over.

How short the triumphing of the wicked!

What a contrast between the last moment on earth, and the first in eternity! "He stretched out his hand against God, and strengthened himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon

him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers" (Job xv. 26).

Perhaps many impenitent readers of *The Gospel Messenger* would not insult an old Christian, or utter blasphemy, but are they not just as truly *sporting with damnation* as the poor, reckless young man above-mentioned?

Are you one such? Oh, fellow-immortal!

Remember—

"The *wrath of God* hangs o'er thy head,
And judgment lingers nigh,"

and yet you are up to this moment as oblivious as he of the *wrath of God*. God, in His goodness, warns you by the startling example of this young man being *suddenly cut off*.

Yes, God plainly tells you by His written Word, in the most solemn language you will ever hear this side of the judgment, that "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. xxix. 1).

Again, "Beware lest he take thee away *with his stroke*, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18).

Oh, reader, thank God *you* are still in time—
"Behold, *now* is the *accepted time*; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"Now, now, now, to-morrow too late may be,
Oh, sinner, in *true repentance* bow,
Confessing—*He died for me.*"

SCRUBBING AND PRAYING.



BACKWARD to the year 1838 we turn in thought, and in a village on the borders of Scotland we see a maiden diligently doing her household work one Lord's Day morning. Is it the flush of early youth that makes her eye so bright, and her voice so blithe? It is youth certainly, but it is more, for the love of God has been shed abroad in her heart, and she is this morning rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven, "of peace with God, of hope of heaven."

Prior to this date it might have been said regarding that place, "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision." The Bible had an honoured place in the majority of households, it is true, but important truths plainly written therein had to a large extent been lost sight of.

Far be it from us to speak disparagingly of those old divines who served their heavenly Father with reverence and godly fear; who loved the Bible, kept the Sabbath, upheld the "Kirk," and who, to quote the words of an old writer, "would stand six hours on a wat hillside listening to a sermon." But a clear evangelical work begun in England came creeping northward, and souls that long had groped in darkness now saw great light, and many

a one, the language of whose heart for years had been—

“When Thou, O Lord, shalt stand disclosed
In majesty severe,
And sit in judgment on my soul,
Oh, how shall I appear?”

now saw that the judgment they had dreaded had been fully borne by Jesus on the cross, and it was their portion to enjoy the blessings which accrued to them through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Was it then that the preachers at that time began to speak smooth things to the people, and to make light of the awful consequences of sin? Ah, no! peace and pardon will never be got in that way. But the Spirit of God opened their eyes to see that “whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever,” and since God had laid their sins on Jesus, and had shown how fully He was satisfied with His work by raising Him from the dead, that the believer in Jesus no longer need groan under the load of guilt. Nay, more, they saw that instead of it being presumption to believe that their sins were forgiven, they thereby set to their seal that God was true (John iii. 33).

The acceptance of this truth brought great joy to many homes, and to none more so than Isabella's, for her father and mother as well as herself had been loosed from their bonds by the Lord. Her sister, too, a little girl of seven, as she sat on a seat in the meeting-room, her feet scarcely reaching the

floor, listening to the words, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord," also gave her heart to Jesus. The long lifetime of devoted service to God which followed proved it was no childish fancy, but that at that tender age she was born of God.

It was very necessary this Sunday to be early astir, as there was a meeting for prayer in a neighbour's house at six o'clock in the morning, so Isabella's agile form moved briskly round, and the domestic work was accomplished in time for her to enjoy the "sweet hour of prayer." More "works of necessity" followed, and then a long tramp to the distant town, where some servants of Christ proclaimed the glorious gospel, which ever falls freshly on ears that already have tasted its purifying power.

About three in the afternoon, as they were wending their way home under a burning sun, Isabella said, "Oh, father, I quite forgot to take my breakfast this morning." So great had been her joy in the Lord, so eager her desire to hear more of Him, that, like another, "she esteemed the words of his mouth more than her necessary food" (Job xxiii. 12). "Master, eat," said the disciples to the Lord when He had been ministering the water of life to a needy soul, and He replied: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Truly a little of the spirit of the Master had been caught by this young disciple.

‘Ah!’ you say, “that was simply the excitement of a young convert in the morning of life, when everything looked bright and fair; wait till years have brought trouble and care, and she will lose her enthusiasm.”

Yes, it certainly was life’s morning, and a morning without clouds too. If you are in that fortunate period, may it be yours to say, “My voice shalt thou hear *in the morning*, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up” (Ps. v. 3). “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Eccles. xii. 1) is a splendid injunction. Food and raiment have to be laboured for, but “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. vi. 33) is a word we should all heed.

It was a wild, wet Sunday morning in the winter of 1898, and with difficulty we traversed the wind-swept streets to a place where some Christians sought to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Many who were wont to congregate there had been deterred by stress of weather, and it was with surprise we noticed an aged woman among the worshippers.

“Why did you venture out in such a tempest?” we asked her, when the meeting was over. A look of holy joy overspread her face as she answered: “It is worth encountering a storm to meet with Jesus. He is worthy to be praised.”

There was no gainsaying the ring of intense reality with which she spoke. Her eyes were dim from age, and her natural strength abated, but clearer than noonday was her delight in the Lord.

"He was the guide of my youth," she said; "He will be my guide even unto death. He has kept me as the apple of His eye, and in affliction He hid me in the shadow of His hand, and soon He will receive me to glory."

Perhaps some one says, "Well, it is very nice for the aged to be religious; when their life is well-nigh spent, it is quite appropriate that they should think on their latter end."

My friend, this aged woman and the young girl are one and the same, with sixty years rolled in between. "In life's gay morn" she applied her heart unto wisdom, and now at "eventide" she found the Lord her refuge and strength, His truth her shield and buckler.

What about the intervening years? How did she bear the burden and heat of the day? We asked her particularly about that. "I always found the Lord's grace sufficient for every circumstance I have been in," she said; and many details she enumerated of divine help received in time of need. We only adduce one incident which belongs to the "noonday" of her life.

Her eldest son had reached the age of fifteen years, and her heart's desire and prayer for him was that he might be saved. From a child he had known the Scriptures, and very earnestly did she

entreat him now when childhood was merging into youth to accept of Jesus as his Saviour. She felt he had come to the parting of the ways—either Christ or the world.

“One day,” she said, “I was on my knees scrubbing the floor, and praying all the time for my son, when this word came to me with power, ‘Thy son liveth!’ I had just got the floor all scrubbed when Willie came in, saying, ‘Mother, I am converted!’ What a joy it was to my heart that God had heard the voice of the lad. I wrestled in prayer with the Lord for every one of my children, and each one, as he or she grew up, was brought to the knowledge of the Lord. Now I keep praying for my grandchildren, and I have the assurance they will all be saved, for the word is, ‘I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.’” (*Isaiah 44. 3*)

Do we know anything, dear reader, of thus continuing instant in prayer?

“Thou art my strength, Lord Jesus;
 Power and praise belong to Thee:
 Thou art my song, Lord Jesus,
 For Thy grace sufficeth me.
 Till the tears of time be o’er,
 Till the tempter tempt no more,—
 Thou art my strength:
 Thou art my song in tribulation,
 Thou art the horn of my salvation.”

"ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD."

(Read Gen. xv. and Rom. iv.)



HERE are many serious persons to-day who have not peace with God. They wish they had it, but they have it not. They would like to have the assurance of forgiveness, but they have not got it. They would like to be able to read their title clear to mansions in the sky, but they cannot do it yet, and what is the reason? It is twofold: they have not been brought through grace to believe implicitly, first of all, the Word of God; and secondly, to rest on the work of Christ. Now these two things, in the history of our souls, must be, if there is to be peace, and the happy knowledge of God. You will have to listen to God, and to believe God.

I sometimes hear people say: "I cannot believe the gospel; it is too good to be true." Then you cannot believe God. They reply: "I cannot believe the gospel you preach. It is too good to be true. You tell me I am a sinner in my sins, and yet say I can be saved without doing anything for myself." That is just what God's gospel says. The law told me the things I ought to do, but which I could not. The law told us what we ought to do, and what we ought to be, and we neither did what it commanded us to do, nor were what we should be. The only

effect of the law, therefore, is this—it puts a man in distress. If you understand what the law is—applied spiritually—it will put you into deep distress of conscience, because you get the sense—I am not fit for God. The law says, "Be ye holy," and I am not holy. The law says I must be righteous, and I am not righteous. The law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke x. 27); and I know perfectly well that I have not done thus. There are penalties attached to a broken law, and we are put into deep distress as a consequence.

But what is the gospel? It is the revelation of what God is. The law was the declaration of what you ought to be, and you know perfectly you are not what it says you should be. I know perfectly well I am not. No man is. The law was the revelation of what the creature ought to be, in his walk here on earth, but he is not it. The gospel is the revelation of what God is in the absolute goodness, love, holiness, and righteousness of His nature, made known in the Person of His Son, and through the work of His Son; and the result of its reception is blessed indeed. By the gospel you learn that you are free to enjoy God; to believe Him, to trust Him, to delight in Him. In fact, the company of the Lord is the sweetest thing to your soul, and what brings you to that? The gospel. It shows us what God is in His own nature, and how He has

acted in Christ; and, that in righteousness, He has brought blessing and pardon to us just where, and as we are, sinners in our sins. That is grace, and the knowledge of it is what the gospel brings to us.

This fifteenth chapter of Genesis is very interesting, as showing that there is progress in the soul, for I do not doubt that there is progress in Abraham's soul here. He had heard the call of God before—I quite admit—in the twelfth chapter, and he came out from Ur of the Chaldees. He obeyed the Lord. He was called to go forth, and he did so; but still he never learned what it was to be a justified man before God. Now the gospel not only calls you out of the world to God, and not only forgives you, but it meets you fully as to your state, and you learn by it what it is to be justified before God—that is, that you stand before God as though there could be no possibility of anything being laid to your charge—nay, more, that you are before Him in a state and condition that suits Him—that suits His own heart, and His own nature. That is exactly where the gospel leads us now.

Possibly you may say to me: "How can I, a sinner, stand before God? How can I come in before God in a condition suitable to His heart, and nature, and throne?" There is only one answer. It is this—There is a Man in the presence of God, perfectly suitable to God, and that is the One, who, first of all went into death, that He

might discharge the liability that lay upon you and me, and deliver us from the state in which we were. You see you need justification, and justification in Scripture is connected with a risen Christ—not merely a living Christ, nor a dying Christ, but a *risen* Christ—raised from the dead by the power of God. That is what the fourth of Romans so beautifully brings out, and no soul has peace until it sees that; nor can it have peace, because you have to learn this, that everything is wrapped up in Christ. When you learn what Christ is, who He is, what He has done, and where He now is, I think your soul will rest in peace with God. You will have the sweet sense that Christ is living for you before God, as He was once for you in death, when He was upon the cross.

Abraham, in the scene before us, learnt what justification was, and it is very beautiful to notice how he learnt it. He had been exposed to a great temptation in the previous chapter. The king of Sodom—a man of the world—had offered to patronise him; and very few of us, let me tell you, are above being patronised by the world. It is only the man of faith that will refuse to be patronised by the king, for the king wanted to make him rich. But Abraham says: "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (xiv. 22, 23). He would not even take

a string. What a nice state he is in. He has done with the world. He will get on. If you break with the world, my friend, you will get on spiritually.

What is the result of this refusal of reward from the world? Let us see. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*" (xv. 1). What a lovely word to encourage a man! The Lord draws near to you. You have had a great temptation, and you have resisted it. You will receive a blessing. You have met some temptation—for the devil always strews the path with temptations: all along the road he drops them, and sets traps for you—and you have been able to say, No! You will find that the Lord will give you a blessing. He says here, "Fear not, Abram." Beautiful words! Are you troubled? Fear not! Are you anxious? Fear not! Are you in distress of soul? God says, "Fear not."

These two lovely words you will find strewed like diamonds throughout the pages of inspiration. You cannot go far through God's Book without finding the Lord drawing near to some trembling, timid soul, with these words—"Fear not!" You and I were afraid of God once; we shunned Him—we feared Him. I do not mean in the right sense. We shunned Him, and got as far away from Him as we possibly could, but He comes near and says—"Fear not: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Did Abraham lose any-

thing by saying "No" to the king of the world? Not he. "I am thy shield," says God, and if you get God as your shield, the devil can throw as many of his darts as he likes, but they will have no effect. My friend, if you have God for the shield of your soul, you are very safe.

Elsewhere we are told to "take the shield of faith"; but this is not the thought here. If you have moral courage enough to say "No" to the world, God says—I will put myself between you and what is antagonistic to you—I am thy shield, and more—I am "thy exceeding great reward." If God be your shield you are protected. If He be your reward, you are well off. Abraham refused the world, and what did he get instead? The Lord for his portion.

People sometimes think it would be a sorrowful thing to give up the world. Abraham may teach you differently. He got far more than he gave up. Young people usually think it would be a great mistake to give up the world. Abraham would not take as much as a shoe-latchet from it, and he was an immense gainer thereby. He had done with the world. It could not satisfy him; and it can never satisfy you.

The moment he has taken this decided step of "refusing," and "choosing" (see Heb. xi. 24, 25)—God says to him—"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." Now see how Abraham advances. He catches the mind of the Lord immediately. He is going to bless me,

he thinks, and he says to the Lord—"Lord God, what wilt thou give me?" He takes his right place. God had drawn near to him, in the richness of grace, and Abraham takes his right place before God—in the fulness of need and faith. "Lord God, what wilt thou give me?" is always the language of faith. Some of us thought we had need of something to bring to God. There are some reading this who have thought till this hour that they must bring something to God in order to get God's blessing, and secure salvation, and the knowledge of life and peace. They have been struggling for long to bring Him something, and have never managed it. Do what Abraham did. He is "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. iv. 11). He is the leader of the host of the saved. He is the first man whose conversion is related in Scripture. He is a typical man—a representative man as regards conversion. You had better do what he did. What was that? When the Lord drew near to him in grace, and goodness, and with purposes of blessing in His heart, he took the place of being ready for blessing, and said: "Lord God, what wilt thou give me?" He took his right place.

Are you willing to be blessed by God, or do you think that you must bring something to the Lord? Are you to be a receiver or a giver? Do as Abraham did. Now note the next step here. "And, behold, *the word of the Lord came unto him.*" Observe that. I press that greatly. It is listening to God. You will never get clear in your

soul till you listen to God, and God only, and hear what He says. "And the word of the Lord came to him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (ver. 4). God promised him an heir. He was to have a son. He had heard about him before. The son had been intimated in days gone by (Gen. xii. 2, 3), but now he gets the divine assurance that the son shall come. God takes him outside, and directs him to look toward heaven. The shades of evening had fallen, the earth was quiet, so to speak, when the Lord brings this man forth, who had great desires in his heart for a son and heir, and he hears from the Lord that he is to have a son. He knew he was an old man, and that his body was "now dead, when he was about an hundred years old" (Rom. iv. 14), and that his wife, Sarah, was only ten years his junior. It must have struck him with great force, when God led him forth and said: "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, *So shall thy seed be*" (ver. 5).

Picture the darkness of that Eastern night, relieved by the brightness and clearness of light shed by those millions of silvery, twinkling worlds overhead. Abraham looks north, south, east, and west, and with amazement scans the glittering firmament as God says: "Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them." Of course he could not number them. Who could? Obeying his orders, he looks, and the next thing he hears is: "So shall thy seed

be." That was a stupendous statement. And what do I read now? "*And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness*" (ver. 6). It says in the fourth of Romans, regarding this circumstance, that "*Abraham believed God*" (ver. 3). In the historical account we find Abraham "*believed in the Lord.*" In the same chapter of the Romans we read that we shall be justified if we believe "*on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*" (ver. 25). Is there a difference? Yes. You believe God, you believe *in* Him, and you believe *on* Him. All three are found in Scripture, and you say—What is the difference? When I believe God, I believe what He says, *i.e.*, His Word. If I believe *in* Him, I believe what He is in Himself; I trust him; I can rely on Him. If I believe *on* Him, I believe what He does. That is very simple.

