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The Gospel Messenger.

"LET THERE BE LIGHT."



"H! how awful it would have been if I had died then; I was in such profound darkness, and distance from God," and a passing look of horror came o'er the pallid and wan face of the speaker, while her blue eyes filled with tears, as she seemed to shrink from a visible evil.

"And what would it be if you were to die now?" I rejoined.

"Thank God! it is all light, and peace, and joy, and rest now. I know Him, and I shall soon be with Him," and the look of horror gave place to a smile of sweet contentment, and holy joy.

The speaker was a lady in the prime of life as far as years go; but the bright eye, flushed cheek, rapid breathing, and emaciated frame, coupled with a constant cough, told all too plainly that a few days would close her earthly history. She was propped up on a sofa, and in her hand held a little red-bound "Marked New Testament," gazing at the words—

"IT SHALL COME TO PASS, THAT AT EVENING
TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT,"

which, with her initials, were written inside the cover. It was the perusal of this text, and an allusion to our first meeting, some years before, which led to her startling ejaculation above narrated. That meeting, as she had often in the interval said, manifested wondrously the ways of God in grace to sinful wanderers here on earth, and for it she daily gave thanks. It came about thus.

One Lord's Day afternoon in October 1893 I received an urgent call to at once visit a lady staying in apartments in the West End of Edinburgh. Responding immediately to the message, I found my patient in a condition of great danger from acute inflammation, and almost complete closure of the larynx. Suffocation was impending rapidly, and the look of distress on her face will not be forgotten. My prompt measures for her relief were rapidly effectual, her thankfulness was great, and although entire strangers, I soon saw that she thoroughly trusted me as a doctor.

Her personality was striking and attractive, an exceedingly pleasant smile giving charm to her face. A short acquaintance revealed that she was a woman of the world, in every sense of the word, and that of every fountain, that was supposed to afford pleasure to the human heart, she had drunk, and drunk deeply, and yet

I could plainly see, her heart was ill at ease. She had travelled a good deal, had seen the world from many sides, and had tasted and learned its hollowness. Novels formed her staple food, as far as reading was concerned, though she had read largely in other subjects. Pictures had great power over her, for art was her idol, nature her God—if she had any—and she was a painter, whose pictures were but seen to be admired, while her skill in designing, and manual dexterity in the execution of ornamental needlework, was remarkable.

I rather wondered that I should have been selected to be her physician, the more so as she knew me by name and sight, and afterwards told me, that she had been repeatedly warned on no account to call me in, if she needed a doctor, as I should be sure to "talk religion" to her, a subject for which she had no taste in the world. Her sudden illness, however, had made a doctor's presence necessary, and her landlady had said, "My doctor lives near by, shall I not send for him?" and thus God brought us together.

I became greatly interested in my patient, and longed for a fitting opportunity of a talk with her about her soul, and the blessedness of the knowledge of Christ, but I had the distinct sense that if I broached the subject, she would resent it, so quietly bided the Lord's time. She afterwards told me this was exactly the case. She daily expected me to speak, and was prepared to fight, but when weeks rolled by, and I did not speak, she wondered

if God had altogether given her up, and that troubled her not a little.

The illness for which I first saw her was of a passing nature, but a neglected chill of months before involved a long attendance in the winter, and early in January of 1894 I had to see her frequently.

The light nature of the books which surrounded her led one afternoon to a conversation, in course of which she broke the ice by saying, "They tell me you write books, Doctor. Is it so?"

"Oh yes, I have written a little thing or two. Have you seen any of my books?"

"No."

"Would you like to?"

"Very much," she replied.

"Then I will bring you one next time I come," and, on the morrow, I put into her hand a little volume entitled "Rest for the Weary," some gospel addresses on the Book of Ruth. The contents of that little volume God graciously used to awaken in her soul the sense of her sin, her guilt, her need, and her danger. She became thoroughly aroused by the Spirit of God. Her conscience was reached, her soul solemnised, and for the first time in her history she looked eternity fairly in the face, only to feel that she was unready to enter it, and that to die as she then was, would indeed be awful. Death was not then in the cup, but God made her face it, and weigh the solemn fact that after it came judgment.

At each succeeding visit the need of her soul, and not that of her body, was what was uppermost in her mind, and one afternoon, wishing to point out to her God's way of salvation, and His joy in man's blessing, as unfolded in Job xxxiii. and Luke xv., I said to her, "Would you give me your Bible?"

With a deep blush she answered, "I have not got one."

"Not got a Bible?" I said.

"Not here. I may have one in the old home" (and so she had, for her mother had given her one on the day of her confirmation, over twenty years before)," but I have not opened a Bible for fourteen years."

The next day I sent her a little Polyglot Bible, first writing in her name, and thereafter these words—

"AND GOD SAID, LET THERE BE LIGHT; AND THERE WAS LIGHT" (Gen. i. 3).

When next I called she thanked me for the Bible, at the same time asking, "Why did you put that text under my name, I mean that particular one?"

"It was the text that specially came to my mind in connection with your state," I rejoined. "Is it suitable?"

"Oh yes, indeed it is. It is light that I want, I feel I am in darkness, awful darkness. I can see nothing except my sins, and, oh, they have been

many, many, too many I fear to be forgiven," and tears of divinely-produced contrition and repentance rolled down her cheeks as she reviewed her life, wasted, as she now judged it to have been, in the mere trivialities of daily existence, the things that concerned her eternal peace having been utterly neglected.

From that day her Bible was her constant companion. She read it continuously, studied it diligently, and marked it from end to end. For fully twelve months the only effect of its perusal, and frequent conversations with her as to its truths, was to deepen the distress of her soul. Each time I saw her she plied me with innumerable questions as to God's way of saving sinners, what was the new birth, how was it to be obtained, how could a sinner like she ensure it, and how could she know if she had passed through it. Glimmers of light which the Holy Spirit gave her as she diligently searched the Scriptures, only again gave place to a deeper sense of darkness, as she saw what sin was in God's sight. Along with this sprung up a deep desire for the salvation of others, a desire which God fanned by the distinct conversion, at this time, of her youngest sister, who, at her instigation, went to hear a well-known evangelist preach, and being dealt with in the after-meeting first believed, and then simply confessed Christ as her Saviour.

The sense of God's holiness grew in her soul correspondingly with the increasing discovery of

her own unholiness, and her greatest difficulty and oft-repeated query was, "How can God love a sinner like me?" God's love in giving His Son—His only begotten Son—for the world she could believe. Christ's love in sacrificing Himself for sinners she believed implicitly. The atoning value of His blood she was assured of. Her need of that precious blood to cleanse her sins away she was persuaded of; but pardon, peace, and salvation seemed somehow out of her grasp. Her spiritual distress told greatly on her physical health, and as she had one illness after another her condition at length became serious.

It is usually darkest just before the dawn, and so was it in the history of this dear soul. A full year of this soul-exercise was gone through before she found rest in the Lord. I well remember the occasion, when, with self-loathing and repentance, she judged the whole of her bygone history in no measured terms, as she saw what a sinner she was in God's sight; and then said, "Now, Doctor, what must I do to get peace?"

I replied, "You will have to go to the Lord, and just tell Him the whole of your history as simply as you have told it to me."

"But I do not feel that I can; He seems so far away."

"No, He is not far away, nor is His salvation far off either. You will have to heed the Scripture, 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he

be not far from every one of us' (Acts xvii. 27). Again, listen to this: 'The word is *nigh thee*, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: *for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*' (Rom. x. 8-13).

"Now do not you sleep to-night until you have cast yourself simply on Him, just as you are, and told Him all that you are, all that you have been, and all that you have done. Many troubled souls, like you, do not get peace because they are afraid of the Lord, and do not make a clean breast of all to Him. They are therefore like David as he says, 'When I *kept silence*, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long: for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.' That is where he was, and you are. Now see he goes on: '*I acknowledged my sin unto thee*, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, *I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord*; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin' (Ps. xxxii. 3-5). Just you

do as he did, and you will taste what he tasted—the sweetness of forgiveness."

When I called the next morning her face was radiant with joy. I saw something had taken place, and said, "Well, what has happened?"

"Oh, I just did as you bade me. I went right to Him and told Him everything. I just cast myself upon Him, and His love, and His mercy."

"And what took place?"

"Oh! Jesus has saved me. I have found Him, and He has found me. I have proved just what David did, that confession and forgiveness go hand in hand. The Lord spoke to me Himself. He just said to me, like the woman in the Gospel,

'THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN. THY FAITH HATH
SAVED THEE; GO IN PEACE'

(Luke vii. 48, 50); I am forgiven, saved, and have peace with God now," and tears of joy rolled down her cheeks, as she lay back on her pillow, and seemed to nestle in the sense, "I am loved by Christ." Truly, God had said, "Let there be light, and there was light." It filled her soul, beamed from her eyes, and gave her the experimental knowledge that "God is Love."

From that hour she never had a doubt as to her salvation. As time rolled on she learned much of the grace of Christ, gladly owned herself a disciple, and associated herself with the Lord's people, while her interest in all that was connected with Him, and His work, was unbounded. She had

immense joy in hearing of the conversion of others, and greatly longed and prayed much for the conversion of a young friend from a foreign land. This desire God granted eventually, but not while she was alive.

After she had found the Lord, and entered into soul-rest, and the happy knowledge of a Father's love to His child, she began to pick up a little physically, but the hand of the Lord was upon her, as regards her body, and a succession of illnesses, necessitating grave surgical operations, overtook her between 1895 and 1898. All these she bore with remarkable uncomplainingness, cut off as she now was from the outside world, which had once been her delight.

Just before one of these ordeals the surgeon who was to operate told her its gravity, and that indeed it might have a fatal issue, though he hoped otherwise. Her answer was: "Never mind! Do what you judge right. I am ready to go, and have no fear as I look into the future."

These illnesses confined her for months to her bed, and almost entirely, for the rest of her days, to her room, but she was never idle. When her fingers were not necessarily busy on some embroidery or other useful work, her pen was in constant exercise, culling choice bits of prose and poetry from the writings of God's servants, relating to things spiritual and heavenly. She filled volumes thus, while her deeply valued little Bible contains in its blank spaces the breathings

of her own soul Godwards, beautifully intermingled with such extracts.

Her sense of dependence on God, and the need of His sustaining grace, thus finds expression :—

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. xxvi. 3).

Lord, keep me true to Thyself, in heart, and purpose, and from loving the world, or the things of the world.

Lord, do Thou keep me ;

Lord, do Thou help me ;

Lord, do not let me fall under

Satan's power.

O good Jesus ! may Thy voice sound in my ears, that my heart may learn how to love Thee—my only true good, my sweet and delightful joy.

O my God ! in loving Thee I possess Thee—Thou art love itself.

Lord, Thou knowest what I desire of Thee, and if it be according to Thy will Thou knowest ; but if not, O beloved Lord, forgive Thou my simplicity, for Thou knowest I desire only that Thy will, not mine, should be done.

To grow in the knowledge of Christ is our life and privilege. He shuts out everything else.

May I so trust the love of God, the faithfulness of God, that I may have courage to say "Show me Thy way ;" faith in the full delight of God to bless me, so that I may do His will, even if it be at the loss of everything ; may my soul be so intimate with God that I may seek His way and nothing else.

"THE WELL IS DEEP" (John iv. 11).

"Thy saying is most true ;

Salvation's well is deep,

Only Christ's hand can reach the waters blue ;

And even He must stoop to draw it up,

Ere He can fill thy cup."

A PLACID AND STEADY CALM.

One has seen such gentleness of spirit in some Christians, that they have been an ornament to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

May I learn that holy calm, and may the Spirit of God so dwell in me, that in all I say, and all I do, and all I am, I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things.

Keep my soul happily occupied with Thyself, who lovest me, and gavest Thyself for me.

O dear Father, give me grace to love, so in my life and words to testify of Jesus, that in the home where I live, and places where I go, instead of a barren and dreary desert, there may spring up many trees of Thy planting.

My God, O make me perfect to do Thy will, working in me that which is well-pleasing in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ.

“Saviour, lead me, lest I stray,
Gently lead me all the way ;
I am safe when by Thy side,
I would in Thy love abide.

Thou the refuge of my soul
When life's stormy billows roll,
I am safe when Thou art nigh,
On Thy mercy I rely.

Saviour, lead me, till at last,
When the storm of life is past,
I shall reach the land of day,
Where all tears are wiped away.

Lead me, lead me,
Saviour, lead me, lest I stray,
Gently down the stream of time,
Lead me, Saviour, all the way.”

"WHAT LACK I YET?" (Matt. xix. 20).

"If I lack the real knowledge of Christ—if I have not Christ, no matter how beautiful and moral my life may be—I lack everything. Let me have everything, be what I may in this world, if I do not possess Christ, I lack everything really worth having. If I am not right about Christ I am wrong about everything. If I am right about Christ I am right about most things."

Lord, keep me near to Thyself.

Self-confidence is the cause of our failures.

Self-distrust is the secret of our getting on with the Lord.

A CLOUD TO GUARD AGAINST: SELF, AND SELF-CONFIDENCE.