God is to be believed. I hear people say sometimes, I cannot believe. It is not a question *what* you believe, but *whom* you believe. The point is, Can you believe God? Alas! when God speaks to you about His blessed Son, and says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," you cannot believe Him. When God tells you, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," you say, I do not think He could mean me. Is it not strange? You can believe anybody but God. Are you convicted of the gravity of your unbelief? I hope so. Now, "*Abraham believed God.*" May you do so too. If you have been convicted of un-

belief in days gone by, may your heart from this hour be able to say, I will be like Abraham.

God said to him, "So shall thy seed be," and "he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Now what was that? Abraham had no righteousness of his own. Neither have you nor I, and if you think you have anything to fit you for the presence of God, it is an immense mistake. Did you never read the scripture: "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isa. lxiv. 6). There is not one who would come here, let alone come to God, in filthy rags. I have heard many poor men say they could not go to a gospel meeting because their clothes were not fit. That was an excuse, but not a good one. But observe that it is our righteousness, not our sins, which are as filthy rags. That is what God labels them. Your nicest thoughts, sweetest ways, best actions, aye, the very finest you ever did, are as "filthy rags." If you think they will clothe you before God, sin is attached to all of them.

If a command comes to you to appear before Her Majesty Queen Victoria, you know you must obey, and the first thing you say is, I must get a Court dress; I must have a dress that suits the presence of the one into whose august audience I am called. There is a regulation as to what the dress must be, and you would of necessity pay heed to it. Friend, God wants you in His presence. He wants to have

you for ever and ever. Mark this, if you are to be there, you must have a dress that will suit Him. Your righteousness will not do, for it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one." Again: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 10, 12). Then you may turn to me, and say, If that be the case, are all men lost? Yes, all men are lost. Every man is lost till Christ saves him.

But, I hear you saying, surely every man should do good deeds. Good deeds! My dear friend, the Holy Ghost says, "There is *none* that doeth good." You may be moral, benevolent, and charitable, all of which is very well among men, but when you have to do with God you must have a nature, a life, and a righteousness which suit God. There has only been one man in this world whose heart, and life, and ways have been suitable to God, and that is the One who now sits on His throne to-day, the Lord Jesus, blessed be His name. Before He went yonder, to adorn that throne as the ascended Man in glory, He went into death, that He might atone for the sin of the man who could not put away his own sin. He went into death, in infinite grace, and God in righteousness has taken Him out of death and put Him yonder, where He becomes the righteousness of every one who believes in Him.

How did Abraham become righteous? By faith. How can you become righteous? By faith. Did Abraham acquire righteousness by works? Listen

to these words in the fourth of Romans: "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." He had no righteousness. What God said he believed. He took God at His word. He gave God credit for doing as He said He would, and as a result God said, You are a righteous man, Abraham. And is that the way you and I are justified? In principle exactly so. We are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). Listen: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). What does the law give? The knowledge of sin. What does grace give? Justification through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. From the law there comes a sentence of condemnation. What the gospel gives you is a present and eternal salvation. I prefer the gospel. Do you cling to the law still? You will rue it. Listen again: "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). Has your mouth been stopped yet? You surely cannot talk about what you do, and what you are. If "all the world" is "become guilty before God," you are guilty. Perhaps you have never yet pleaded "guilty." You will have to after a while. I

pleaded guilty long ago, and God has justified me.

But probably you will say, Must I not do something towards salvation? Well, do you think you ought to do something? Listen: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." If you work, it is not grace to get payment for your work. If I work for a man, I do not think it any grace that he should pay me for it. If the one for whom you usually work knows that you need money, and sends it to you, though, through illness or accident, you do no work for it, that is grace. Carefully note the principle of the passage: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5). Thank God, Abraham and I stand upon the same ground. Abraham! how did you get justified? God told me what He was going to do, and I believed Him. And you might say to me, How did you get justified? By faith, just the same as Abraham. God told me what He had done; that His Son had gone into death for my sins, and that He had raised Him from the dead, and I believed Him. We are justified by faith.

Every believer is on the same ground before God. Notice that, for it has ever been true that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for

righteousness." In proof of that, the scripture before us turns us to David's history: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (vers. 6-8). The gospel goes further than merely giving pardon, for it says that the Lord will not impute sin to you—that is, He will not reckon sin against those who have believed. He might forgive you, and you might not have the sense of being justified before God. But when you learn that through faith in Jesus, and by virtue of association with Him you now stand before God in Him, and as He is, at the right hand of God, you occupy new ground altogether. You learn that righteousness is imputed to you if you believe on Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, and, therefore, being justified by faith, you have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"No works of merit now I plead,
But Jesus take for all my need ;
No righteousness in me is found,
Except upon redemption ground.

Come, weary soul, and here find rest ;
Accept redemption, and be blest :
The Christ who died, by God is crowned
To pardon on redemption ground."

A FOE, OR A FRIEND—WHICH?



HE apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, was preaching to those, whom he addresses as "Men of Israel," the marvellous tidings of Jesus, God's own blessed Son. He told them that He had been in this world, that the world

had refused and slain Him, and that God had raised Him from the dead. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: 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" (Acts ii. 22).

He brought out in plain language the folly of their course. They had calculated without God. They did not want Christ. They did not love Him. They did not desire Him. His light was too bright—too strong for them. He came not to be a judge. He came to be a Saviour. They did not know their need of Him as such, and the result was they put Him on the cross—they refused Him. But He is the One, says Peter, "whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." How utterly wrong

was their calculation. They thought they could get rid of the Lord by putting Him to death. That was to be the end of Him, but God raised Him up. God brought Him out from among the dead. They had left God out of their calculations.

The second of Acts is the opening of the day of grace, and on this day of Pentecost what takes place? First, Peter impresses upon the people the folly of their course, and their sin in having put the Lord to death. He then brings out this wonderful truth, that God had stepped in, and raised from the dead the One whom they had refused and slain. "This Jesus," said Peter, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (vers. 32, 33).

It was a wonderful moment. Just ten days before this the Lord Jesus had passed up into glory. For forty days He had moved about upon earth after His resurrection. His work of atonement was done. He came not to be a judge, but a Saviour. He came to glorify God, to save man, and to annul death. Forty days had passed since His resurrection, then He went up into glory; and ten days after that the Holy Ghost came down. It was the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost fell upon the hundred and twenty disciples, and when Peter stood up, and told this startling news to His murderers, that He, whom they had slain,

was alive again, and was exalted at the right hand of God. They had thought to put an end to Jesus by putting Him to death, but God had raised and exalted Him, and said to Him, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." And what will the next thing be? He will leave God's right hand, and His foes will then be His footstool. Thank God, I am not going to be His footstool. Do not you be either, my friend.

Oh! but, you say, I have been His foe. True, solemnly true, but you may yet be His friend. He has a wonderful way of making friends of His foes. There is no one like Jesus for turning a foe into a friend. Jesus has a deep interest in you, and He desires to turn His foes into His friends now. What is He doing now? I will tell you. He is calling out His bodyguard. Who will go in for it? Will you? What do you mean, you ask? Why, I mean the souls that delight in Him are really His bodyguard. You know that the Queen when she comes to Scotland has a little corps, armed only with bow and arrow, who are formed into the bodyguard of the royal person. It is a very high honour to be of the bodyguard. Now you know what I mean. Christ gives you the privilege of being of His bodyguard. Believers in Him are no longer His foes, but His friends. He won three thousand hearts on the day of Pentecost. Shall He not win yours? He is looking for recruits. Will you not join the ranks of the bodyguard? You had better. If you are a wise man you will.

Peter told the house of Israel, and I can say to you now, that assuredly "God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." God has exalted Him. He is the One whom God thinks very much of. He is the One whom God honours. What is the effect of that upon you? See what effect it had when Peter proclaimed it: "Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart." What a joy it is when a sinner is pricked in his heart. I wish I were only certain that you were pricked in your heart. You say, What do you mean? I mean their consciences were aroused. They were awakened. They were convicted sinners. They had gone on the wrong line, but they judged themselves. That is the object of the gospel. It leads men to judge themselves. It leads them to see what they really are before God.

"Now, when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, *what shall we do?*" I like that question. It is not at all like that of the poor wretched man in Luke xii. His question was, "What shall I do?" so as to be able to bestow the increase of his goods for his own exclusive benefit. What is the question these people ask? They turn and inquire, What shall we do? We are convinced of our sins. We are convinced of the error of our ways. We acknowledge we were wrong. We were opposed to Jesus, and if God has exalted Him, we are now in a wrong case entirely. It is a wonder-

ful thing when a man gets awakened. Were you ever an aroused sinner? Have you ever been convicted of your sins? Have you ever been a self-condemned, self-judged, humbled sinner? God awaken you if you have not!

“What shall we do?” they cried. They did not know what to do. They did not say, “What shall we do to be saved?” That was rather too far for them to go at that moment. Salvation seemed out of the question. Perfect amazement was on their brow. Fear took possession of their hearts. Consternation possessed them, and conscience was smiting them. They knew very well that the judgment of God hung over them. They had been guilty of the murder, and rejection of His Son, and they thought that God would draw the sword of His righteous vengeance from its scabbard, and deal with them according to their guilt, and they cried to the servants of God, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Then Peter said unto them, “Repent”—a good word—“and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Repent! What is repentance? It is judging yourself. Man, have you ever repented? You must either repent, or be damned. You must change your attitude towards the Lord Jesus Christ. You must change your mind towards Him, and accept Him in simple faith, coupled with self-judgment, or depend upon it there is nothing

but the eternal judgment of God before you. If you are not Christ's friend, you are His foe.

"Repent, and be baptized," rung in their ears that day. Why be baptized? That would test the reality of their repentance, if it existed. Go, and as publicly own His name, in the waters of baptism, as seven weeks ago, in Pilate's hall, your voice was heard crying, "Away with him, crucify him." Seven weeks ago you clamoured for His blood; now, Peter says, own His name, confess His name. I glory to confess that name. Do not you? It is the joy of the heart of the Christian to confess that name. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Public confession of Christ was what Peter meant.

Why does Peter put these together? The people's rejection of Christ had been public, and God demanded that there should be confession of Him as downright and public as seven weeks before there had been rejection, when they had demanded His death, and chosen Barabbas in His stead.

The gospel comes to us rather differently from the way in which it was presented to these Jews, for, to Cornelius the Gentile, Peter said, "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever *believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). The principle is the same, however. You believe in Him, and take your stand for the Lord. They repented and took their stand for the Lord. I do not believe that

there is any real genuine conversion unless it comes to the surface. Some people say, We do not believe in talking much about these things. I will tell you why. You have nothing to talk about. If Christ filled your heart, you could not confess Him enough. Somebody meets you with the wonderful news that an uncle has died, and left you £100,000. You would not be ashamed to confess that. If a paragraph appeared in the *Times* announcing the fact about you, you would not hesitate to admit that you were the person in question.

Yes, my friend, yet unsaved, you are ashamed of Christ. You have never boldly owned His blessed name. If you henceforth are to be His, let all know that you are for Christ. "Repent, and be baptized *every one of you.*" It was not to be national, congregational, or all coming in a crowd. It was individually—"every one of you." Damnation is individual. Salvation is individual. Confession of Christ is individual. We cannot pass into God's kingdom all in a company. The man who says, "We are all Christians," is, I am pretty certain, not one himself.

But, you say, I go to church. Yes, but do not forget that you may go from church to hell. But, I am in the membership of the church, you reply. There is no better decoy duck to eternal ruin at the present day than profession without the possession of Christ. It is that which lures and leads men on to destruction. I have been preach-

ing the gospel for thirty-eight years, and, of those above fifteen or sixteen years of age, whom I have seen the grace of God reach and save, ninety-five per cent. were "church members," and yet, by their own confession, till then unsaved.

Miscalculation as to this point has ruined hosts of precious souls. Profession is not possession, and a terrible day of awakening awaits all mere professors. If that awakening occur in eternity, it will be none too long for the Christless professor to deplore his earthly folly. "A fool is known by his folly," says God, whether that folly be profane or religious. What I want you to see is, that if you are a church member without Christ, it is high time you got converted. May God convert you to-day. Ah, you will join that wretched fool of Luke xii. if you do not take care. Repent every one of you and confess His name, for "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

And now, mark what Peter proclaimed: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" Yes, there is remission of sins, and reception of the Spirit. You have been a sinner, a downright sinner, but if you believe in, and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, God will forgive you even the sin of rejecting Him. "Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." So witnesses every prophet. Hear

another witness: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, 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). But there is yet deeper blessing to the simple believer, for he is told, "And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

There comes in the full blessing of the gospel. God is a forgiving God, and a giving God. He forgives my sins on the ground of the work of Christ, and He gives me the Holy Ghost to bring me into the enjoyment of all that is mine in Christ. God give to you, my friend, the enjoyment of the heavenly riches which belong to faith. These are worth having. I much prefer these two blessings, "the remission of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost," to the "much goods" and "many years" of that poor wretch, whom God called a fool. His much-prized riches did not last out the night, but our joys are eternal, as Christians. Thank God, our sins are forgiven, we have life eternal, and the Holy Ghost dwells in us to shed God's love abroad in our hearts (Rom. v. 5), and to witness to us that we are the children of God. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). Such is the effect of receiving the Holy Ghost, and He loves to make the child of God know that he is a child, for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with

our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16).

There are but two classes in any company of people. You are either a glory-bound saint, through faith in Christ, or you are a hell-bound sinner, through being occupied with the things of this life. You are either Christ's foe or His friend. Among which class are you? Ah! you say, I do not like the line to be drawn as tight as that. It is time the line was drawn tight, just to show you where you are—just to show you that you are on the wrong side of the line—and if you find yourself there and are wise, you will cross that line to Christ's side without delay. Many of Peter's hearers did, as we shall see, as he passed on to say to them: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Thank God! He called me, and He called you, dear brother; and we heard His voice. Thank God, dear sister, that He called you, and you heard His voice. Let us together say, Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! The Lord has blessed and saved me, and just because He has called and saved me, I want you, my dear friend, to take His blessing too, and to join the choir of those who sing in the congregation of the Lord's redeemed and saved ones.

Depend upon it, the downright Christian is the happiest man on earth. I have Peter's example for exhorting you thus, for I read, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save

yourselves from this untoward generation." Yes, every man, in this sense, has to save himself. Now, says Peter to his hearers, come out clearly and distinctly, and let all Israel know that you are on the Lord's side. Let all your friends and relatives know that you are on the Lord's side, I would say to you. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls." What a beautiful haul of fish for the gospel net in one day! And Peter was the fisherman! About three thousand souls! That is like the grace of God, and a good sample of what the gospel does.

People sometimes ask me, Do you always expect people to be converted when the gospel is preached? Certainly, what else is it to be preached for? I am disappointed when there are none converted, and we should not be surprised at many conversions taking place, for Christ is worthy thereof, and glorified thereby. You must either be converted or damned, and I should strongly urge you to join these three thousand.

This second of Acts shows us a wonderful scene, and what a contrast to the day when the law was given and broken. That was Moses' day, you know, and then three thousand men died (Exod. xxxii. 28). On the day when Peter unfolded the truth as to the ascended Saviour, three thousand men were saved. I call this Jesus' day.

When he saw the effect of his preaching, I am

sure the devil was sorry that he did not leave Peter alone on that night in the high priest's palace. Seven weeks before this Peter had cursed and sworn, and said, "I know not the man." Here now he was confessing, and speaking of Christ most blessedly, and was the means of the conversion of three thousand souls through one preaching. I am afraid it takes about three thousand sermons to convert one soul now. That is the order nowadays. The whole thing is inverted. But what a wonderful moment was that for Peter, and what a wonderful moment for the grace of Christ. The breaking of Peter was really the making of Peter. In the high priest's hall Peter was full of self-confidence. Here, in Acts ii., he is full of the Holy Ghost, and showers of blessing fall.


And now let me ask, Have you received God's blessing? Thank God, if you are the Lord's now; and having made up your mind, my friend, you are on the right side from this hour forth. Your experience will be that of a young man who spoke to me lately in London, after I had been preaching.

"Are you decided for Christ?" I said. "Thank God, I am, doctor," he replied. "And when were you decided?" "To-night, I could not hold out any longer. I am happy now." So will you be, for joy in the Holy Ghost is the portion of every decided soul. And I trust you will do what the young converts did on the day of Pentecost. Of them it is written, "And they continued steadfastly

in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." That was much better than delusive plans of "much goods" for "many years." Do you not think so?