Self-confidence flung me off my guard, and took me away from Christ. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall," had no place in my mind, and so, failing to pray to be kept out of temptation, though bidden of the Lord to do so, I slept when I should have been gathering strength, and fell an easy prey to the enemy's stratagems in the moment of temptation when I should have humbly, yet boldly, confessed my Lord; so it will always be if self-confidence, or a spirit of boastfulness, be found in my heart. The day that I fell was the day I ceased to fear to fall. So long as fear was in my heart, I was kept of God!—the only path of safety is near to my Lord.

Precious Saviour and Friend, teach me more simply to cleave to Thee, and thus to be more like Thee.

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. xxvi. 4).

"Scripture invariably gives us the dark side as well as the bright, and what does this bring out? Only the grace of the Lord, who can take a saint out of the slough into which he has fallen, and make him a more useful vessel than ever before;—the fall breaks self-confidence."

"It is an intensely solemn fact that every man or woman who is not in the company of Christ, is in the clutch of the god of this world, and sooner or later must learn the power of the evil one. The Lord would teach us that even a saint away from Christ is in the power of Satan."

The Holy Ghost shows us what we are, and that is one reason why He often seems to be very hard, and does not give peace to the soul, as we are not relieved till we experimentally, from our hearts, acknowledge what we are.

"The real effect of grace is to teach us that we have no strength."

"Grace creates confidence just in proportion to the measure in which it acts towards us, and in us. It produces trust in Him who is its source. We cannot trust ourselves, but we can trust the grace that forgives our faults, and will trust us when we are broken down and humbled."

The truth is, that when we have no strength and no will, we are in a state for God to take us up:—May I follow Thee, Lord, and do Thy will.

"WHAT A CHRISTIAN KNOWS."

"A Christian knows that the work of Christ was so perfect that it has effected everything for him. He knows his sins are all blotted out, he knows he is forgiven, he knows that God is his Father, and now he simply waits for Jesus."

"Into the very scene of our sin and misery and degradation, God has stepped, and brought salvation to us in the Person, and through the work of His own beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ."

Our greatest wisdom is to do according to the will and counsel of our best Friend. And this blessed Friend is Jesus, and His will and counsel is that we should take refuge in Him, and abide in Him; coming to Him clean or bemired, His love is the same in every case.

"O Jesus, make Thyself to me
A living bright reality ;
More present to faith's vision keen
Than any outward object seen ;
More dear, more intimately nigh,
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."

(Phil. iii. 10.)

"To be near Jesus is the only place of safety for the soul that knows him."

"The grace and love of Jesus fill the heart with joy and peace."

"Still on Thy loving heart let me repose,
Jesus, sweet Author of my joy and rest ;
Thy love grows never cold, but its pure flame
Seems every day more strong and bright.

Oh ! what is other love compared with Thine,
Of such high value, such eternal worth.
What is man's love compared with love divine,
Which never changes in this changing earth :

Love, which in this cold world ne'er grows cold,
Love, which ne'er decays, with the world's decay,
Love, which is young when all things else grow old,
Which lives when heaven and earth shall pass away."

THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS LOVE.—Opposition does not stop it ; through everything He goes on with His love.

FAITH.—Human reasoning and wisdom of words cannot manufacture faith : it comes by hearing the Word of God.

"Faith can walk on rough waters as well as on smooth, if the eye be kept on the Lord. The Lord had said to Peter 'Come,' and that was enough—He who created the elements can make the sea a pavement for His servant. When Christ and His word are kept before the soul, we can walk on the rough sea of life, as well as on smooth waters."

"The Lord stood with me and strengthened me. The Lord will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 17, 18).

"Surely through my tears I saw
God softly drawing near;
How came He without sight or sound
So soon to disappear?"

God was not gone : but He so longed
His sweetness to impart,
He too was seeking for a home,
And found it in my heart."

God knows with whom He has to deal, the resistance to be met with, and how it is to be overcome. He saw all things from the beginning to the end—how consolatory to our feeble hearts. Not a difficulty or trial can befall us which has not been foreseen by our God, and for which in His grace provision has not been made. Everything has been prearranged in view of our final triumph, and of our victorious exit from this scene, through the display of His redeeming power, to be for ever with the Lord.

God being my refuge, I shall find, either that He will give me deliverance from my trouble or help in it—but blessing in some way or other. It may be painful to find every other refuge fail, but God being my refuge, I shall find Him my strength and very present help.

"Casting all your care upon him." Why? "For he careth for you." What comfort, what rest for the soul, in all the ups and downs, and vicissitudes of this life!

"THE LORD'S MESSAGE."—"I am with you" (Haggai i. 13).

"The just Lord is in the midst" (Zep. iii. 5).

His presence is always fresh; weariness and repetition are impossible where He is.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock." But the latch is on the inside.

To do good for evil is Christian perfection (Matt. v. 44).

It is surely a right Christian spirit to look up with loyal admiration to a great or saintly soul, feeling that in quite a peculiar way such an one is meet for the Master's service.

I cannot be a partaker of the Lord's Table, and of the table of devils. It is impossible. The Spirit of God will not allow me. I may sit down, but I cannot be a partaker. If I allow myself in things *that are not of God*, when I come to the Lord's Table, *I may get there in body*, but I shall *never touch the real thing*.

Is the Spirit going to minister the things of the Lord to me on the Lord's Day morning, when I have been doing what I like the other six days of the week?

What is my title to come to the Table of the Lord? He has invited me. He says it, that is the whole point.

"It is enough to know our own path. We are not called on to inquire as to our brother's."

"If I am always looking to my own interests, if I have no thought but for my own personal comfort, if my religion can live and die within my own heart—I have not anything that is worth having. I must love others, love them intensely, and make it the one object of my life to make other people happy, for so I will then be acting according to the will of God in all things."

"O God, give me the skill
In comforts art,
That I may consecrated be,
And set apart
Unto a life of sympathy."

Give me a Christ-like touch.

"While here, to do 'Thy will' be mine,
And Thine to fix my time of rest."

The last quotation is a kind of intimation that she knew the end was drawing near. The morning

of her life had been spent in the world, the afternoon with the Lord and His people, and now the evening had come.

In the spring of 1898 she caught a chill which laid the basis of consumption, which took her away just ten days after the conversation first recorded in this article. I saw the end was near, and her feebleness being so great that she could with difficulty hold her Bible, I had sent her the little "Marked Testament" before alluded to, with the quotation,

"IT SHALL COME TO PASS, THAT AT EVENING TIME IT
SHALL BE LIGHT"

(Zech. xiv. 7), written within. Truly it was light at eventide. Her rest and peace in the Lord was deep, and she longed to be with the One who had loved her and given Himself for her.

One bright Lord's Day morning, as the flowers began to bud in May 1899, she peacefully fell asleep in Jesus.

At her funeral I read a portion of John xi., where we learn that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (ver. 5). A few remarks were made on the words, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (vers. 25, 26), coupled with the statement as regards the body of the believer, "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown

in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 42-44). Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He is the life of all those who are His. If, therefore, they die, they shall again live, because believing in Him, and the blessedness of being a believer was emphasised. Then, as regarded the beloved one whom we were going to bury, it was pointed out that she was with Christ, and that what we were about to sow in corruption, dishonour, weakness—a natural body—Christ would raise incorruptible, in glory, in power, a spiritual body. With these remarks, and thanksgiving to God for His grace to our dear friend in saving, keeping, and granting her to pass away so happily, her remains were laid in the tomb.

The young foreigner whose conversion she so longed for was present. She had heard of her friend's death, and that she had "died happy." This aroused in her mind a great desire to know how she could die happily. The remarks made at the funeral as to the resurrection of the body of the believer, and the evident joy which filled the heart of the one who prayed, and gave thanks, because of the assurance that she who had passed away was then with the Lord, and in the eternal rest of His presence and love, was used of God to thoroughly awaken her to a sense of her sin, need, and danger, and after some weeks of great distress of mind, she came where I was preaching the Word

of God, received the gospel, and found the Lord as her own Saviour.

How wonderful are God's ways. Truly He is found of them that seek Him not, and really at heart want Him not, till His grace produces a sense of need. So was it with my patient. So with her sister, and her young friend, who both now go on their way rejoicing in Christ, witnessing for Him, and seeking to win others for Him, while the one who prayed for them, and in one case, never knew the prayer was answered, is in eternal rest.

And now, my dear reader, how is it with your soul? Are you yet saved? If not, let the foregoing tale of God's grace lead you to trust His blessed Son. As 1900 dawns, let the new year mean a new history for you.

God's word is true, "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be *silent in darkness*" (1 Sam. ii. 9). Where will you spend eternity, in *light* or in *darkness*? Which? It is quite possible that as you read these lines you may be in the enjoyment of perfect health, and think that a long life is before you. Do not forget that you have no lease of life, and that no prolonged space may be granted to you to get "ready." Again the Lord's coming is at hand. His coming will be the judgment-knell of the unready. I implore you to heed His word "while ye have light, believe in the light that ye may be the children of light" (John xii. 36).

THREE ENDS.

1. THE END OF ALL FLESH.



It is very long since God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me" (see Gen. vi. 13), and also since the consequent flood swept the earth of its corrupt and violent inhabitants.

That end came. "The flood came and destroyed them all." It was a necessary judgment, and a terrible end.

But, then, we must remember that God is holy; and, although He may, and does, bear very long with the sinner, yet He must also vindicate His character as to absolute non-compliance with sin. His gracious long-suffering towards the sinner can never merge into indifference. Sin must be punished.

The mill of God's judgment may grind slowly, but it also grinds surely.

Few chapters of Scripture are more worthy of study than is Genesis vi. We read that "*all* flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (ver. 12); and again, "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that *every* imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only* evil continually" (ver. 5). A fearful description of the heart and ways of man!

But, now, contrast with this the feelings of God: "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (ver. 6).

This is at least affecting. The heart of the Lord was just as full of grief on account of the condition into which man had been brought, as man's heart was full of evil continually.

What a study! How wicked man, how patient God!

Then, if judgment must follow, in the necessary maintenance of divine holiness, it came only when divine patience had exercised itself in the fullest way.

The end was thoroughly deserved. "Hast thou marked" (we read in Job xxii. 15, 16) "the old way which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us."

Mark that way—that old way—they who trod it were wicked men, and haters of God. Their foundation was destroyed by a flood.

"The flood came and destroyed them all" is written (Luke xvii. 27) of all those who said to God, in one way or another, "Depart from us."

God took them at their word, and answered their awful prayer. He departed from them. He interposed a deluge of waters between Himself and them. This was the end of all flesh—a merited end. Only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, one man—one solitary exception to prove the rule. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31).

2. THE END OF THE WORLD.

"Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix. 26).

Noah, the one man who found grace, escaped the flood-judgment by the ark. He entered afterwards on the water-swept world, and had all the advantages of a new start. He had learned the double lesson of man's wickedness and of God's holiness; and, thus instructed, he had a new life before him.

Alas, the seeds of evil were in his heart too. He failed. His son failed. Their sons failed. The lesson had not been truly learned. Babel, and another judgment, followed. Confusion of tongues, and confusion of every kind, dogged the human family then and now. Under the sun there is but vanity of vanities!

Another end must therefore be expected, and it came. The "end of the world," says our passage, was marked by another judgment than a flood. It was that which fell upon, not a world of sinners, but a world's Saviour. How different. The end of the world, here, should be "the consummation of the ages," and it refers to the winding up of those periods in which, by various means, God was demonstrating to man the simple fact that the seeds of sin are just as ineradicable as they are inherent. Nothing can mend man, and what cannot be mended must be ended. It only cumpers the ground.

Well, then, these ages of probation over, the end comes—Christ appears to—reign? Nay, not yet—to establish His kingdom gloriously? No, but to put away sin. Blessed Saviour. Ah! He might have appeared to put away the sinner as the flood of old, but He appeared in grace, not to judge, but to save. This was the object of His first appearing—to put away sin! and how? By the sacrifice of Himself! That was at Calvary. Then the judgment that should have fallen on us fell on Him. He was our voluntary substitute—He who alone, in virtue of His person as Son of God, could render a sacrifice adequate for such a demand as the awful sin of man—He gave Himself! “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” What an offering!

And now, risen and glorified, He is the perfect witness of the value of the offering. God wants “no more offering for sin.” No priestly addition is of the smallest worth. His blood cleanseth from all sin!

Dear reader, let it suffice for your guilty conscience. That which can cleanse a universe can avail for you!

3. THE END OF ALL THINGS.

“The end of all things is at hand” (1 Pet. iv. 7). A solemn fact indeed! and one that should weigh increasingly with our hearts. If that end were at hand when the apostle penned these words, how much nearer must it be to-day! “A thousand

years are with the Lord as one day." To Him time is nothing. He dwells in eternity. To us nineteen hundred years may seem long, but not to Him; and were things to continue for another nineteen hundred years, even that were as nothing. Yet the fact should have an immense moral effect on us.

Water once destroyed the world; fire shall do it again. He is the wisest whose treasure is in heaven, and whose heart is there too. There things are without end. They bear the stamp of eternity. If here there is vanity, there truly is eternity. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1); and the knowledge of this—the sweet and blessed assurance it carries to the heart—enables the child of God to view calmly "the end of all things" here. He has received a kingdom that cannot be shaken; he belongs to another country — a heavenly; he awaits the Saviour thence who shall change his vile body, and fashion it like His own; he patiently anticipates his home in his Father's House; and he walks to-day by faith.