W. T. P. W.

WILLING, AND ABLE TO SAVE.



FEARFUL storm was raging in the Channel, and the inhabitants of the town of Kingstown saw with horror a vessel, driven by the fury of the storm, strike upon the rocks, and become a wreck. The brave fellows who manned

the lifeboat, when a case of need called for their services, were soon astir on their errand of mercy. The lifeboat was quickly launched, and watched by many from the shore, as the would-be rescuers bravely pulled through the angry waves toward the poor fellows on the sinking ship. Little did they think as they stepped aboard that they would never return, and that they would spend their Christmas in eternity.

As they rowed out of the harbour toward the wreck, a tremendous sea broke over the lifeboat, capsizing her. From some unknown cause she did not right herself as she should have done, and the would-be saviours, being made fast to their seats, all perished.

Near the entrance to the pier of that harbour may be seen a stone slab, bearing the following inscription:—

“Near this spot, during the storm of Christmas Eve, 1895, the crew of one of the Kingstown Life-boats embarked on their last mission of mercy, in an attempt to reach a wreck. The boat was capsized, and all her gallant crew were drowned.”

It is a sad story, and from it we turn to tell a brighter one—of Him who was not only *willing* but *able* to save. These poor fellows were willing, and did all in their power to rescue the shipwrecked sailors, but they were not able to accomplish their errand of mercy, and died in the attempt.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Alone, at Calvary, He braved the storm. There the angry billows of God’s wrath broke over Him, and He died, not in an attempt to save us, but that by His dying we might be for ever set free, and know, since He has been raised again, that our sins are gone, and our souls are saved.

“Christ is the only Saviour mighty to save,
He who suffered once for sins, and sank 'neath the wave,
Sing how the wrath of God on Calvary’s cross He bore;
How by death He conquered death, and lives evermore.

Christ is the Saviour, He never will fail,
All hope to save oneself could nothing avail;
Man is a total wreck; can never reach the shore;
All who trust in Jesus Christ are saved evermore.”

A HUNGRY SOUL FILLED.



ABOUT ten years ago, a young girl just into her teens left her home in Peterhead for her first situation, a few miles from Edinburgh. It was rather a long distance from home for a start, but she was a brave lassie, and did not mind

that very much.

Up till this time—although she had been well brought up, and was morally all that could be desired—she had never had any serious thought as to how she stood in relation to God. She had not taken into consideration the fact that she was by nature and practice a sinner.

Like every other person in their natural condition of soul, she had thought as little about God as possible. She was therefore rather surprised and disconcerted when, on the night of her arrival at her new abode, after family reading, the master of the house knelt down and commended her specially to the Lord, thanking Him for watching over her, and bringing her safely on her journey. She had been accustomed to think of God as a far-away being, whose name was only to be used in a sort of superstitious way, and she had been quite content to have it so. This was therefore rather more than she was prepared for, to be brought, as it were, into the very presence of God.

However, she got over it, and the time wore on until she came to be leaving that situation to go to another close by. Then she found that her last night there was to be the same as the first. Again the master of the house commended her specially to the Lord, praying that what she had seen and heard there might not be lost upon her, but that God would follow it and her with His blessing.

G—— went to her new place, but she was not quite at ease. The Lord was answering the prayers of the Christian with whom she had been serving, for by-and-by she got more uneasy, until at last she thought she would have to get converted, for her state of soul was getting to be unbearable.

Like many more, she had an idea that conversion was just like an ordinary business transaction which could be gone through at any time; but as to this she found out her mistake. One thing the devil greatly used to hinder her was novel reading. She could not get very much of it where she was, but one weekly paper she got regularly, and devoured the two or three stories that were in it, always finishing at an interesting part, with the alluring intimation—*To be continued.*

G—— was usually in the middle of her stories when her conscience would make itself heard, and she would say, "Well, I must read them this week, but I will get converted before another week." Of course the devil looked after that, since it was only a resolution formed in her own strength. Over and over again the same thing

happened. Then her health gave way, and she had to go home.

A severe illness followed. So ill was she that at one time she thought she was about to die. She called her mother to her one night and said, "Mother, I think I am dying."

"Well," said her mother, "if it is the Lord's will, we will just have to submit."

"But, mother, I am afraid to die," said G——; "I know that if I die I shall land in hell."

Her mother then gave her some Scripture texts to comfort her, but they had no effect. Ah, no! A death-bed is not the place to get the question of the soul's eternal salvation settled. However, G—— recovered, and went to another situation in Peterhead. It was a large establishment where eight servants were kept. No doubt the devil thought that a whirl of worldly company would drive all serious thoughts out of G——'s head; but no, God had begun to work, and when He works "none can stay his hand."

So miserable was she now, and so afraid lest she would die and be damned, that she could not sleep at nights. She would lie awake until she thought the other servants were asleep, and then, getting up, would kneel down at the bedside and say her prayers. Although after all it was only a form, still saying her prayers seemed to give her some relief at the time. She did not stay long at that place, but leaving, came south again—to Portobello this time.

Poor girl, she had had an awful time of soul exercise. It had gone on for about eighteen months, but it was nearly at an end now. Nature's darkness, intensified by the wiles of the devil, was about to give way to the light of God. Soon after she came to Portobello she went with a friend to a gospel meeting. At the end of the meeting there was an after-meeting announced, and both the girls stayed. After a bit the preacher asked all those who wished to be prayed for to put up their hands. Immediately G——'s friend put up her hand, at the same time giving her a nudge as if to say, "Up with yours," so she put up her hand too.

By-and-by another order was given: "Up hands all those who are trusting Christ." G—— did not need to be pressed this time, but put up her hand at once: so did her friend. We would not like to commend this way of testing converts, but in G——'s case it was the time of decision. The seed had fallen into prepared ground, and so took root. The work went on, and deepened in her soul, unhindered now by her own struggling. After she had gone on for some time feasting on the love of Jesus, the thought came to her, that she would like to break bread in remembrance of the One who had loved her with such a love as to give Himself for her. No one had said to her that she should break bread; only the Lord was leading her on in the path which was pleasing to Himself.

With G——, as with many other earnest simple souls, a difficulty now arose. She could not break

bread alone. It must be in fellowship with others, and where was it to be. One friend advised her to join the church. G—— asked if the members were all Christians. Yes, they were supposed to be. That seemed good so far, but yet she could not make up her mind to join them.

Another friend advised her to join the church, but still something seemed to keep her back. By this time she had made the acquaintance of another bright Christian girl, who said to her one night as they were walking together, "Oh, G——, I have a nice book I would like you to read; will you come round and get it?" Of course G—— went to get it. She was always ready for anything fresh to read. "Aids to Believers"—the title looked good anyway; so G—— went away home to see if the contents were as good as the title promised. She read on and on: it was good to start with, but as she went on it grew more and more interesting for her. At last she jumped up exclaiming, "I've got it now."

Yes, she had got it: light from the Lord Himself about the very thing she had been exercised about. How little this makes of all the effort of man, to see how simply and quietly the Lord can do His own work. By-and-by G—— was found with a few like-minded Christians, outside the camp, gathering together on the first day of the week at the Lord's request, to break bread in remembrance of Him, and to show forth His death till He come. He has not come yet—although we

expect Him soon—so G—— is still going on simply and happily.

Reader, do you know G——'s Saviour: He is the chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely One. If you have no link with that Blessed One, you have immediately ahead of you what G—— in her natural state so much dreaded, death and judgment. If you do know the Lord, bear with us while we put a question to you—Are you following Him? This is the only way to get clear as to your path. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. vi. 3). Cultivate an appetite, for all that is of God. "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul" (Ps. cvii. 9).

A. C.

"BEYOND THE GATE—WHAT IS THERE?"



AT E one stormy evening the old doctor was summoned to see a man who had been attacked with sudden illness on the cars, and had stopped at a little inn near the railway station, about three miles from the village. The patient proved to be Squire Joyce, from the neighbouring county, whom the doctor slightly knew. He examined him carefully, and gave him medicines taken from his saddle-bags. Then he rose to go,

smiling cheerfully down at the anxious face of the sufferer.

"You will, I think, find yourself better in the morning; able, I hope, to go on your journey," he said.

"Yes. Stay a minute, doctor. I want you to be honest with me. I have had seizures like this before. Shall I have them again?"

"It is probable."

"I want the truth—all of it."

"Yes, they will return."

"I may die in one of them—to-morrow?"

"Yes. Or it may be, not for years. It is uncertain. Do not waste your life in anticipating them. We all must go through the same gate some day."

"The gate—yes! But beyond the gate—what is there?"

HIS EYES WERE ON THE DOCTOR'S FACE, full of doubt, almost of pain.

The two men were silent a moment.

"What is there?" Joyce repeated harshly. "You are a member of a church—a Christian. I have no religious belief. Tell me, for the love of God, what is there beyond? If I may go to-morrow, what shall I find?"

"I do not know."

Joyce did not speak for a while, and then gave a forced laugh.

"I need your help more for this than for my

disease. I'd rather talk to you than to a clergyman. You are a shrewd man of the world; and a good man. Sometimes I am greatly depressed, thinking of this darkness into which I am going. For thousands of years men have gone out into it, leaving their loved ones behind, and not one has sent back a word to say how it fares with him—not one."

In the silence that followed the rain beat against the windows. There came a slight whimpering cry from without.

"You are an old man, doctor," said Joyce, turning quickly on him. "You are not far from the gate yourself. Are you not afraid of what may be beyond?"

"No," said the old man; "no, I'm not afraid. May I ask you to look here?"

HE ROSE AND OPENED THE DOOR.

Outside, in the dark hall, lay a little fox-terrier, drenched with rain. He was crouched on the floor, his eyes fixed on the closed door.

"This is my dog, a bright affectionate little fellow. He followed me through the storm, knowing that I was in this closed chamber. He never was here before. He did not know what was in the room. He did not care to know. I was in it, his master whom he loves, and who has cared for him. He was not afraid."

Joyce looked at the doctor keenly a moment before he spoke.

"You mean——"

"I mean that I am like poor Punch. I am not afraid of the dark room to which I am going. I do not ask to know what is there. I believe that my Lord and Master is there. In all these later years of my life I have felt that He has cared for me. My confidence has been such that I have been assured that in my hours of trial He has never failed me here. I sincerely believe He will not fail me yonder."

"But I—I do not know Him."

"He knows you. I think I am authorised by the declarations of the Bible to say that His hand is stretched out to you. I think, too, that I can reverently ask you to take it. You must accept Him as your Saviour, Guide, and Teacher. That done in sincerity, you will not fear the gate, nor all that lies beyond it."

ANON.

THE LOSS OF THE "STELLA."



LOOK out! where are you going? There is danger ahead!"

A gentleman was crossing the English Channel and stood near the wheel. It was a calm, pleasant evening—no one dreamed of possible danger; but a sudden flapping of the sails, as if the wind had shifted, caught the ear of the officer on watch. He

sprang at once to the wheel and examined the compass. "You are half a point off course," he said sharply to the man at the wheel, and the officer returned to his post. "You must steer very accurately," said the passenger, "when half a point is of so much consequence." "Ah!" said the man, "that half point in many cases would bring us on the rocks." Thus was it, only a few weeks ago, with the fine passenger boat which left Southampton bound for Jersey, with a full complement of passengers, many of them eagerly looking forward to meeting friends, and others to a pleasant Easter holiday. Who would have thought, as the "Stella" glided swiftly down Southampton Water, into a comparatively smooth sea, that she was

ON HER LAST VOYAGE?

"Full speed ahead!" was the captain's orders, and for a few hours all went well. Suddenly she ran into a thick mist that we had had round the island from early morning. Anxious to reach the port of Guernsey before dark, the gallant ship held on her way, when suddenly, to the intense consternation of all, the treacherous rocks of the Caskets loomed immediately before them. The signal was given, the engines reversed, but it was

TOO LATE!

The gallant "Stella" rebounded, and lay quivering beneath the death-blow. "Man the boats!" was the captain's orders, and in a quarter of an hour the boats were lowered. Who can pretend to

picture the heartrending scene on board? Eye-witnesses can scarcely find words to express it. Timid children clinging to helpless parents. Husbands and wives taking their last, long farewell. Lovers locked in their last fond embrace. Strong men weeping, and the careless pleasure lovers crying to their long-forgotten God. In a few moments the relentless hand of death had seized over eighty souls, and the cold waters of the Channel had become their burying place, whilst the funeral knell sounded from the lighthouse hard by.

Those who were saved will never forget the experience of that night—how, amid hope and fear they eagerly waited for the coming dawn, when they might hail a passing vessel. A young man, whose parents are well known to the writer, tells an affecting story of their terrible experience—seventeen hours in an open boat without food or water! However, deliverance came at last, and with thankful hearts they once more stood upon *terra firma*. Thousands of hearts have been deeply moved by the various newspaper reports, but, reader! have you not read "between the lines"?

BE YE ALSO READY.

God speaketh once; yea, twice. But man perceiveth not. How long shall He chide with YOU? Your bark is launched! quietly, perhaps, you float down stream; even now you may have reached the moment in your soul's history when God has spoken for the last time—remember!

“There is a time, we know not when,
 A point, we know not where,
 Which marks the destiny of man
 For glory or despair.”

One pin's point of deviation pursued by the man at the wheel drove the vessel from her course, and rendered her a hopeless wreck. One pin's point of deviation from faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus for salvation, and that course pursued, will wreck your bark on the soul-damning rocks of “false trust,” and the dark, cruel waters of death will conduct your Christless soul into the regions of hopeless despair.

Reader, God still welcomes SINNERS! That heart of love yearns over the LOST.

“Come NOW, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. i. 18).

“Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear?
 When the breakers roar and the reef is near;
 While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,
 Shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow?”

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,
 When the waters cold chill your latest breath?
 On the rising tide you can never fail
 While your anchor holds within the veil.

Will your eyes behold through the morning light
 The city of gold and the harbour bright?
 Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore
 When life's storms are past for evermore?”

A GOSPEL CALL.



H, sinner, hear the joyful sound !
 Glad tidings through the world resound,
 Of pardon, peace, salvation free,
 God's blessed way of liberty.
 His Word believe,
 His Son receive,
 For Jesus died for thee.

God sees thee in this world of sin,
 And fain thy heart would woo and win ;
 Oh, flee unto His arms of love,
 No longer in the darkness rove.
 Thus saved from hell,
 Soon thou shalt dwell
 With Him in light above.

Thy footsteps haste, the day draws near,
 When Christless souls shall quake and fear ;
 Soon, soon will pass salvation's day ;
 From wrath and vengeance flee away.
 God bids thee come,
 To His bright home,
 With Christ to dwell for aye.

Lest thou in hell for ever sink,
 No longer trifle on the brink ;
 Here is a refuge open wide,
 Salvation in the One who died.

His blood was shed,
 Raised from the dead,
 He lives. In Him confide.

Yes, now in Christ alone confide,
 If works could save, would He have died?
 Nay, sinner, hear His blessed cry,
 "'Tis finished!" He is crowned on high.
 Look unto Him,
 Once judged for sin,
 Trust Him who cannot lie.

Henceforth art thou for glory meet,
 By blood made nigh, in Christ complete;
 God's child, His son before His face,
 Blessed in the riches of His grace,
 To praise Him now,
 With all who bow,
 A chosen heavenly race.

E. H. C.

"WHAT is the Gospel, and our hope? Christ has died, put away our sins, annulled death, endured judgment; and we, believing in Him, stand on the other side of death and judgment, and just wait for Him. When He came the first time, He took our *sins* away; when He comes the next time, He will take *us* away to scenes of rest and glory, to be the everlasting partners of His joy."

W. T. P. W.

HEROD'S TROUBLER.

"When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."—MATT. ii. 3.



T is an intensely solemn fact that Christ is not wanted by the very people that need Him most, unless the Holy Ghost has raised the question of sin in their souls. No matter where you find the Lord drawing near to man, this is ever the case, and the testimony of the wise men to Herod first demonstrates this truth, after the Son of God became incarnate.

At the very outset of His course He was *rejected*, and that is why we read in the opening chapter of John's Gospel—"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own (property), and his own (the Jews) received him not" (John i. 10, 11). Whenever you bring in the truth about Christ into the world, whenever there comes the testimony of the Holy Ghost to men of the world—introducing Christ—do you know the effect? Trouble! What was it then? "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

Now would you not have thought that they would have rejoiced, and been delighted to hear the news? When they heard the question, "Where is He?" would you not have thought there would

be a desire to know where He was, and who He was? Alas! they were not prepared to receive Him, but they were prepared to say, "Not wanted." Somebody said to me only to-day, "What do you mean by a rejected Christ?" My dear friend, do you know what rejection is? You are not wanted. Sinner! you do not want Him, do you? Indeed, from the date of His birth, I might say, the sad truth came out—He was not wanted. He was needed. But was He wanted by Herod? No! Did the scribes want Him? No! Did the men of the world want Him? No! Do you want Him now? Well, if you are an awakened sinner, you do; but if you are not, you do not. Oh no! Do you know the finest way to spoil a worldly party? Go into the midst of it and speak about Christ. Go into a ballroom, or on to a racecourse, if you like, and witness for Christ, and you will find He is not wanted. The world does not want Jesus.

Some years ago I was in a third-class carriage coming up from Musselburgh on a Saturday night. The train was crowded, and the carriage I was in had five communicating compartments, so there were about fifty people in the carriage. As we journeyed, a party of ten who occupied the middle compartment began to sing. They sang very well—Scotch songs—and all the rest of the people in the carriage stopped talking and listened. When we reached Portobello they got out, and other people got in. At that moment I rose and said—"My friends, I have observed that you have been

listening with interest to these Scotch songs. I am not a Scotchman, but I should like to tell you about the song of my native land." Everybody looked and listened. Then I went on—"My native land is heaven. I belong to heaven. I am redeemed by the blood of the Saviour, and belong to heaven. I cannot tell you the tune of the song sung there, but its words are these, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.'" From these words I preached the gospel for two or three minutes, and then sat down. At the same moment the train was drawn up by a danger signal, and there was a dead silence. The first words that broke the silence were, "Is he drunk?" They came from the further end of the carriage, and the speaker was a working-man. "No," said another man, "I do not think he is drunk; I think he is a good man." "He is not a wise man," said a third. "And why not?" asked a fourth. "Because he does not know the time nor the place for these things," said the first speaker. This sentiment was applauded. It just expressed the world's opinion. It never has time or place for Jesus. Sinner, the fact is you have no time for Christ; you have no place for Christ. Alas! you do not want Jesus.

My reader, you will want Him one day. He was rejected in the day of His birth, and He has been rejected ever since. You say—Oh, things are

altered since then. Are they? How many times have I stood with others at the corner of a street, and sought to speak a word for the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and gathered a crowd around us, and just as we were beginning to get into the sweetness of the proclamation of the gospel, Policeman No. B246 has come along and said—"Move on, please; by the order of the magistrates; we can't have the thoroughfare blocked." "All right," says some one, and we move on. We go down three blocks, and there, at the foot of the street, is a German band, with the listening crowd reaching over to the other side of the thoroughfare, but you do not find Policeman No. B246 coming and telling them to move on. No, the world likes music, but it cannot tolerate Christ.

Some day you will sadly want Him, friend, when you cannot get Him. You will want to get to Him when you cannot get near Him. But do tidings of Christ trouble you now? You are like Herod. "When Herod heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." I would to God that you were troubled, but on a right account. Would to God that you were anxious about your soul, and crying, "What must I do to be saved?" It would be a good thing for you if you were to heed the Scriptures too. Herod did, but not for salvation. In his trouble, "when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa:

for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." It is a very striking thing that if you want solid information you must go to the Scriptures, and even that godless man Herod had to go to Scripture. Whence did Herod get his information? From the pages of Scripture. And where do men get real light and truth to-day? Again, it is from the Scriptures.

Let me exhort you, young man, to hang on to the Bible. Do not let the infidel professors of a theology that suits the world rob you of a single letter of Scripture. They are very busy, indeed, cutting out this section and that. Believe them not. A young man wrote me a letter lately, in which he stated that he had been filled with doubts as to Scripture, and, strange to say, that it was the teachers of religion who had upset his faith. Well, I have not much respect for such teachers. Men who will teach the truth, and give their hearers undiluted and unadulterated Scripture, are above all things wanted now. The man who tampers with Scripture will do so only to his own cost, for he will find out in the end that he has been tampering with the words of the living God. Thank God, He has long patience with all such, but there comes a moment when His patience is wearied out. My friends, thank God for the Scriptures. All the difficulties of the Scriptures, that men so often

speak about, are really not such when rightly understood. Errors do not exist in them. God forbid the thought. There are no errors in Scripture, and their difficulties become the greatest beauties when they are rightly apprehended. There is all the difference in the world between what God says, and what man says.

If you take the finest thing man has made, say for instance the finest work in steel, which has been most highly finished off, and burnished, and put it under a microscope, what a rough, wretched, scratched concern it is. There is no smoothness in it at all. Now I put the wing of a butterfly under the glass; and the more you magnify it, the more beautiful it becomes. That is the difference between what man makes, and what God makes—what man writes, and what God writes. So do not you let into your head any of the current flimsy, and withal infidel, ideas as to there being errors in Scripture. I will tell you where the error lies. In the vision of the man who is reading it. He has got a spiritual cataract—a blindness about his moral vision; and he does not see things clearly. Blind men do not see. Every one knows that; and if you think you see errors in Scripture, be sure you have not a clear vision. That is not complimentary to me, you say. I know it is not. I do not want it to be. I want the legs knocked from under you, my infidel friend. I want to see you get down, and say, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." You listen to God, for He speaks the

truth, and His truth is exactly just in all its proportions.

It is a striking testimony to the value of God's Word that Herod, in the middle of his confusion, is obliged to turn to, and listen to Scripture. When he gets the knowledge, he turns it to bad account, like many another sinner. "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search for the young child, and when ye have found him bring me word again, *that I may come and worship him also.*" He had no thought of that. That was mere deceit on his lips. He was set on murder, not worship, in his heart. You know what took place. Although on his deathbed, as we are told, he sent out his headsmen, "and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." Such is man's hatred, that he plots, as soon as he hears of His birth, to cut off the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now do you not think it startling when you come to look at Scripture, and at what God tells us about His Son? Yes, it is very startling! He was not wanted. Herod's awful project the magi did not aid in carrying out. When they had seen and worshipped the Lord, they repaired, warned of God, to their own country. Scripture tells us that "being warned of God in a dream that they should

not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

Jesus of Nazareth is a living, and a loving Saviour; but He has been rejected. Rejection met Him at the outset of His history. The world has never wanted Him. From His birth He has been rejected, and now He has gone out of sight.

Jesus the Nazarene—the blessed Son of God—has passed through this scene—alas!—unloved and unwanted by man. He was rejected. "He came to his own, and his own received him not"—but then, as now, grace has led some to care for Him, and of them it is written—"But 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. 11, 12). But though He was a rejected Saviour, He would still be a Saviour. Nothing chilled His love. He is rejected still; but, friend, what I want is your heart for that rejected Saviour now, and if you have never yielded your heart to Him till now, I ask you, Is He not worthy of it? And do not you think the day is coming when God will vindicate Him, and judge the world that has rejected Him, and the man who has refused Him? You may be certain He will.

Let me then urge you to come to Him in time, and confess and own Him now. God give you, my friend, this moment to receive that blessed One as your Saviour. You may say to me—You have not told us much about His work. You have heard plenty about His work, and have not been

converted. I want you to see clearly that He is a rejected Saviour. The world has rejected Him, and you either side with the world who rejected Him, or with Him who is rejected. God has yet to settle with you, my friend, as to how you stand in relation to Jesus. God has said to Him—"Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Do not forget that He made peace before He went out of the world, and said to His own, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John xiv. 27). His birth *troubled* the world; His death secures *peace* for the one who accepts Him.

How do you stand in relation to the One who was rejected by the world, which at the outset would not have Him, and at length spat upon Him, scorned Him, and finally crucified Him with malefactors? How do you stand in relation to Him? Yours is an awful case if you are on the world's side, for, mark this, He will appear, He will come back in power and glory; and woe betide the man who is not on His side then. God help you to take your stand with Jesus, and for Jesus. Where is He? At the Father's right hand. Whom will He save? Anybody that will trust Him. Whom will He receive? Any one that will come unto Him. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." If you are wise you will say just now, "From this moment forth, Lord Jesus, I will be on Thy side, whoever may be opposed to Thee. Yea, Lord, *I am Thine.*"

MY CONVERSION: A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

“**B**E that, being often reprovèd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov. xxix. 1), was all that remained of a sheet almanac which had been pasted up in an outhouse—the rest was torn away, leaving only one corner bearing the above words. They caught the eye of a procrastinator, one whom God had been speaking to for many a day, and who was just at this time recovering from a long and painful illness.

Oh! how those words haunted that poor miserable soul, day after day, and night after night. Conscious of having been *reprovèd*, and that often, and that it was God speaking, saying, that such an one, who “hardeneth his neck,” should be “*suddenly* destroyed,” and that “without remedy,” only caused greater agony of soul.

Time went on, and still there was no crying to God for mercy. But He, in His gracious tender love, *still spoke*. Again, in a dream, the object of His interest finds itself dying, and, in a few moments more, felt it would be in hell. It awoke to find it only a dream. Thank God, and what a relief. Yet again the tempter whispered, “Not yet, time enough yet, wait till you are older, have a little more pleasure, there is plenty of time.” And on

it went again, hardened, careless, and more indifferent than ever.

Reader, are you a procrastinator? Let me entreat you, delay no longer. The great enemy of souls will tell you there is plenty of time. Thank God, it is still the day of grace to-day, but ere to-morrow's sun may rise, you may have passed out of this scene, or the Lord may have come, and taken to be with Himself all those who have come to Him in this the day of His grace, those who have cast themselves upon Him as their only way of escape.

Some months passed, and the writer, with a friend, went to hear one of the farm men preach, and let me say, it was only to sneer. Ah, well do I remember the portion of Scripture he read that night. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. iii. 22, 23). But there was no ear to hear, it passed by. On the following day I was driven by the same man to the station about seven miles off. As we parted he said, "Do not forget you have a soul to be saved." Ah! God was speaking again. I never forgot it. Blessed be His name, He was about to bring me into circumstances where I would be shut up to Himself, and that would cause me to cry to Him for deliverance, circumstances which I could not possibly extricate myself from, and which, in the end, brought me to my wit's end. Blessed moment in our soul's history!

We see in Psalm cvii. how they cry unto the Lord in their distresses, and He delivers them, and finally they come to their wit's end (see ver. 27). And He, blessed be His name, whose ear is open to their cry, bringeth them to their desired haven, which is Christ. But this beautiful Psalm came to my help and comfort, just after I was converted.

But, to go back, several months elapsed. In deep agony of soul, I cried unto the Lord, "What must I do to be saved?" He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I answered, "I do believe on Him." He said, "You are saved then." Over and over again I repeated this question, and got the same answer. Oh, if only we took God at His word, took the free gift of salvation, and thanked Him for it, how much agony of soul we should be spared. But alas, we are unbelieving, and slow of heart to believe. I believe I was truly sheltered by the blood, and safe from the judgment of God, but that was not salvation. There was no joy, no peace, no singing. I found that not only had I sinned, but that I myself was a perfect wreck. There was no good in me, and no strength to do good. Trying to be a Christian did not make me one. I had tried that several years before my story here began, and that was the worst part of my whole life. Instead of being better, I was worse. It had proved to me that I was good for nothing, and that not only my sins, but myself would not do for God.

One morning I received a post-card saying a

relative of mine was coming to preach in the town near which I lived. Would I like to come to hear him? I went. Ah, God sent him, and gave him the suited word too, for at the close of the meeting he said, "When I came here to-night, beloved friends, I had a very different subject before my mind." Well for me was it that he yielded to the Spirit of God, and said what God had intended him to say. He turned to Jonah ii. 9, and read, "Salvation is of the Lord." First he spoke of Jonah trying to get away from the presence of the Lord. That was just what I had been doing. Second, as regards his voyage, "He paid the fare thereof." He was independent. That was what I was. And then he fell asleep. He was indifferent. How like my own character. How well it fitted.

But my state then was as one shut up in close quarters, and no way out, and that was where Jonah eventually found himself—in the belly of the great fish, and at the bottom of the sea. He then says what he will do—sacrifice and offer vows, &c.—all to no avail. Then he says, "Salvation is of the Lord." "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land." Ah! when God speaks, the enemy has lost his power. He may hold a soul in bondage, but as soon as that soul has learned its lesson, and is set free by the Lord, Satan has lost his power over it.

Job's history shows this. There came a moment when Satan had done his worst, and Job answered the Lord, and said, "Behold, I am vile" (chap.

xxxix. 4). And in the last chapter we see that the latter end of Job was better than his beginning.

See also at the Red Sea. The people of Israel who had been sheltered by the blood in Egypt, and who were still under the fear of the power of the enemy, were brought into a position where they were shut up to God. They were to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." This was where I was. I felt the truth as to my character, and saw the way of escape, but I was not out.

Weeks passed by; I cannot remember what went on in my soul, but again I had a longing desire to go once more to that little meeting-room. How truly wonderful are God's ways. A beloved servant of the Lord stood up to speak, taking for his text, "Salvation is of the Lord." He did not touch on Jonah, but took up God's side. Oh, how eagerly I listened, but there seemed nothing for me. Towards the close he turned to Revelation xxi. 8, saying that the first to be cast into hell were the fearful. I felt that I was that man. I was longing to confess Christ, but I was afraid to, afraid of the consequences, and what my friends would say. Reader, you may have good desires, you may desire to become a Christian, all your life (I had from a child), but that will not save you. It had not saved me. I had not yet accepted the salvation God had provided. Then he began to speak of "Behold, now is the accepted time: behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

At the close I was introduced to the speaker,

who said, "You are a believer, are you not?" thinking I was a Christian.

I did not reply; tears filled my eyes. I dared not say "No," and I could not say "Yes."

Another week passed. I received a note, with two leaflets enclosed—one "Nothing to Do," and the other "The Woman of Samaria." It was a Lord's Day morning. I have no recollection of what they contained, but that morning I got peace. And from that moment to the present I have never had a shadow of a doubt as to my eternal security. Salvation is salvation. Blessed be God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A few days later I called on the wife of a dear servant of the Lord who had spoken to me. We had only a few moments together, but she opened her Bible and read to me, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9, 10).

I wrote home to my friends telling them of my new-found joy, and when the reply came, I handed it over to those with whom I was then living. A remark was made when the subject was arrived at, "Oh, I am afraid this is not true." It may cost us something to confess to others that we have found a Saviour, but depend upon it, there is no real joy until we confess Him openly. We may be taunted and jeered at, but the joy of having Him before our souls far surpasses that.

Troubled reader, if believing, why are you

troubled? You rightly believe that the precious blood of Christ has cleansed you, and that you are under its shelter, and are free from the judgment of God, for does He not say, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." By those words Israel got relief no doubt, but there was no joy, no singing, till they had crossed the Red Sea, till they had learned that "salvation is of the Lord." Then we get the first song mentioned in Scripture. We read in Romans, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (x. 10). There we get the soul's relation to God and to man. Faith towards God, confession towards man. There is the inside, and the outside.

"Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. iv. 23-25, v. 1, 2). The reader will find in studying Scripture that salvation and confession of the Lord generally go together. Salvation is consequent upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. He not only died, but God has

raised Him from the dead, and given Him glory. It was a risen Christ that Peter preached (Acts ii. 14-48). The day had come to pass that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (ver. 21). And then he says, "Know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (ver. 36). He who died for us, lives for us. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10).

Reader, believe Him, and then boldly confess Him.

ANON.

THE CASTAWAY ON THE MALDIVES.



REMEMBER,"—said an old British "salt," as we talked together on the fo'c'stle of one of the liners between England and Australia,—“I remember being cast away on one of the coral islands of the Maldive group in the

Indian Ocean. We were in a brand new composite barque, and the captain was part-owner in her. We were driven on to the windward side of the island, and stranded on the coral reef that surrounded it.