Well it is to know God. He is made known in Jesus. The cross is the centre of revelation. But for the death of the Son of God salvation and the knowledge of God were impossible. Now all is revealed; the truth is disclosed; "God is love," and "God is light." On this revelation of Him the soul may rest for time and eternity. J. W. S.

THE LORD OR THE DEVIL?



HE 4.5 P.M. express to Adelaide was about to start from the Melbourne platform. Many of the passengers had taken their seats, and their friends were standing on the platform giving last messages and bidding adieus, when two well-dressed young men, each with a cigar in his hand, stepped into a second-class compartment, with a view of travelling some distance up the line.

"This is not a smoking compartment," was remarked by one who was already in it.

"What?" said the first of the two.

"All right, old man, we'll put it out," was the rejoinder.

Then, turning suddenly on his heel, before taking his seat, and pushing his companion before him towards the door by which they had entered, he said again, "Here! the Lord's in this carriage; let's go somewhere where the devil is."

"I hope you'll not eventually find your place where *he* is," said the first speaker. "The Lord is ready to save you and to deliver you from that place."

"We'll find some place where the devil is," said the young man, and they walked off to another compartment.

"The old tale of Christ or Barabbas," remarked one of the bystanders on the platform.

Reader, it is the old tale of Christ or Barabbas, but in more modern language, and with the final issue of the choice more boldly before the consciousness; and yet it shows man's deliberate choice of Barabbas rather than Christ. Yea, of the devil rather than the Lord.

"Not this man, but Barabbas," was the cry nineteen centuries ago.

"Not the Lord, but the devil," is the deliberate choice of some of the men of this boasted nineteenth century.

Jesus was not then officially made Lord and Christ. He had not then accomplished redemption's work. Now, He has most blessedly accomplished it, having died for sinners, His enemies, those who expressed their hatred of Him in the cry, "Away with Him." He has died beneath the wrath of God against sin, and rising triumphantly from the grave, God has given Him an immediate answer to His work, and exalted Him to His own right hand, making Him, there, both Lord and Christ, a Prince and a Saviour.

And this truth is preached throughout Christendom to-day. But the more truth is made known, and blessed too to believers, the more boldly does the human heart blasphemously express itself against all truth, and against God and Christ as the source and sum of it.

What is your choice, my reader?

Do you choose the devil rather than the Lord?

Perhaps you would shrink from saying so, and

yet the fact may exist as distinctly as in the case above. We do not always like to put our case into plain language, and are often shocked at hearing from another what, if calmly and rightly considered, does but after all describe our own condition.

The animosity of the heart of the young man cited above was brought out by a simple remark about an acknowledged evanescent pleasure, which at the same time inflicted pain and annoyance upon others; but rather than forego this for but a short time, he would go to the devil to enjoy it. And all the while the blessed Christ of God stands with outstretched arms, and voice of tender entreaty, inviting all who feel the heavy yoke of Satan's bondage to come to Him and obtain the rest they need.

Reader, will you not come?

Come *now*; for now He invites *you*.

Do not choose Barabbas! Do not choose the Devil!! Do not choose Hell!!!

Do not put away the truth from you, and judge yourself unworthy of Eternal Life; lest He who now entreats you say, "Lo, we turn to others," and you be *left alone*. There is no more awful word pronounced by the Lord than "Let him alone!"

One can but hope, that even he who forms the subject of this paper may be led to come to Christ the Lord, for He has said, "I will in no wise cast out."

G. J. S.

"I DONT THINK THERE'S A HELL."



HERE can be no doubt that Christ left all the glory of heaven to come to earth to die.

"There can be no doubt that He reascended there.

"There can be no doubt that He's exercising His mediatorial functions there.

"We know there's a heaven.

"But I don't think there's a hell."

Such were the expressions of a man who had been arguing against the reality of hell, when warned of his danger of that place if his present course was persisted in.

He was what is known as a "swagsman," and had entered a train at an up-country station. Pushing his swag under the seat with his feet, he said, "There; that'll be in nobody's way now;" and making himself comfortable on the seat, he was soon asleep, for he had been drinking.

Awaking some little time after, and addressing himself to a fellow-passenger, he spoke of a place that had been mentioned as a "God-forsaken place."

To this it was rejoined, that there was only One of whom it was said that He was "God-forsaken," and that was not for Himself, but for others, whose sins He bore at that moment.

Upon this ensued a long conversation, in the course of which many points of his own downward history came out.

He claimed to be a "Cambridge man," and spoke like one who had had a good education. Had relatives in the Church of England ministry, but was himself a scapegrace. Had thought it was all right with him at one time, and had been "Rescue Officer" in the Salvation Army, but now it was all over with him; he wished to do better, but he hadn't the power, and this was all God's fault, being a "permissive act" of His. He was now well known to the police, of whom some were in the next compartment of the carriage, in plain clothes. He spoke of some of the great preachers of the day, and how they, in the van of education, had exploded the old theory of hell, of which the one to whom he spoke had been *uncharitable* enough to warn him. He admitted he had been drinking heavily, and was now going to one of the large centres of population to enjoy himself.

For him, in common with educated men of the day, hell was but "Hades," the place of departed spirits; and when reminded that the Lord Himself used the word "Gehenna,"—that was but a place outside Jerusalem, and meant nothing more.

He talked loudly of the need of another gospel for the men of education of the day, and resented the suggestion that he wanted a gospel that would give him license to gratify his lusts; and then, leaning over to another who sat on the opposite

side, he gave expression to the sentiment at the head of this paper.

Is not this a very fair sample of a large class of human beings to-day—men with spirits to be saved or lost eternally?

But let us analyse what he said, and see if there is any force in it, for with their great swelling words, such men sometimes silence the timid believer.

Observe, then, that in the first four of the above statements we have the phrases, "There can be no doubt," and "We know." And the things that are stated thus as mere dogma are truths that are most surely believed by all the children of God. Not only, however, are they doctrinal truths, but they speak of facts that move to its depths the heart of every true believer.

What is it, beloved fellow-Christian, to *believe* that Christ left all the glory of heaven to come to earth to die for us!

What to *believe* that He went back again to that place, having accomplished redemption's wondrous work for us!

What to *believe* that He is now carrying on His mediatorial functions there for us!

What to *believe* that the bliss of heaven awaits us!

How it assures the heart! How it quickens the spirit!! How it moves the desires!!!

But alas, that these truths can be held as the mere axioms of a theological science! Yet thus

are they held and stated by thousands of those who even take the lead in the theology of the day, without the slightest power over the heart, the spirit, the desires. And if this is so, whence is their theology, and whither do they lead? Alas, for both the leaders and the led!