“It then became a question of getting a hawser to the island, which lay quietly nestled inside the comparatively smooth waters of the lagoon formed by the reef; but there was the terrible ‘curl’ of the reef to pass through, upon which the billows of the outer ocean broke with all their fury, before the smoother waters could be reached; and volunteers were asked for the perilous task.

“At last an Italian sailor and myself volunteered to attempt it; and, with life-lines attached, we were committed to the boiling surf; and it so happened that, with a good deal of buffeting, we both got through safely, and reached the island, and were not long in getting a hawser ashore and rigging the cradle, which the rest of the crew were thankful to avail themselves of, and all, with only the ordeal of passing through the billows in the cradle, were safely hauled ashore, the captain and carpenter excepted.

“The captain having an interest in the ship was hopeful, as the gale had subsided somewhat, that he might get the ship off again, and had persuaded the carpenter to remain behind to help patch her up, if he should be successful enough to do so through some slant of wind or other providential means.

“But soon from the island we could see that a fresh storm was brewing from the old quarter, and we were sure the ship could not last long; and as I was anxious that the skipper and his companion should be saved, I proposed to my Italian mess-

mate to venture again on to the ship to induce them to come ashore while they might.

“‘I would not go through the curl again for a thousand pounds,’ said he.

“‘Well,’ said I, ‘I shall try it, as I should not like the skipper to be lost.’

“So I was hauled again on board, and, am thankful to say, succeeded in getting them both to come ashore; and only just in time, as that night the gale increased, and in the morning there was nothing left of the barque but wreckage.”

Here, dear reader, is a tale of one who voluntarily risked his life to save others, and who endured the breaking of the angry billows upon his head, as with strong arm and stout heart he forced his way through them to the smoother waters beyond, in hope of saving not only his own life, but also the lives of his friends and companions in misfortune.

He was successful, and his messmates were saved!

But in this he was not alone; another, equally brave and loving with himself, endured like dangers with like results, and they shared the honour of the successful issue of their attempt together.

There were yet others, however, to be saved, and he longed again to make the attempt to save them; and although, this time, it was not nearly so dangerous, yet the remembrance of former buffeting with the angry surf was too vivid to induce his

companion to join him, so he went alone, and was again successful. Brave men! Heroic deeds!! Who would withhold the tribute of praise due to such men and deeds? And history tells of many such, for man can devote himself when he has an adequate object.

But, after all, did not self-interest form a large part of the motive power here? All were endangered in the first instance, and all must perish, unless one or more risked their lives a little earlier, with the hope of saving all. The second attempt was more disinterested, though the danger was not so great.

Ah! but how every human deed of heroism sinks into insignificance before His act, who gave Himself for sinners,—*His enemies!*—an act supreme above all! Comparisons are infinitely distanced, as contrasts are thrown into deepest gloom by it.

Feeble is the illustration in the above of some of the elements that go to make up the mighty drama of Redemption.

The men *risked* their lives in hope of saving both themselves and their companions in misfortune.

Jesus *gave* His life to save those who were in danger, when He Himself was safe. Secure in His glory, He might have maintained His position in His own ineffable Peace; but He left His estate, and came down to share the sorrows of the position His *enemies* were in, and then went voluntarily down beneath the judgment due to them.

These subjected themselves to the buffetings of the billows of *water* to save themselves and others.

Jesus subjected Himself *alone* to the buffetings of the billows of *divine wrath*, and exhausted it, to save others, who never could have exhausted that wrath, but who must have endured it eternally.

They *hoped* that they *might* be able to save themselves and others.

Jesus *knew assuredly* that He *could* save others, and to do it He *would not* save Himself. What was that death to Christ? What that judgment? Ah, all was known and measured by Him, and all shrunk from with a horror with which only such a holy being could shrink from it—from being made sin! from drinking the cup of Jehovah's wrath! Yet all was embraced and endured with a power able to exhaust it all, and in a love that lived through and exists beyond it all.

They made the attempt, if perhaps they might save themselves and others from a present danger simply, while they parted company, and lost sight of each other perhaps for ever when the danger was wholly past.

Jesus died, not that He might redeem His people from hell only, but that, cleansing them from their sins, He might walk in present company with them, and have them for ever with Himself in the glory.

The companions of the brave men above gladly

availed themselves of the escape from danger provided for them at such a risk ; they had, however, to *feel* the power of the waves, though being in the cradle.

Alas, how indifferently men can hear the tale of Jesus' love and the deliverance effected by it for those who will accept it, without so much as *tasting* one drop of the judgment, together with the perfect provision that love has made for eternal companionship with Himself in the blessed conditions of the life and circumstances into which He has gone as a man.

Reader, will not *you* avail yourself of the provision made for such as you by that eternal love ?

Or, Will *you* refuse it ?

You have an interest in the world, perhaps, as the captain had in the ship. But the clouds gather ; the storm is brewing ; yet escape is still at hand.

HASTE thee, *sinner!* ere yet the implacable fury of the devastating blast, that must wreck *the world* you love as it at present exists, and *your soul* for ever, burst upon you. Come *now* to Jesus. Accept His love. *Be saved!* **BE SAVED!!**

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

"Haste, traveller, haste! the night comes on,
And many a shining hour is gone ;
The storm is gathering in the west,
And thou art far from home and rest.

Haste, traveller, haste!"

G. J. S.

WHAT IS TRUTH?



HIS question, was asked by one who did not wait for the answer which he might have received from the ONLY ONE who could and would have told him what it was. What the Lord had just said was the occasion of Pilate asking this question, "What is truth?"

Jesus had replied, when questioned about His Kingship. Pilate said, "Art thou a king then?" and Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king; to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world; that I should bear witness unto the *truth*. Every one that is of the *truth* heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37).

Thus the Lord sums up the whole of His *testimony* by *one word*, and that is the word *truth*; and He further adds that every one who hears what He utters, gets for their listening the TRUTH. How important it is to know that in the midst of all the error, deceit, fraud, and lying, then as now abroad, there is ONE, who has spoken, who has absolutely said nothing but what is perfectly reliable.

Scripture says that "no lie is of the truth" (1 John ii. 21), and it does not matter who propagates falsehood, from Satan downward. The one who hearkens to Christ has before him the fact of everything exactly as it is.

This is a great relief to an anxious soul, and moreover, no number of men or demons can alter one jot or one tittle of that which is true; no, not all the councils that were ever called together in Christendom can alter one word of the Living and True God. What they can do, and have done, is to foam out their own shame, and make the error and darkness they are in more manifest. Man by nature has not the TRUTH, for he has believed the devil's lie, and has obtained thereby perverted, unreal, untrue thoughts of God.

We once saw on an infidel placard the motto, "We seek for Truth;" this to us sealed their condemnation, and that for two sufficient reasons,—one, they had not the truth, or they would not be seeking for it; and the other, they did not know where TRUTH was, for if they had, they would not want to *seek* for it. The fact is, TRUTH is, what was, what is, and what shall be, and no one but God could compass the past, the present, and the future.

This being so, the Lord Jesus, who as "God manifest in the flesh," was born into this world to bear witness to the TRUTH.

All manner of lies have taken possession of the heart of man, as we see in Matthew xv. 19, a long list of wickedness (with no good admixture) flowing out of the heart of man, commencing with evil thoughts and ending with blasphemies.

The Lord also said respecting those who believe in Him, when addressing the Father on their be-

half, "Sanctify them through thy TRUTH, thy word is truth." Thus in the word you have "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and all that has been added by man is so much "untempered mortar" (Ezek. xxii. 28), which will not stand the ravages of time, much less of eternity. But if man's thoughts thus perish, the prophet Isaiah, and also St Peter (who quotes from him), says, "The word of the Lord endureth FOR EVER" (Isa. xl. 8; 1 Pet. i. 25).

When the Lord was asked, "Who art thou?" (John viii. 25), He said, "Even the SAME that I said unto you from the beginning"—that is, He was absolutely what He said He was. And showing thus that He was the eternal TRUTH, ever abiding the SAME, which is indeed one of the divine titles of the Lord (Ps. cii. 27).

Again it is said of Him in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Jesus Christ, the SAME yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (xiii. 8).

Thus one who has the obedience of faith, has divine certainty in regard to the past, the present, and the eternal future. It is recorded in the address to the Church in Philadelphia (Rev. iii. 7), where one of the last phases of the Church's history on earth, as responsible, is traced; that they had there, although held with little strength, those who did not deny the Name of Jesus, and held fast to HIS WORD. Happy such companies, who are now found in these blessed conditions; surely God has a resource for His "little flock," even

amid all the surging tide of error, delusion, heresy, infidelity, and blasphemy, which is now raging,—ready to engulf all that is righteous, holy, pure, and true,—but, as of old, so now, the edict shall go forth, on behalf of God's people, to check the power of Satan and "spiritual wickedness in high places"—"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job xxxviii. 11).

The Word of God ever sets that which is true over against that which is false, that we may cleave to the one and shun the other. The Lord Jesus Christ is the standard of truth, because all the plans, purposes, and councils of God centre and revolve around Him, and anything and everything, to get its true value, must be seen in connection with Him.

Man's little life here is but vanity and an empty show, but that connected with Christ is ever abiding, and therefore true. All the works of God are true to their Creator; it is only base fallen man that gives the lie to God, both as regards creation and also redemption; but as God's Word is for ever "settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89), so man cannot alter it, cannot add to it or detract from it, except for his own mind, and even then only for a time, for he will wake in eternity, to find that every word of God still exists, as it will abide for ever.

The word of truth needs no vindication, hence the folly of those who seek by their own decrees

or councils to send forth their own commandments, and so obscure or deny to men the only light of truth there is in the world, even that contained in the living and abiding Word of God.

We will now quote a few passages of Scripture to show that as the sun—the monarch of the day—gives light to all the creation, so the Word of God shines by its own effulgence to those who have the light of life. All such happily bask in the healing beams poured forth from the Sun of Righteousness, set high up in redemption's cloudless sky.

“For the word of the Lord is right, and all his works are done in TRUTH” (Ps. xxxiii. 4).

“A TRUE witness delivereth souls; but a deceitful witness speaketh lies” (Prov. xiv. 25).

“Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John i. 17).

“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free” (John viii. 32).

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father BUT BY ME” (John xiv. 6).

“Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into ALL TRUTH” (John xvi. 13).

“But Paul said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness” (Acts xxvi. 25).

“Love . . . rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the TRUTH” (1 Cor. xiii. 6).

“For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor. xiii. 8).

“THE NAME OF JESUS.”

(Tune—STEPHANOS.)



Precious Name! the Name of “Jesus”
 Son of God most high;
 Who in love to guilty sinners
 Came to die.

Precious Name! the story telling
 Of His lowly birth,
 Of His humble, lonely, pathway
 Here on earth.

Precious Name! of Him—the Saviour,
 Come the lost to save,
 In His grace for ruined sinners
 All He gave.

Precious Name! of Him who suffered
 On the shameful tree;
 Gave Himself the willing victim—
 Spotless He.

Precious Name! enthroned in heaven,
 Still that name He bears;
 On His head the Crown of Glory
 Now He wears.

Precious, peerless Name of “Jesus,”
 None can tell its worth;
 Sweetest Name there is in heaven—
 Or on earth.

TAKING THE SACRAMENT.



“**W**OD willing, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be dispensed here next Sabbath day; those who wish to partake of it for the first time will please meet me in the Manse at eight o'clock on Thursday night.”

Amongst those who listened to this intimation made by the minister from the pulpit of a country church, were two lads, Archie and Willie. They had reached a point at which boyhood's days had ended, and the stern realities of life commenced. Pressure was brought to bear on each that the present was a fitting time to “join the church.”

“The Lord's Supper is a solemn ordinance,” said Willie's aged grandfather; “if you take it when you are young, it will keep you from many evils.”

“I would greatly like you to get your name inscribed on the communion roll before you leave home,” said Archie's mother; “it is a very respectable thing to do.”

Thus persuaded, the lads presented themselves before the minister at the appointed time, and satisfactorily answered his kindly, but not too searching catechising, and were admitted to the Sacrament next Sunday. Thus were they outwardly brought into a place of nearness to God, ostensibly they participated in the visible sign of an inward and spiritual life, while their hearts

were cold, and hard, and unregenerate. Yet their action was well intentioned, and so was that of their friends in advising them; but they made the too common mistake of taking the Sacrament as a means to obtain spiritual life, and not, as it should be, because divine life has already been received.

On leaving the church that day, a hand was laid on Willie's shoulder, and a voice asked, "Have you been eating and drinking the body and blood of the Lord unworthily?"

It was a youth of their own age who thus addressed them, and who had recently surprised them by telling them he had been converted.

"Is Jesus your Saviour?" he asked further.

"I hope He is," said Willie, "but I would not like to speak positively."

"Well," said Tom, "it is a matter you had better make sure about. Jesus is either your Saviour or your Judge; and if He is still your Judge, how can you presume to have communion with Him?"

"I hoped," said Willie, "it might bring me nearer to God, might help me to love instead of fear God."

"You are mistaken," said Tom, "the Scriptures draw a clear line between one in darkness, and one in light; between one who knows God, and one who knows not God: 'for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?'"

Having talked a little longer at the church door, and feeling the subject a momentous one, Tom

turned his back on his own house, and accompanied Archie and Willie toward theirs.

The charm of that spring day few could resist. The breezes gently rocked the infant buds that decked the hawthorn and lilac; cawing rooks and green plovers made merry on the recently sown cornfields, and overhead rained down the fluttering melodies of the skylark. But the transient beauties of nature beamed all unheeded as these youths thought on the reality of eternal things.

It was the overflow of heart gave Tom speech that day. He spoke that he knew, and testified that he had seen, as he told the other two of the change that had come to him. He was turned "right about face," from being a child of Satan to a son of God, and he insisted the blessing he had received was also free to them. He begged them not to deceive themselves by thinking that taking the Sacrament could avail them anything in the sight of God, if they had not got peace with God, "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Both lads appeared impressed with the solemn appeal. In the case of Archie, the voice of conscience was soon drowned in the whirl of city life to which he repaired. With Willie time deepened the convictions then begun. By day, as he toiled at his labour, his mind reverted to this all-important subject, and by night he sought relief in reading the Scriptures. A favourite passage was Matthew

xix. 16, "Behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" That question asked by another, expressed the now uppermost desire of his heart. He longed to have eternal life, and he was eager to *do some good thing* in order to obtain it. The reply the Lord gave was quite in keeping with his ideas. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." He accepted this as given to himself, and endeavoured faithfully to keep the law. Ah! could he love the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, and with all his mind, and his neighbour as himself? Nay, the law is holy, just, and good; it demands righteousness from man to God on the principle of works; it requires the whole life, but gives no power by which to carry out its commands. Those of our readers who have tried *working* and *doing* all they can for salvation will understand how thoroughly miserable and disheartened Willie became, and will not wonder that by-and-by he felt inclined to give it up as a hopeless task.

There appeared to him another way of meriting blessing, for he read, "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "I might try selling," he thought. He sat in the tiny cot which from childhood had sheltered him; he looked at its bare floor and meagre appointments. "Sell that thou hast, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "The things here are all

my grandfather's," he said to himself, "and I have nothing to sell."

Nothing to pay! Nothing to sell! No strength to labour! That is the stage when God can come in and bless in His own sovereign way.

Spring had merged into summer ere Willie again saw Tom. He sought him out one day while he was on the hillside attending his father's sheep. It was a relief to unburden his heart to such a sympathetic ear.

"I do want eternal life," he said, "and I have tried hard to keep the commandments, but I cannot; and if treasure in heaven is to be gained by selling what I have, then I can never have any connection with heaven, for I have nothing to sell."

And he stood before the other youth looking pale and perplexed.

"You want to labour for salvation," Tom said calmly. "You wish to reach heaven by your own efforts."

"I am trying to get blessing in the very way that Jesus says it is to be got. These are His own words: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'"

Tom got up from his mossy seat. He was puzzled. He had felt overjoyed when Willie came to him with his questions as to the good and the right way, but he was bringing forward difficulties which he could not meet. He had himself trodden the narrow pathway for but a short time, and he had not wherewith to answer this inquirer.