But if they say, "There can be no doubt," and "We know," whence do they know? What removes doubt? Is there any other known source whence such knowledge, such certainty can be drawn, but the unerring Word of God? None, my reader, none! Search earth and hell; study all the books man has produced since he became a registrar of his own thoughts, and whatever may have been the result of his imaginations even; yet you get nowhere stated as facts, but in the blessed Book of God, that Christ left the glories of heaven to die (John vi. 33-51); that He has gone back where He was before (John vi. 62; Acts i. 9); that He lives a great High Priest for His people (Heb vii. 25); or that there is a heaven, and what it is (John xiv. 2).

In this Book—the Word of the Living God—these truths are stated, and have been the solace of myriads of hearts that have by faith trusted them, spite of all the opposition to them by devil-led man.

Let us now examine also the last statement. Here it is:—

"I DON'T THINK THERE'S A HELL"!!!

What, my friend! You who can say, "There's no doubt," and "We know," without its having any moral power to restrain your lustful heart, will you *act* upon what *you think*, and go headlong to hell with a lie in your right hand?

But what makes you think there's no hell? Ah! is it not because you feel you deserve it, and it would be very convenient to you if there was none? The wish is father to the thought, and though you talk grandiloquently about God's character, and what *you think* is suitable to Him, yet have you no foundation but the wretched wish and thought of your own poor fallen heart for such a direct contradiction of Scripture as is contained in the statement that "THERE'S NO HELL"? For the *same* Scriptures that warrant us in stating what "there can be no doubt about," and what "we know," warrant us also in opposing to *your thought* the statement—

"WE KNOW THAT THERE IS ALSO A HELL."

For allowing that "Hades" is the place of departed spirits, yet Jesus said, "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke xvi. 23); and if you say that is a parable and a figure, we say, Yes—a figure, but of what? The same figure that tells of the bliss of Lazarus, tells also of the woe of Dives, and this in his unclothed state, his spirit's woe, and its eternity—a great gulf *fixed*.

And allowing that Gehenna is drawn from the valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem, where they

kept constant fires to burn all offal, and that it is also a figure,—of what is it a figure? Jesus says, "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" (Matt. x. 28); and "Fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say unto you, Fear him!" (Luke xii. 5). As the bodies of beasts were cast into the fires of the valley of Hinnom, where the worm abounded, so the bodies and souls of men who refuse God's mercy are cast where it is said "their worm *dieth not*, and their fire is *not quenched*" (Mark ix. 44, &c.).

But enough, reader, enough! We will dwell no longer on the solemn theme. A believer needs not to be convinced of the truth of it; a rejecter *will not*. Of such the Lord says, "How can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna?" (Matt. xxiii. 33). But if some doubter has been arrested we will turn now with such to the gospel. It is contained in the first four of the above statements.

Scripture says as to the first, that "Jesus . . . was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9). Can you say "For *me*"? This is faith's work.

It further states that He has entered "into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). Can you say "For *me*"?

It says again, "We have such a High Priest who is set at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. viii. 8). Have *you*?

Further, He tells us of heaven. "*He* who came

down from heaven, and has ascended up again to heaven, and is now in heaven" (John iii. 13), where also all believers soon will be with Him (1 Thess. iv. 17). Will you?

Finally, He who *knows* has further drawn back the screen from the unseen world, and disclosed to us the awful fact that there is a hell, into which all who reject His gracious overtures will be cast with the devil and his angels. Oh! my reader, are you able to say, in the consciousness of the truth of it, "I shall not be there!"

If so, you may substitute for the statements at the head of the paper the following:—

I *believe* that Christ left all the glory of heaven to come to earth to die for *me*.

I *believe* that He has gone up where He was before.

I *believe* that He lives in heaven *my* great High Priest.

I *believe* there is a heaven.

I *believe* that there is also a hell.

I *know* that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. v. 1).

"Eternal is our rest,
O Christ of God, in Thee!
Now of Thy peace, Thy joy possessed,
We wait Thy face to see;
Now to the Father's heart received,
We *know* in whom we have believed."

G. J. S.

CHRIST'S DEATH—SALVATION AND FOOD.

(Notes of an Address on 2 KINGS vi. 24-33, vii. 1-20, given in Edinburgh in October 1899.)



DARESAY a great part of those present have some acquaintance with Scripture, and one has to count upon that. If I were attempting to address a company of heathen perfectly ignorant of the Scripture, I could not talk to them as I would to you. One is entitled in Christendom to count on a certain acquaintance with Scripture.

At the time to which the passage I read relates there were two very striking prophets. They stand out in a way in which no other prophets stand out. They were not prophets of Judah. Almost all the prophets prophesied in Judah. These two were prophets of Israel. I refer to Elijah and Elisha, who were raised up in a time of peculiar darkness in the midst of Israel. Their ministry too was in character entirely different. Elijah was raised up to vindicate the claims of Jehovah, and to challenge the people in regard to their departure from Him, and on that account he was very much a minister of righteousness, akin to John the Baptist. Elisha, on the other hand, represented the ministry of grace, and superseded Elijah. He got a double portion of Elijah's spirit, that is the portion of a first-born. Elijah's mission,

although it vindicated God, failed in regard to the people; that character of ministry was ineffectual for them. Then the mercy of God came in with Elisha, and in result the people get deliverance from their enemies—the Syrians. I have said this because it enables you to see how that in Elisha you get remarkable illustrations of the gospel.

The incident I have just read is a very pathetic one. You can hardly hear it without being moved, and in it we get a foreshadowing of God's ways in the gospel.

The evangelist is the bearer of glad tidings. These four leprous men were evangelists. I think they reasoned in a natural way, but I am inclined to sympathise with them. They were getting the benefit of all the spoil of the Syrians, and they felt that if they held their peace some mischief would follow.

I want to speak of two things in pointing out how the grace of God came in. You get the intervention of God in mercy on the one hand, but a striking picture of the condition of the people on the other. Now I make but one or two remarks in regard to the people in Samaria. They were under two evils. There was dearth within, and the fear of death without. This has often been heard of in the history of men, but nevertheless few of us can conceive the horrors of such a state of things; dearth within, and the fear of death without. The Israelites had no power; they could not raise the siege; they were no

match for the Syrians. Then we have the intervention of God, and the effect of it is this; in the place of the enemy's power, in the place of dearth there God brings in abundance. That is the way of God in grace. It is not only that the enemy is scared away, but that where there was the enemy, there God brings in abundance of spoil for Samaria. It was perhaps a reproach to the people in the city, that unclean men should be the bearers of glad tidings. They were leprous, but were nevertheless the bearers of good tidings to the city.