"I cannot explain it to you, Willie," he said; "but if you get salvation by works, I know I have got it without works."

They remained for a time in silence, then simultaneously they said, "We will pray about it."

They found a "closet" in a disused quarry near them, and there they cast their burden upon the Lord.

It was while Daniel was speaking and praying, and confessing his sin, and the sin of his people Israel, that a heavenly messenger was sent to cause him to "understand the matter." Of Saul the record was made on high, "Behold he prayeth." And surely God was very near these two who cried to Him for help in the greatest matter that affects a human soul. They rose from their knees with lightened hearts, and a consciousness pervading them that God would give needed truth.

Long they sat after this, Tom meanwhile turning the leaves of his Bible in search of some "text" on which Willie might rest.

"I have got it," he said at last, and he read: "'Then said they unto him, What shall we *do* that we might *work* the *works* of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the *work* of God that ye *believe on him* whom he hath sent' (John vi. 28, 29).

"These people wished to work, so do you. Jesus says the work is to believe. You don't need to work for salvation, for there is nothing to do. But

the work of redemption was not accomplished when the young man in Matthew xix. asked what 'good thing' he should do in order to have eternal life. The law was still reigning, and still exacting from man its just requirements; so Jesus told him to keep the law. By His death on the cross He made atonement for sin, He died to redeem those who were under the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us; and God showed how thoroughly He was satisfied with that work, by raising Him from the dead."

Then they turned to Romans x., that scripture which has been used of God in blessing to so many: "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." But now "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And in Galatians ii. 21, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Long and earnestly Willie looked at the scriptures before him, then with bowed head he prayed, "Father, forgive me that I thought the gift of God could be purchased with works."

A very hallowed spot that quarry became to them. Throughout the autumn they met in it whenever occasion offered, and there they drank of "the sincere milk of the Word," and found their souls nourished and strengthened in consequence. When chill November rendered an "open-air meeting" impracticable, they repaired to the barn, and one and another whose hearts God had

touched gathered with them, and together they learned from God's precious Word more of the mystery of His will, and the exceeding greatness of His power to those who believe.

Later on Willie again partook of the Lord's Supper, not that it might give him access to God, but because in the riches of God's grace he had got the forgiveness of sins, and redemption through Christ's blood, and he wished to remember the One who endured such a shameful death that he might get such wondrous blessing.

Reader, are you a lifeless sacrament-taker ?

M. M.

THE SCOFFER'S QUESTION.



HE truth of the adage, that "the wish is father to the thought," is strikingly illustrated in the scoffer's question, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

The coming of the Lord in judgment is not desired by such men—in fact the very opposite is their wish; and, therefore, they boldly cry, "Where is the promise of his coming?"

Can they be blind, or what? Where do they look for that promise?

Ah! that is just the point; they look to the wrong quarter.

They cast their eyes around, and say that "all

things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." They judge by things seen; they appeal to creation; and, since the revolution of the seasons maintains its accustomed regularity, they assume that nothing extraordinary can happen.

They forget the Flood! or perhaps deride the idea of it. Yet their forgetfulness amounts to wilful ignorance, as one day they shall discover.

But then, if they are wrong in thus regarding "things," where else should they look?

They should listen to the Word of God.

And does it speak of the coming of the Lord? Yes, it has been said that that solemn event is mentioned once in every thirteen verses of the Bible. Could any event be more forced on one's notice? And yet the scoffer of the last days asks, "Where is that promise?"

Only think, dear reader, that God has repeated over and over, in such a way as to convince any honest mind, that the Lord is coming again.

The earth has once been the scene of judgment, let the infidel scoff as he may, and the heaven and the earth, which now are, are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

One judgment may prepare us for another—the first was by water, the second shall be by fire. In Noah's day sin had risen to a great height, and God interposed by that kind of judgment. Since then sin has further developed spite of all the

restraints of civilisation and of Christianity, so that the idea of this age sailing smoothly into the calm waters of a millennium is set aside as preposterous and vain.

Sin must be punished. God could not tolerate the old world, nor will He suffer for ever with the present.

Hence, we read that "the day of the Lord will come." That is fixed and decreed. It will come.

The scoffer may scoff, and the mocker, mock, but come it will.

The rationalist may ask when and how? He may reason from past long-suffering that such an evil is impossible, but come it will, and that as a thief in the night, for God will keep His word. That day, characterised by judgment, however long its duration, must come. Things cannot go on as they are. Sin, rebellion, crimes too shocking to detail, are increasingly polluting the very air we breathe, and is God, the Judge of all, to take no cognisance? Shall not He interpose?

The last days are the worst and most critical.

Reader, we live in serious times. But notice this, that "the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation!"

Why has God not yet interposed in judgment? Why has He suffered so long? Just because He is a Saviour! He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!" Beautiful words in such a connection—"any"—"all!"

(1.) "Not willing that any should perish." (2.)
 "But that all should come to repentance."

He throws the door wide open, and announces over the face of a doomed and guilty world the glorious fact that He seeks the good of all.

What a God!

Oh, sinner, enter that door! Soon, soon long-suffering must cease, else indifference to sin might be charged against God; soon, soon Mercy's door must close, and stern Justice pronounce its verdict; soon, soon the blood of the Lamb, now so divinely efficacious for the worst and vilest, shall cleanse no more, and instead of pardon through its infinite merit, the wrath of God must fall for eternity on the guilty soul of man.

Now, remission through blood—then, rejection under judgment.

Now, salvation through faith in the Saviour—then, damnation on account of grace despised.

These are plain words, dear reader, but, pray let them speak to your heart.

You have but one soul—that lost, your case is utterly hopeless!—one life—that wasted, you have no other!—one Saviour—Him rejected, your only alternative is everlasting misery!

List not to the scoffer! there are none in hell.

Hearken unto God! Place yourself amongst the "any" who should not perish, and the "all" who should come to repentance. This is God's way of escape.

ROTHSCHILD'S FOURTEEN MILLIONS.



SWAGSMAN, old beyond his years, with white beard smeared with blood, and nose and face disfigured by "gravel rash," came into a smithy one Saturday evening as the work was about to cease, and addressing himself to the

smith said—

"Can I sleep in the shop to-night, master?"

"Yes, you may sleep in the shop," said the good-natured smith.

"Thank you," said the old fellow; and unrolling his swag and spreading his blankets on some sacks that happened to be there, he got his billy ready to make himself some tea as soon as the men should knock off.

The next day being Sunday, the swagsman evidently meant to camp in his quarters for the day, and the smith sent him out a substantial breakfast, and a paper that spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Saviour for sinners. At dinner time a second meal was sent to him.

In the afternoon, a conversation took place with him, in substance as follows:—

"Did you read the little book sent you?"

"Yes, sir, I read it."

"And have you got 'The Receipt'?" (the title of the book).

"No, I can't say I have."

"How do you think you're to get it?"

"I suppose by praying, and doing better for the future."

"But that won't settle the past."

"Won't it? I don't know what will, then."

"First, is there any past to be settled; I suppose you're a sinner?"

"Oh yes, I suppose I am."

"Have you any idea how much you have sinned, and how much you owe to God?"

"Oh, I suppose Rothschild's fourteen millions would represent it."

"Well, how can you get rid of that load?"

"By going down on my knees and promising to do better?"

"That will take you to hell."

"You'll excuse me, sir," said he, "but I have my own opinion about hell, and about heaven too."

"No doubt; but your opinion won't alter *facts*, and neither your opinion nor mine is worth the air that gives expression to it. The Lord Jesus Christ, who knows, said of one: 'In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.'"

"Oh, I believe there was such a man as Jesus Christ, and that He was a good man."

"And I believe that He was the Son of God, and that He became a man in order that He might die to put away our sins, and your fourteen million may all be blotted out by His precious blood which cleanseth from *all* sin; and the more the devil

proves you to be a sinner, the more he proves your title to the efficacy of that precious blood."

"There's not much difficulty in proving that," said he, with a deepening sobriety of manner.

"The very chief of sinners has been saved."

"Then there's corn in Egypt for me yet!"

"Yes, and you've only to accept it. As my friend's kindness in giving you shelter and food, needed only accepting, so the provision of God's love is yours upon the same terms. You are an old man, and a single blow may put an end to your existence. Will you *refuse* His love till it be too late?"

"Ah!" said he—baring his arm and showing a scar from wrist to elbow—"that very nearly did it. But I'm not as old as you think, perhaps; I'm about forty-seven."

"What! are you not yet fifty?"

"No, and I look ten years older; that's the effect of knocking about and sleeping in people's back premises among the fowls, &c.; it's not a very pleasant life."

"Doubtless it is not; but it's the result of the indulgence in sin, too, which must ever leave its mark."

Reader, what a life does this short conversation open up! But a life, alas, by no means uncommon in our Australian colonies. Hundreds of men are just living such lives—eating, drinking, fighting, satisfying their lusts in every possible way, and sleeping anywhere. The very ease with which a man may

earn what will enable him to do it, and the genial character of the climate, induce men bent on the grosser pleasures of sin to follow their own inclination in the matter, in defiance of every law both of man and of God. But such a course must have its effect; and prematurely old men are dropping, unshriven and unforgiven, into a hopeless grave, all around us every day. Their white hair is the proof of how thoroughly the leprosy of sin has had possession of them all their lives.

What a contrast between the premature white hair of the leper and the ripeness of the hoary head found in the way of righteousness, which is then a crown of glory!

Our old friend, who spoke carelessly at first, but sobered down towards the end of the conversation, was at the gospel meeting in the evening, and heard from the parable in Luke vii. how God forgives the five-hundred-pence as well as the fifty-pence debtor when he acknowledges he has nothing to pay. He who spake this parable has now Himself paid the debt, and more than ever delights to set forth the grace of the heart of the Father in receiving all who come to Him.

Reader, will not you come to Him, then? Will not you accept His offered forgiveness? Our sins are variously represented in Scripture: Fifty pence! Five hundred pence! Ten thousand talents! But all alike may be forgiven, while not even one can be forgiven, save through the precious blood of Christ, who is the Son of God. And the fifty pence

unforgiven, will sink the soul into hell: as surely, if not as deeply, as the ten thousand talents. Every day, too, and every year, the debt accumulates, and souls are heaping up wrath to themselves against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. But God is slow to anger, and delights in mercy, and still beseeches you, my reader, to be saved. To-morrow may be too late.

G. J. S.

THE RED SEA—SALVATION.

“By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.”

—HEB. xi. 29.



HAVE no doubt whatever that the Red Sea—the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea—is a figure of the death and resurrection of Christ for His people, for us, *i.e.*, that He died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification.

The moment Israel got through the Red Sea they began to sing. While they were in Egypt there was no song. What were they doing? Sighing, crying, weeping, groaning—they were miserable slaves. Even when they were at Pi-hahiroth (Exod. xiv. 2, 9) what were they doing? Fearing and trembling; they were in dread, and distress of soul. But the moment they had gone through the

Red Sea, by the path which God had opened for them—the moment typically they had accepted death, and got into resurrection—what do I find? They begin to sing; they sing a triumphant song to the Lord. And what is the burden of the song? "The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation" (Exod. xv. 2). It is what the Lord is and what the Lord has done. Well might they sing, because, from the sunny heights of resurrection, they look down and see all their foes dead on the seashore, not one of them left. They are brought now to have to do with God, and to know God as their Saviour, and they can sing with happiness and truth, "The Lord is become my salvation." They are *saved*, and they *know* they are saved.

I meet a great many people nowadays who are hoping, trying, and longing to be saved, but I do not meet many who are bold enough to say, "Thank God, I AM SAVED, for *He* has saved me." Can you say that yet? Come, honestly, my friend, can you say, "I have obtained God's salvation, I am a saved soul by divine grace"? Is it presumption to say so? No, it is not presumption to boast in what God does. It would be great presumption if it were something in which you and I had any hand. But you will observe here that the people of Israel *stand still*, and the Lord *does everything*, and, when *He* has done everything, what do they do? They turn and exalt, and praise Him, and give Him glory. We read, "Thus the Lord *saved*

Israel" (Exod. xiv. 30). Why do not you let Him save you, and then you could likewise sing to Him, as the Author and Source of your salvation?

There are many souls to-day who are desiring salvation, and would like to have it, but they have not got it, because they have never learnt what this precious Scripture unfolds, in figure, viz., that Christ not only died for our sins, but that He rose again for our justification, and that consequently the one who believes in Him who has died and been raised again, is linked with Him in the place where He now is—in resurrection. And as a result, there is peace and joy and gladness in the soul.

Now, I will tell you where hosts of people are spiritually. Being a doctor, I go into the houses of all classes, and in numbers of them I find a picture, to which people are uncommonly attached. It depicts a stone cross standing in a wild sea, a fearful storm raging, and a poor, wretched, unhappy looking woman clinging to this cross, with despair printed on her face. And people think this is Christianity. Christianity! It is an utter travesty of Christianity. Oh, you say, do you make light of the cross? God forbid. With the apostle Paul, I say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." But does that picture teach me Christianity? Not at all. And why? Because the truth of Christianity is that the storm has gone by, the Saviour has passed through it, and risen out of it, and faith leads the soul, not to the foot of an empty cross, but to

the feet of the ascended Saviour, where there is "neither enemy nor evil occurrent." The storm is over, the forces of evil have been dealt with and overcome, and the soul, instead of being in fear, anxiety, and distress, is in the possession of solid, divinely-given peace—in the assurance that it is saved, because connected with the risen Saviour, who has passed through death and judgment, and is now at God's right hand.

Many a poor soul nowadays carries about a cross, with or without a figure of Christ upon it. The idea is to remember the death of Christ. But Christ is not on the cross now, nor is He in the grave. Where is He? He is risen. Hear the glad tidings. I declare to you a risen Saviour, a Saviour triumphant over death and the grave. He went into death, and met the judgment of God in the moment of His death; He bore the whole weight of the wrath and vengeance of God against man's sin and guilt. He atoned for that guilt when He died; when He tasted death He annulled it; in His passage through death, He met him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and destroyed him. But, now, what has happened? He is alive from the dead, He has risen, and ascended.

It is a risen, triumphant, and glorified Saviour at God's right hand that I preach to you, and the believer is entitled to know that Christ is his Saviour, that Christ is his peace, that his sins are forgiven, and that he belongs now to that Saviour.

He is absolutely saved, and he is entitled to give thanks. His doubts and fears are for ever gone; he knows that his sins have been swept away by the blood of Jesus, and that the power of the enemy has been broken by His death. The day of doubt, fear, distress, and anxiety is gone by for ever; and if you have the picture I have described in your house, I advise you, before you go to bed to-night, to put it in the fire. Why? Because if any one came into my house, I should not like to give him a false impression of what Christianity is, and I conclude you will feel similarly. Christianity tells me of a victorious, triumphant Man, at the right hand of God, who has dashed in pieces the power of the enemy; who has been exalted, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance, and remission of sins, to all who believe in His name. It is resurrection you must know.

I do not wonder that the devil made a great noise in Acts iv., when the apostles preached and taught the people the truth. What did they preach? They "preached through Jesus the resurrection from among the dead" (ver. 2). If they had only preached Jesus as having lived on the earth, the devil would have said, You may go on and preach that as much as you like, because He died. But, said the apostles, God has raised Him from the dead. One has gone into death, on whom death had no claim; and He has annulled it, and now He is alive from the dead in righteousness at God's right hand. He is the life, the righteousness, the

sanctification, and the redemption of every soul that simply believes in Him. I do not wonder that the devil sought that day to put the apostles in prison, because the resurrection, which they preached, was the absolute proof of his utter defeat by Christ, and of the abolition of the power of death. Death, which was the wages of man's sin, being annulled, Christ's resurrection proved that sin had been put away. It is freely granted that our sins took Him into death, but who took Him out of it? God, in righteousness, took Him out of death, and set Him at His own right hand in glory, and the consequence is that the one who believes in Christ is associated with Him where He is.

The blessed truth of the gospel is this (and unless you know it, you have not really tasted God's salvation—you have not got peace and solid rest in your soul), that He, who was ever the Father's delight, came down into this scene, that He became a man, and as a man was so sinless, spotless, and perfect, that death had no claim upon Him, and that then the Man on whom death had no claim went in grace into death for me—for the man upon whom death *had* a claim. Further, He who knew no sin, was made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He has taken *our* place in death, and God, having raised Him from the dead, through grace now gives us *His* place, when we believe on Him. It is a wonderful thing to be able to say, 'Christ took my place in shame, sorrow, suffering, death, and judgment, and I, who believe in

Him, get His place in life, acceptance, peace, and righteousness before God.

But you say, What has all that to do with Exodus xiv.? It is just exactly what the chapter teaches in figure. When the enemy is coming after Israel to overtake, and to destroy them, God says, "Go forward" (ver 14). And where do they go? They go upon "dry land" through that, which would, without the intervention of God, have been overwhelming destruction for them. They go right through the Red Sea, God Himself having opened a pathway for them through the waters, which form a wall on their right hand, and on their left, as the passage tells us twice over. And now we find them on the other side, brought to God, the power of the enemy broken. They are saved, they know it, and they rejoice in the Lord accordingly.

Have you ever travelled that road. If not, I pray God you may learn what it is to travel it. The Lord give you to hear His own word, "Go forward." If you think it is right to be in a condition of doubt, and fear, and uncertainty, this scripture ought to undeceive you. Nay, nay, the Christian is now entitled to be in a place of nearness to God, in blessing and favour, identified with Him who died and rose again.

In Exodus xii. we see that the blood put on the lintel preserved the first-born, in the household that was obedient to God's command, from God's judgment. But the blood does much more than that.

Not only does the blood of the Lamb screen us from the righteous judgment of God, not only does the blood of Jesus shelter us from God's righteous judgment upon us as sinners, but it sets us apart to God. "The wages of sin is death," but that is met by the blood of the Lamb, for "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 27, 28). I beg you to observe the "as" and the "so." As it was appointed to you and me to die, and then to be judged, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. He took the sinner's place in blessed grace, as Anne Steele's lines charmingly put it:—

"He took the guilty culprit's place,
He suffered in our stead:
For man, O miracle of grace,
For man the Saviour bled."

Faith can say, "For *me* the Saviour bled." That is chapter xii., but in Exodus xiii. I find that the same blood of the Lamb, which shelters me from judgment, sets me apart at the same moment to God. As soon as the people are sheltered the Lord says, They are mine. "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: *it is mine*" (ver. 2). God claims the soul that is

sheltered by the blood of the lamb as belonging to Him. If any one can say truthfully, "I do rest on Jesus, and I am trusting in His work," even though you have doubts and fears, let me tell you this, If you believe in Jesus, and are resting on His precious blood alone for salvation, you belong to God, and He will never give you up. And more than that, He would give you to know personally, how full, and rich, and perfect is the salvation He makes yours through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the end of chap. xiii. the Lord comes down, and gives the people the sign of His presence, in the pillar of cloud and of fire. He makes it manifest that they belong to Him. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by day and night" (ver. 21). Who would not be a Christian? I have the Lord not only for my life, and my shelter, but also for my guide. If God's people wanted light by night, His presence was their light, in the pillar of fire; if they wanted shade by day, He spread His cloud over them.

What is the next thing? Pharaoh having learned that the people are on their way out of his dominions, of course makes a final effort to keep them back, and God now comes in to deliver them from his power. The knowledge that I am sheltered by the blood of the Lamb from God's judgment does not give me the knowledge of deliverance from Satan's power. Therefore in chap. xiv. God brings

the people to Pi-hahiroth, which means, "The gate of liberty." The Lord brings His people to a spot where He shows them what real liberty is. They must get clean out of Egypt, and so must you, beloved fellow-believer, get delivered out of the world. You say to me, Can you bring a man out of the world? I cannot, but the gospel can. When the gospel really gets into a man's heart, he gets the knowledge of the heavenly sphere, and of heavenly blessing and joy, and his heart is turned from the world. He gets out of Egypt. In what way? Through the knowledge of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereby his sins have been all blotted out, and he himself brought to God, through the work the Saviour has accomplished.

Satan of course will not let any soul go easily, he will try to hold it back if he can. So in our chapter Pharaoh comes out with all his forces after Israel, and the people are terrified. It is after people are converted, after they have made the first start, and turned round to serve the Lord, desiring to be for Him, that they learn the evil of their own hearts, and it is then that Satan brings pressure to bear upon them, to keep them from being for the Lord absolutely, and entirely. Pharaoh gathers together all his hosts to pursue them, and the people find themselves in a terrible fix. They look behind them and there are Pharaoh and his hosts; they look before them and there is death—the Red Sea—and on either hand mountains rise to the skies. Hence, Pharaoh thinks he will certainly overtake them and enslave them again.

Similarly Satan comes after the young believer to-day, with the thought that he is going to get him under his power again. But do not you be frightened: he never will. Once under the shelter of the blood, you are brought to God in all the value of the Saviour's finished work, and that place you can never lose. You are like the sheep in Luke xv. The shepherd went after it, and when he found it, he put it on his shoulders. I once heard some one say, May not the sheep drop off on the road? Well, I do not read that it did. I read that He brought it home. No doubt if it depended on the sheep, it would slip off, but all depends on the shepherd. I have sometimes seen a man carrying a sheep on his shoulder in an awkward way, and the sheep almost falling off, but I read that the shepherd of Luke xv. put the sheep on his *shoulders*, and there he held the sheep. My safety depends on my Saviour, not on me.

I quite admit that there is faith on my part, and that salvation is through faith. But the point is this, it is the Saviour who sought me and found me, and carries me. And here it is God who comes and says to Israel, I want you out of Egypt, and I mean to have you for Myself. With great difficulty Pharaoh is made to let them go, but afterwards he tries to get hold of them again. And this is where unestablished souls are so often frightened. Perhaps after all, they say, I may go back, I may fall away.

What about that scripture in Peter which says,

"The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire"? (2 Pet. ii. 22). Well, why does the dog return to his vomit? Because he is a dog. And why does the sow return to wallowing in the mire? Because she is a sow, and nothing else. You may wash a sow as much as you like, you cannot make a sheep of her. The point of the figure is that the sow has an unclean nature, and delights in the mire. You never saw a sheep wallowing in the mire. You may have seen a poor sheep fall into a ditch and bleat to be taken out. And that is the case of a backslider. But a child of God is never called a dog or a sow. Those of whom Peter speaks never had been born again, never had received a new life or nature; they had been merely outwardly reformed. Before the sow was washed she was a dirty sow; after she was washed she was a clean sow, but a sow still, no matter what she was washed in. The devil has manufactured all sorts of things in which to wash people. Moral reformation, and ecclesiastical observances—quite apart from new birth, and the personal knowledge of Christ—are favourite receipts of his for salvation. I suppose when the sow was washed they tied her up to keep her clean. But you will find that putting a restraint upon nature merely, will not do. Some day the sow will gnaw the rope, and reach the mire again. Why? Simply because she is a sow, and loves the mire, just as an unconverted man loves sin.

But when the grace of God gets into a man's heart, that man is new-born, he has a new life and nature, with new tastes, and a new object, with heavenly hopes and aspirations. He is set up in this world a new man in the power of the Holy Ghost. He may fail, he may stumble and fall, but "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi. 29). The Lord Jesus Christ says: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." It is really *no one*—angel, man, or devil—can pluck them out of His hand. And why? "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John x. 27-29). The Lord Jesus looks upon the sheep as the precious gift of the Father to Him. You do not know how precious you are to Christ. Dear young believer, and old one too, would that you knew better the love of the Saviour's heart, and what a price He sets upon you. And is He going to let us go after He has bought us, and washed us in His blood? Nay, nay.

It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. viii. 33, 34). Will He condemn those for whom He died? Never!

"OLD JOHN IS DEAD—I AM NEW JOHN."



LD John, the fish-seller of L——, was a remarkable character, but remarkably bad; in fact so bad that neither God nor man could repair him; he must be made *new*, or be useless—worse than useless, lost for ever. He was known

in L—— as 'drunken John, the fish-seller.' One night he stumbled into a hall, where the gospel was being preached. In bewilderment there he sat, with his big Kilmarnock bonnet on his head.

Before long, he was surprised to see the speaker come along to where he was sitting; and putting his hand on his shoulder, he began to speak to him kindly. John shrank back, and pushed the hand off his shoulder—not that he was displeased, but thought it was a little too much for a clean hand to touch his shoulder, which was covered with little more than black rags. But the man of God, with all the love of his Master, looked John full in the face. Seeing his misery, wretchedness, and sin, his whole soul was moved with compassion for him. Putting his hand on his shoulder again, he just said, "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The truth went right home to John's dark heart. "God," he thought, "God—God so

loved—the *world*, then God must have loved poor drunken John of L——, for drunken and guilty as I am, still I am part of the world; there is no mistake about that.”

His eyes were opened; he saw the wide arms of God's love embracing a lost world—embracing *him*. His heart was melted, large hot tears washed white gutters down his blackened face. He saw it all—how that God loved him, and that when the broken law demanded John's life, and that John be punished, God's Son was punished, and died in his stead. Poor old John thus received that Son, whom God had given. He was *saved*. “*For 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 went away a *new man*. For God says, “*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*” Full of joy and peace, he went home—at least to the miserable cellar which he called home. Such a home! We need not describe it.

On entering the wretched place, his wife and only son were in. Addressing her: “Sal, lass,” he said, “*I have been converted.*” They knew as little about conversion as he had known until that night, and so only muttered, “*Drunk as usual!*” After a little time, his wife remarked that it was bed-time. “Oh! but, Sal, lass,” said John, “I've been converted, and before we go to bed we must pray.” “Well,” thought Sal and her son, “this is a new thing”; but they at last agreed to kneel

with John, if he would do the praying. Down on their knees they went, but now John was completely stumped. He never tried to pray before in his life. *He knew nothing of prayer, but his heart was full with a new joy which struggled for expression.* He soon remembered how he used to express his worldly joy, if ever he had any; so taking off his Kilmarnock bonnet, he gave it a swing round his head, and shouted, "Hurrah for Jesus." Another swing, and "Hurrah for Jesus"—a third, and again came "Hurrah for Jesus."

That was John's first prayer. It went from his overflowing heart. Jesus was the beginning, middle, and end of it; and through Him, it went right to the throne of God with acceptance indeed.

The news spread abroad that John was converted, and the women of L—— gathered round him in the street, some to buy his fish, but more to see what like John was, now that he was converted.

"Sure enough, there *is* a great change in him," said one. "He is not drunk," remarked another. "Not swearing as before," said a third. There was old John, with his face shining with joy, selling his fish, and telling all around, "*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.*" He could not stop it coming from heart and tongue. Thought many, "We'll watch him and see how long this will last." But it soon became too evident for any to doubt that John was a *new* man.

"Father," said his son one day—"father, if you

are to keep on converted, it would be as well if we could get a better house."

John said little, but shortly after, seeing a nice house to let in a respectable street, he went to the landlord and said, "You have a house to let in such a street, sir." "Yes, I have, who wants it?" "I want it." "You want it?" "Yes, I want it." "Do you think I would let one of my respectable houses to you?" "You do not know who I am, sir." "Oh! yes, I know you too well." "I think you are mistaken." "Oh! no, I am not mistaken, you are old drunken John, the fish-seller." "Ah! sir, I thought you were mistaken. *Old John* is dead. I am *new John*, 'for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' I have believed God, and have that everlasting life." Putting his hand in his pocket, he pulled out some sovereigns, and said, "If you're afraid, sir, about your rent, I'll pay in advance." This was too much for the landlord. John's words and actions went together. He got the house, and lived in it for long, telling to all around what great things the Lord had done for his soul.

John could say, "*He loved me, and gave Himself for me.*" Won't you receive Jesus now, and rejoice in being saved?

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18).

“For while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 8).

“Be it known unto you, therefore, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that *believe* are justified from all things” (Acts xiii. 38, 39). ANON.

SELF-JUSTIFIED, OR JUSTIFIED BY GOD—WHICH?



TWO classes of persons often surrounded the Lord when on earth, and the same two classes are to be found on all sides to-day. One was the class of religious formalists and moralists, and the other the class of godless and careless sinners.

The former looked down with unmingled pity and contempt upon the latter. Puffed up with their formal religion, and satisfied with their outwardly moral life, they looked upon themselves as the acme of all that was required of men, and their words and their acts showed that they thought God was as satisfied with them as they were with themselves.

Outwardly, according to human estimate, there was a wide margin between the two. A man ignorant of the gospel of Christ would certainly judge that the religious moralist would be more in the favour of heaven than unscrupulous, grasping,

and careless sinners. But when we have to do with God, we get a very different estimate about Him, ourselves, and everybody else. We get His thoughts, and not our own. Upon His we can rely.

Now, in the course of our Lord's blessed ministry, we read in Luke xviii. 9 that He spake to some who trusted in their own righteousness and despised others. Let us give an attentive ear to *what He had to say*.

The Lord spake in a parable. "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican." Now the temple at Jerusalem was the temple of God. In it the glory had dwelt of old. It was still recognised of Him, though soon to be destroyed. Hence what the two men did was a right thing. They went to the right place to do a right thing—to pray. Let us hear what each one uttered. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke xviii. 11, 12).

Now, dear reader, what do *you* think of that prayer? Let us examine it a little. Firstly, the Lord describes him as standing and praying with himself: "God," &c. Now it strikes us very forcibly, as we read these words, that the Lord, who is the searcher of hearts, and knoweth all things, describes most graphically, in a few words, what was really the moral state of these religious formalists, the

Pharisees. So thoroughly self-occupied that, though they address God, the utterance of their hearts does not go beyond themselves. In principle, they were making a god of themselves. And the whole tenor of the prayer which follows confirms it. He begins with the name of God, but the next word that follows is "I"; and so all through. It was I, I, I, and nothing but I, till the man was done.

It was a short prayer (and so far commendable); and there was much in it. It was pointed, pithy, but not powerful, for the ruling factor was a big I. "I thank thee that I am not . . . I fast . . . I give tithes of all that I possess." Poor dear man! How *very good* he must have been in his own eyes. He knew well how to weigh both himself and others in the scales. But what would such an one have done if his lot had happened to have been cast on a desert island alone, with no one to compare himself with? If *good works* were the key to heaven, and others had confirmed his own estimate of himself and his doings as true, one would think he was sure of going there. It seemed as though there were really nothing more to be desired of him. No doubt he thought so. *He was not as other men.*

Surely Solomon had made a mistake when he said, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20). Ah, then; but he spoke before this man's day! Things had improved since then. Civilisation, culture, education had made rapid strides. Nature, with man to help it, had turned out a fine specimen at

last, a full-fledged Pharisee, who was not as others. Born no doubt without an evil heart—*not as others*—it surely must have been so. Robbery, injustice, and evil desire were quite foreign to this perfect specimen of the human race! And as to the poor publican (or tax-gatherer), he had never descended to such evil ways as he. Oh dear no, very far from that. Paul surely must have fallen into a similar mistake as Solomon, after this man's day, when he also said, "There is none that doeth good, *no, not one*" (Rom. iii. 12). And he was less excusable!

We have only dwelt so far on what this poor man had *not done*, and on what he *was not*. Hear further from his own lips a list of his *good deeds*. "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." We should like to have seen this abstemious man's table the other five days. And we wonder what kind of fasting it was. We have seen a little of what so-called fasting is in certain religious circles of modern times. Perhaps some reader thinks we are coming a little too close. Well, we only want to arrive at the truth of matters. We do not want to be hard on anybody. But facts are stubborn things, admittedly. But it was only a parable, suggests another. True. But a parable of our Lord, which sets forth the strict truth. There is no exaggeration here. But, on the other hand, there is no paring down. We are face to face with realities. The Lord was describing a class, and a large class, for all time. And the human heart has not changed. We have here our

Lord's own description of a religious man without the truth. It is a most striking picture, alas! of thousands of so-called Christian professors of to-day.