I pass on now to show the application of this incident to men as in the world. I know well what the condition of men is. Appearances are kept up. The world lives by the keeping up of appearances. But if you get beneath the appearances, you find that the state of the people in Samaria describes the condition of the people of this world. There is moral dearth within, and the power of death without. There are few people who care to look death in the face. Death carries its terrors with it, and rightly too. One cannot express this too strongly. It is the judgment of God on man, consequent on sin. I refuse entirely human ideas as to what death is due to. It is the judgment of God upon sin, and exists with the terrors of judgment beyond. It is the end of all hope of man here, howsoever God may have opened the door of hope to him beyond. What hope has man in death? If a man has accumulated a fortune, in death he has to leave it. I have known

many cases of that in my life. Man brought nothing into the world, and can certainly take nothing out.

Everything connected with human life on earth must be left behind. All that gives character and pleasure to human life is broken up in death. Death is the severing of every human tie. Human ties are connected with human life here, and every such tie with the affections connected with it closes in death. There may be tender remembrances, but the ties will never be renewed, for the simple reason that they belong to life in this world.

Now that is what death is, and "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Death is spoken of in Scripture as the last enemy to be destroyed. It is a great enemy to man.

Then, as to the food of their minds, men are very like the prodigal we read about in Luke xv. So long as he had substance left all went very well, but when that was gone then came the time of destitution. He would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, the food of the unclean. Do you think that novel-reading ever really brought rest or comfort or satisfaction to a man? I will tell you what people live upon nowadays. They live upon excitement, and they get no real rest or satisfaction, and God does not intend them to find food or satisfaction in husks. Depend upon it there is no bread except in that which is of God. Christ is the living bread that

came down from heaven for man. That bread is from God, and there can be no bread in that which leaves God out. The literature of the world ministers largely to excitement and sin; it takes up the attention of people, but it is the food and proof of moral death. That is all I say upon that subject.

What I bring before you now is the intervention of God. God has in grace come in, and provided salvation for men. God has made known in Christ His righteousness, in order that He might secure salvation for man. I cannot conceive a greater expression of grace on the part of God than that He should prepare for man salvation. And not simply a future but a present salvation. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." I warn every one not to be indifferent to this. You may depend upon it that there never was a better moment to consider the matter than now. There never will be a more appropriate moment than the present. I want you to consider the grace of God which has brought salvation to all men. The fact is that the blessed Son of God became man, and went into death for two things—That He might destroy the power of the enemy, that is the power of death, and that His death might be food for men. He annulled death, for if the Son of God went into death there must certainly be a way out to life. It was impossible that He could go into death without there being a way out, and He died, too,

in order that God's righteousness and love might be declared, that thus there might be food for man. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judges xiv. 14). The death of Christ is the stronghold of my soul, There the power of death was broken. All God's purposes of blessing were established in righteousness in the death of Christ.

I go a point further—God raised Him from the dead. It was impossible that He should be holden of death. But God raised Him from the dead, that He might be a covering for men. Men want a covering before God. No man can stand before God in his nakedness, for "in thy sight shall no man living be justified." It is futile for any man to think that he can stand before God in his nakedness. Man will have to stand before God in the day of judgment when the throne is set. But heaven and earth flee away, and what about man in that day? The resurrection of Christ has provided on the part of God a covering, so that man might be before Him, hidden in Christ. In the beginning, when sin first came into the world, Adam and Eve made aprons of fig leaves, and hid themselves in the trees of the garden. They knew they could not stand in the sight of God. God, however, provided for them a covering. He clothed them in coats of skin. Not only has Jesus been "delivered for our offences, but he was raised again for our justification." That is that man might stand covered in the sight of God; that he

might have Christ for righteousness in God's presence.

One point more. Not only did Christ suffer and rise, but He went to the right hand of God that there might be salvation for men down here upon earth ; so that man might not have to wait for the coming of the Lord to bring salvation to him, but that he might have present salvation in the confession of Christ as Lord. The Holy Ghost has come to bring light into the world as to what has transpired in heaven. The very Jesus who was crucified here has been exalted in heaven, and the Holy Ghost has in consequence brought salvation to man, and there has been salvation here for man, in the presence here of the Holy Ghost, ever since.

The people of Samaria would have been very foolish if they had disregarded the good tidings of the four leprous men. If God sends good tidings to you it is mad of you to despise them. I am not speaking of myths or fables when I speak of the death and resurrection of Christ. The Old Testament looked forward to it. The very existence of Christianity is witness to it. Christ has been raised from the dead, and the Holy Ghost has come from heaven to show His glory, and that salvation is free for you in His name. The grace of God has been expressed to us in the death of Christ, and that grace has brought salvation within reach of all men. It is for you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ whom God raised from the dead. "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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ~~For the~~ Scripture saith, "Whoso believeth in him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. x. 9-11).

People, alas! are often ashamed. They are terrified of the power of the world, and move in the fear of man. "The fear of man bringeth a snare." And the world is the instrument ~~of~~ the devil to blind the minds of men in order that ~~they~~ may not see the glory of the Lord. ~~Mark this,~~ everything will soon have to give way before the glory of the Lord. But in the meantime the tidings of the glory of the Lord have brought salvation to all who believe. And faith means not only salvation from the enemy, but abundance of food for the soul, that which ministers satisfaction and rest to the soul, because it brings you into the region of love.

Do not let anything stand between your soul and Christ. Christ is set before you. Then do not let the fear of man, or the power of the devil, come between your soul and Christ.

"When your eye alone can view
Jesus on the cross for you,
Meeting there the wrath of God,
Giving there His own life's blood,
Then, and not till then, you'll know
What the grace God can bestow."

THE LAST LINES OF A LAST SONG.

"Is there beyond the silent night
An endless day?
Is death a door that leads to light?
We cannot say.
The tongueless secret locked in fate—
We do not know; we hope and wait."



UCH are the last lines of the last song penned by Colonel Robert Ingersoll, whose marvellous eloquence, fine presence, open-handed generosity, lofty moral sentiments, and pure life combined to make him the most popular exponent of infidelity in the United States of America.

Our steamer had just arrived from Jamaica to New York. The Customs officials brought the newspapers containing the news of Colonel Ingersoll's death, and the account of his cremation.

In reading the account of the funeral, one was struck by the expression of hopeless, helpless sorrow betrayed by those who had shared with him his freethought.

And his last lines of poetry, beautifully and chastely expressed, but show the sad doubt and shadow such a system as his gave to one who was nearing the grave—no joy, no certainty is contained in them. The secret of the future is im-

penetrable for him, for it is a "tongueless secret." It is as silent as the silent Sphinx.