Lastly, says the Pharisee, "I give tithes of all that I possess." Well, and what of that? It was no more than the law of God demanded. It was really obligatory, and hence nothing to boast about, much less in prayer, and professedly in the presence of God. If he had loved God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, undoubtedly a tenth would not have satisfied him. After all said and done, it left nine-tenths for number one, or that very prominent I. It does not strike us, with this correct example before us, that the Pharisaic religious devotion and philanthropy in Jerusalem at that day was of the highest order. We cannot help thinking that many a priest and widow and orphan would have fared better, if our friend the Pharisee had given up tithing only, and learnt through faith in the Son of God that he and all that he had was the Lord's. Well, his ground of justification stands on three supports — "not as others," "a strict faster," "an exact tither." We shall see presently the Lord's estimate of them. But first let us turn to the tax-gatherer.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me *the sinner*." Now, dear reader, what do you think of that prayer? Here was a man that had nothing

good to say either for or of himself. He did not take the ground of not being as others. The tax-gatherers as a class were all much the same—a rapacious, covetous, money-grubbing lot. Filthy lucre was the god of most of them. It was quite out of the ordinary for one of that company to go up to the temple to pray. Prayer was not much in such people's line. Pharisees you might count by the dozen in the holy precincts. But tax-gatherers in general were too busy filling their money-bags. Yet here was one. What had brought him there? Need; undoubtedly, need in his soul. The Lord was on earth, and working in power.

But some one may say again, But it is a parable. Yes, but setting forth actual occurrences. We doubt not that the Lord knew of more than one tax-gatherer whose heart was touched. Well, this one is described as standing afar off, evidently with a deep sense of his own unworthiness. He cannot even lift up his eyes unto heaven. Holiness is there, and he is a sinner. He beats on his breast with a deep sense of his wickedness, and says, "God be merciful to me *the* sinner." In the original, as is well known, it is the definite article. *The* sinner. No comparison with others whatever. There may be thousands of other sinners around. But *he* is *the* sinner in God's holy presence. Mercy, mercy, mercy! That is what the poor, sinful tax-gatherer wants. (Pharisees apparently do not require it.) His prayer begins with God, and ends with the sinner, and nothing but mercy can come between. Nothing

else can meet his case. Without it, there is no link with God. *God be merciful to me the sinner.* Not a syllable about any good deeds or his good character. He had no righteousness, and had discovered it. The sinner takes in all that he was. And the same term takes in all that every Pharisee is. In short it embraces all, whoever and whatever we may be or think. To take any other ground before God is utter folly. Such a prayer could not fail to be answered. It was the heartfelt cry of a conscience-stricken sinner, and such prayer God hears and answers. It was the fruit, in principle, of His own gracious work in the soul.

"I tell you," says the Lord—and, dear reader, we do well to listen reverently when the Lord tells us anything, for we may depend upon it being both true, and well worth our most earnest consideration—"I tell you, this man went down to his house *justified* rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke xviii. 14).

Now mark it well, he went down *justified*. He went up a self-judged sinner, and he went down a *God-justified believer*. The Pharisee went up a self-righteous formalist, and went down as he went up. He did not need justifying. He could manage that well for himself. He had had a life-long experience at it. He was no sinner, not he. He was a thoroughly respectable, upright, moral, religious temple-goer. Reader, what are *you*? There are many like him. Does it describe your case? If

so, turn not away angrily. Lay not this paper down in haste, with a rebellious heart. But listen to the voice of the Son of God. If these were our words, we could understand you saying, How do you know better than I? But they are the words of the Lord, and His word endureth for ever. Formalist, moralist, religionist, arouse thee from thy self-satisfied and blinded condition. Learn through this parable, what thy real state is, and whilst it is called To-day, the day of salvation, bow thy proud, deceived, false, religious heart in the presence of the Divine Majesty, and cry with the poor tax-gatherer, "*God be merciful to me the sinner.*"

You may hesitate to take this place, yet sinner you are, think what you may. Yes, a sinner, at heart not one jot better than any other, though you may be able to thank God that you have been kept from a life of open sin. As a sinner alone can you be justified. Pharisees are outside it, till they bow. There is no justification for them. They say in word and deed, we need it not. But sinners do, and you are one, whoever and whatever you are. If you own it before Him, He will justify you. "God is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26). No sinner is too guilty. The greater the sinner, the greater the need, and the greater the grace. And the grace of God, reigning through righteousness, on the ground of Christ's finished work, meets all Pharisees, publicans, sinners of every kind and degree, who

bow in heart before Him. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24).

The process was not long in the tax-gatherer's case. As we have seen, he went up a sinner, and he went down home justified. How happy he must have been as he crossed the threshold. All his scarlet sins for ever washed away, justified by God Himself (Rom. viii. 33). So will it be with you, if you only bow. You may sit down at your fireside and say, "God be thanked, I was a lost sinner, and my whole life (whatever it may have been) dishonoured Him who made me, but He has justified me from all things for ever, through faith in the precious blood of His dear Son. I'm a justified man." May God give to each one who reads these lines to learn the utter folly of self-righteousness, and to believe from the heart, as a poor, guilty lost one, His blessed testimony concerning His Son.

Again we repeat, in closing, "God is just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

"Oh, joy of the justified, joy of the free,
 I'm washed in that crimson tide opened for me!
 In Christ my Redeemer rejoicing I stand,
 Being saved by His grace and held by His hand.
 O sing of His mighty love,
 Sing of His mighty love,
 Sing of His mighty love,
 Mighty to save!"

THE ANT-LION.



WAS going into a deep forest alone on foot, with my blanket, food, and cooking utensils on my back. The day was very hot, and I sat down to rest. Every leaf was still, and the only sound was the distant murmur of a waterfall away in the

forest.

Very soon I noticed something that caused the sand to fly up not far from where I was sitting, and after a few moments I satisfied myself as to what it was.

It was a small insect that had burrowed down into the sand, and with its tail or some other apparatus, I could not see exactly, he was throwing up the sand thick and fast.

How it flew! In a very few moments he had a hole about the diameter and twice the depth of a large coffee-cup. The sand was dry in a few moments, and of course would very readily roll down into the centre. I had read of this creature, but had never seen one before. He was a little dark-looking fellow, and now he put himself into the very centre of his den, burying himself completely out of sight, except his horn, as it appeared sticking like a rusty needle out of the sand.

This was the ant-lion, and soon I had a specimen of his skill and power. A little red ant came running along seeking her food in her usual busy way.

So she climbed up on the rim of this sandy cup and peeped over to investigate. Presently, suspecting danger, she turned to scramble off. Alas! it was too late; the sand rolled from under her feet, and down she went to the bottom; when in an instant that little black horn opened like a pair of shears, and "clip," the poor ant had lost its leg. And now the poor thing struggles to climb up, but one leg is gone, and she finds it hard work.

The little monster does not move or show himself. He knows what he is about. The ant has got almost to the top and liberty, when the sands slip, and down she goes. "Clip," go the shears, and another leg is gone. She struggles hard to rise, but she gets up but a little way before she slips again, and a third leg is off. She now gives up the struggle, and the lion devours her in a few minutes, and then with a flip of his tail throws the skin of the ant entirely out of the cup, and the trap is now set for another victim. A fly crept down to see what was smelling so good, when "clip," he had but one wing, and here was the second course.

I found several such dens with the skins of the dead all around, but the inside looked pure and clean. There was no lion in sight, but the destroyer was there. The dead are shoved out of sight.

O ant-lion, thou art a preacher to me! I now see how it is the feet of the sinner slide as they walk over sandy places. They go to the hotel. It

is all fair and inviting. But "clip," they are crippled. They will soon roll back and take another glass, and every time the destroyer cripples them. They go to places of sin, to the ball, the opera, the billiard table, the racecourse, and know not that the dead are there! Ah, every fall makes the next easier, and the probability of escape less and less.

O ant-lion! I wish all could see thee, and learn from thee, so cunning and bloodthirsty, so cruel to thy victims, and withal so remorseless, so like the devil—that roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

T.

MAN'S UNCERTAINTY, OR GOD'S REVELATION.



HE great agnostic is dead; cut down in a moment, and ushered into the presence of God whom he had so long blasphemed. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. xi. 3); "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). The throne of God is not more sure than that Colonel Ingersoll has met a righteous and infinitely holy God ere this, whose judgment will be according to truth (Rom. ii. 2), and from which no amount of impious eloquence can deliver him.

When death comes all have to yield. Like the grass before the scythe, all are cut down. Death is no respecter of persons. The crowned head and the head without a shelter must bow when death comes; and it is infinitely important that we have the consolations of the truth and love of God in the hour of death.

A little ago a Christian was smitten with apoplexy. When the doctor arrived, she said, "Do you think it is death, doctor?" To which he replied, "I could hardly say." She answered, in the simplicity of faith which rested on the revelation of God, "*It makes no difference, all is well.*"

This is the consolation that Christianity gives in the hour of death. But, it may be asked, what consolation has infidelity to give to any one at such a time? What certainty, what resting-place has it to give when this world is passing away, and eternity is coming into view, when it is no more a question of what "I think," but of what God has said?

Let us hear from the death-room of the great American infidel, who had lured by his eloquence so many on to an infidel's grave, and to an infidel's eternity. We shall get some light surely.

After an unchristian service had closed, Mr Rouse, Colonel Ingersoll's oldest friend, arose from his chair, and, as he was totally blind, passed his hand over his departed friend, saying, "*Perhaps he is better now. No one can understand it.*"

What! it may be asked with astonishment, is

this all that infidelity has got to give? After all the books that have been written, after all the eloquent speeches that have been delivered against God and His Word, have we nothing but a miserable "Perhaps he is better now"? and are we left befogged in the cheerless uncertainty of "No one can understand it"? This is cold comfort indeed, to say nothing of the insult offered to God whose revelation is completely ignored.

Blind Rouse is but an apt illustration of the system he advocates. All is darkness and uncertainty; not a ray of light is there for the soul in the entirety of their godless system; because God is shut out, the Saviour of sinful men scorned, the testimony of the Holy Spirit treated with utter contempt, human responsibility ignored, and man's intellect is made the arbiter of everything, and God Himself is made to appear to be judged by the corrupt notions of that intellect. In them is fulfilled the words of the prophet: "Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them!" (Jer. viii. 9).

But how vastly different is it with the one who reverently bows to the one only true God, the Creator of all, the God of the Scriptures, the entrance of whose Word gives light, and which scatters the darkness that has reigned in the soul before. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). And if God

has shone into the believer's heart, it is that it might shine out for the benefit of others. He is a light amid the darkness. He shines as a light in the world. It is a reflected light, however. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, and thus illumines the darkness of the night, so is the child of God in this dark world. In the Word, that revelation from God the infidel refuses, we learn that God has been revealed in Christ, His Son, in this world; that God's Son in death upon the cross accomplished redemption, and opened the way back to God for fallen outcast man. "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). And that God has raised up and glorified His Son, committing all things, all power, and all judgment, into His hands, and sent down the Holy Spirit to proclaim through ten thousand lips a full and free salvation to all (Acts ii. 36, v. 29-33, viii. 4; Titus ii. 11).

There is no "Perhaps he is better now; no one can understand it," here. All is clear and certain, because divine. "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John v. 20).

And as to the future we read: "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . .

Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. v. 1-5).

Who would exchange this light and certainty which come from God for the darkness and uncertainty of infidelity? Who would give up the full-orbed sun of revelation for the midnight darkness of agnosticism? And who would surrender the cheering hope of a glorious immortality, which lies beyond this sin-blighted and death-ridden scene, for the "perhaps" and "no one can understand it" of the infidelity of the nineteenth century? To do so would be to invite darkness rather than light, misery rather than happiness, and the damnation of hell rather than the everlasting happiness of heaven.

Dear reader, what are you? An infidel, or a reverent believer in God and His Word? If the former, see with what you are connected—a system of darkness now, because God is shut out, and darkness for ever; but if the latter, bless God with all your heart, and serve Him with all your might.

“‘What think you of Christ?’ is the test
 To try both your state and your scheme;
 You cannot be right in the rest
 Unless you think rightly of Him.
 As Jesus appears in your view,—
 As He is beloved or not;
 So God is disposed to you,
 And mercy or wrath is your lot.”

JUST IN TIME.



THE importance of receiving the gospel, when an opportunity of so doing is presented to the soul, cannot be overestimated. The truth of this was greatly impressed upon my mind in connection with some gospel meetings, which I had, not long since, in the East of London.

For three successive nights a large audience came together to hear the glad tidings of the grace of God.

The first night a fine intelligent young fellow named Fred —, the picture of health, and youthful physical energy, was brought by a converted comrade to the meeting. That night he was somewhat interested as to the matter of his soul's salvation.

The next evening his friend again induced him to come and hear the Word, and he did so. The end of the meeting, however, still found him undecided for Christ.

On the third evening he had serious thoughts of coming to the meeting, but was waylaid by a number of godless companions, who chaffed him for attending gospel meetings, and eventually dissuaded him from going that night.

Mercifully for Fred his Christian friend just then crossed his path, and, dragging him from the clutches of the devil's servants, induced him to

carry out his first intention of going to hear the Word of Life.

At the close of that third meeting a very bright-faced young man came up the aisle, and with outstretched hand, grasped mine, as tears suffused his eyes, exclaiming that he had found the Lord, his sins were forgiven; that he knew he was saved; and that from that night, by divine grace, he would be on the Lord's side.

On asking what had brought light to his soul, and led him to decision, he said, "It was that bit of the preaching about the blood."

The part he referred to ran thus. I had been saying—"Some sinners are afraid to come to Christ, because they are so conscious they are sinners. Satan attacks them with the remembrance of their sins. He presses on them the enormity of their guilt—sins of thought, word, and deed, of daylight, and darkness; sins, the very memory of which makes them blush, and the exposure of which would utterly terrify them. How is the enemy to be dealt with in such a case? I will tell you how I deal with him.

"I say, 'Oh mine accuser, write all my sins on that wall, do not leave out one, from the day of my birth till this hour, put them all down, write them big.' And Satan, so to speak, writes them up, thousands, tens of thousands, millions, billions, trillions. Go on, I say, do not leave out one. And so he writes them, innumerable as they be.

"When all are written, he will say, 'Now then

what can you say to that list?' My answer is very simple, 'I can say nothing, but God says, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from every sin."' "

"Hallelujah! They are all gone, and the accuser goes too. He cannot stand the testimony to the blood of Christ. That blood he hates, but God exalts it, while sinners trust and saints delight in it, for the Holy Ghost declares it to be 'precious,' and the believing soul finds it to be efficacious in the blotting out of every transgression."

"That bit about the blood settled me," said Fred, for this was he. His beaming face bespoke the reality of the change of heart. And that his ways were changed, I afterwards learned, was only too apparent, as he boldly testified among his comrades at work, that Christ was now his Saviour, Lord and Master; and, on every opportunity, he found his place with the children of God, for prayer, reading, and hearing the Word.

One short fortnight elapsed, and the launching day of an enormous Japanese war vessel arrived in the establishment where Fred laboured as an artisan. The huge monster of the deep glided majestically into the Thames, then at flood tide, and just beginning to ebb.

Immediately she was launched, Fred, with a number of other young men, was despatched in a boat to pick up some of the timbers, which formed her launching cradle, and were floating in the Thames. His comrades fell a-skylarking, upset

the boat, and all were submerged in the rapidly flowing river. All came to the surface, but my dear young friend Fred. He never came above water, and his body was never found, but in the day of resurrection I have no doubt I shall see him in the likeness of Christ.

Well was it for him that on that third night he had decided for Christ. Had he not done so, how different would have been his eternity. We might truly say, he was only "just in time." But thank God he was "just in time."

Reader, 1899 is dying out. Are you the Lord's yet? Are you converted? Are you forgiven? Are you saved? Are you washed in the Saviour's blood? indwelt by the Spirit, and a child of God? Or are you still in your sins a stranger to God, a stranger to grace? unforgiven, unwashed, unblest, unsaved? Forget not that eternity is before you, and that you may enter it at any time. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Be in time.

We heartily invite you to come to the Saviour now. Trust Him where you are, just as you are. He will pardon and bless you. Only trust Him. Believe His love. Believe His blood. Believe His name. Believe that Jesus is a Saviour, not only a Saviour, but may you be able to say, "He is my Saviour." Should a new year come in, oh begin it with God. Let not the old year die out and find you still unsaved. What you need is decision for Christ. Decide for Him now!