His death thrilled America. Well it might. Christians mourned for the infidel son of a Christian minister. Infidels mourned their chief, with none brilliant enough to take his place. But what at the bottom thrilled them most, probably, was that Ingersoll had perhaps found out at last "the tongueless secret." The secret for him had no tongue this side of the grave, but on the other how did it speak, if speak it did?

Was Ingersoll dead, his spirit perished, annihilated? Was he done with, like a dog, or "is death a door that leads to light?" The living infidel, for the moment brought into the presence of death in its most dramatic form, was thrilled, and well he might. Might death not be a door to lead the soul of Ingersoll into light, even the light, least expected, of a judgment throne, where the Creator would settle accounts with one bold enough to doubt His existence, spite of the overwhelming testimony in land and sea and sky, that none but the very blind must see and the dead be conscious of; with one who dared to ridicule His holy Word, and use the very powers He had endowed him with to poison the minds of thousands against His truth; with one whose earlier pages were defiant, defiling, debasing, and degrading.

True, in later years he dropped the bold bantering of Scripture, and gave classical lectures on Shakespeare. Was it that Ingersoll even in life

was secretly thrilled as he thought of death, and what *might* be after death? Or was his conscience ever smitten as he himself perhaps doubted the doubts he had raised in the minds of thousands? What a responsibility to go into the presence of God with? The contemplation of it is enough to make one shudder. What must it be for the unhappy man!

Outwardly he had evidently shaken off all restraint God-ward or man-ward; self-sufficient, yet God held the breath of his nostrils in His hand, till He allowed apoplexy to strike him down.

In the same poem he wrote—

“ We have no master on the land,
No king in air,
Without a manacle we stand,
Without a prayer,
Without a fear of coming night,
We seek the truth, we love the light.”

“ *Without a prayer.*” A creature, yet self-sufficient, and the Creator's existence having no reference to him. Dying, heir to aches and pains, weakness and dissolution, sorrow and death—yet “ *without a prayer.*” What an attitude! Incomprehensible!

But we would turn from the dead man. He is past our words, beyond our reach. God alone has to do with him now. We would turn from the dead man to the living—to YOU.

YOU are journeying on. Death lies before YOU. YOU have sinned, and after death is the judgment.

Your inmost soul answers that this is true. We care not whether you be a bold infidel, a careless worldling, a mere pleasure-hunter, or a devotee of the forms and ceremonies of religion, but we would earnestly ask you to wake up to the fact that as a creature you must give an account of yourself to God, that sin must be punished, that you must face death and God.

And we would tell you, not as a mere historical fact, but as something that is *vital*ly important to you, that there is a Saviour for you—One who once passed through death and judgment for sinners, but is NOW at God's right hand in glory, willing and able to save you.

You may treat these things lightly and coldly, but we should in sober sense advise you not to do so. You may do it now—you may regret it ~~once~~, and that once may cover eternity. Beware!

We turn from the cold negations of blind infidelity, infidelity pathetically groping to the last for that which God would reveal, but which she will not receive. We turn with relief from it to the story of love—aye, even God's love, whose "grace reigns through righteousness," who willeth not the death of a sinner.

Let the *warm* light of such a love illuminate *your* heart, and win your affections for Him whose love it is; and may your conscience find rest in that work which satisfies God, even the ~~work~~ of His blessed Son upon the cross—full, most ~~divinely~~ full expression of both light and love.

"Grace reigns through righteousness." Most magnificent words! Ponder them till your conscience is reached and your heart is won, and you will welcome death indeed as "the door that leads to light"; for God has no "tongueless secret" whereby to puzzle His creatures, but His gospel is to be proclaimed to "every creature," world-wide, for the acceptance of "whosoever will."

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16).

A. J. P.

HIS LAST OPPORTUNITY.



ES, it was his last opportunity, and he availed himself of it; he got his soul saved; he trusted Christ as his Saviour, and he went on his way rejoicing—very soon to be called home to glory.

Unconverted reader, this may be your last opportunity of accepting Christ, of getting God's salvation, how will you treat it?

Some gospel services were being held in a Lancashire village, and one evening a young man, twenty-four years of age, passed and repassed the door of the mission-room several times. He seemed not to have courage to go inside, but crept softly up to the door and listened. The preacher was reading the Scriptures, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give

you rest" (Matt. xi. 28), and "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). The listener was arrested by the Word of God, and could not go away, but making a slight movement, the doorkeeper heard it, opened the door, and drew him inside.

After the service was over, and the audience gone, he made no attempt to leave, so a Christian present went and spoke to him. In reply, he said, "I want to be saved, here, and now." One of the young men connected with the mission stayed with him, and, as hour after hour passed, the man's agony of soul increased, for he was desperately in earnest. The Christian youth read several scriptures, prayed fervently, and spoke to him, but he could not lay hold of the gospel, and everything seemed dark, till after a long pause, the Lord's words, "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John x. 28), were read to him. The man then cried out, "I've got it, I see it, I've got it now." Light broke in upon his soul, and he went on his way filled with joy and peace in believing.

It was now the early hours of the morning, and he started his daily work at the quarries shortly after six. About half-past seven a huge mass of rock fell and killed him instantly. He was hurled into eternity without a moment's notice, but through the grace of God had been saved just in time.

Now, my reader, how do you stand with regard

to eternity—are you ready or unready? If unready, I would solemnly warn you. The eternal destiny of your precious soul is at stake, beware! If you trifle with these great realities, and miss God's great salvation, there will be nothing but His righteous judgment and fiery indignation for your eternal portion, the blackness of darkness for your everlasting abode, where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Thank God you are yet within the reach of mercy, salvation has been procured at the cost of the precious life's blood of the Son of God, and is now offered to you through Him. He can save you righteously, for He has died for the ungodly, and by virtue of His blessed death and glorious resurrection you can be forgiven, justified and brought into peace with God. What a glorious Saviour! will you not trust Him?

You cannot call another day your own. Little did this young man think that in a few hours he would be in eternity, and the time draws nigh when you will have to go, perhaps before another sunrise. Are you still unsaved? Oh! we plead with you, be wise, ere the shadow of death crosses your path, come to Christ, He will receive you, trust Him, confess Him as your Lord and Saviour, and you shall be eternally saved.

“ ‘One Mediator,’ throned above,
Bears witness God is light and love ;
None but the Son sets sinners free,
‘Come now,’ He saith, ‘come unto Me.’ ”

A TORN PAGE.



"HAVE some good news for you! something I know you will be glad to hear."

The words were spoken by a happy-looking young woman of some twenty summers, and were addressed to her companion, somewhat of her own age.

The two were standing at the extreme end of a large show-room, in an establishment where both were employed. The quiet of the dinner hour had taken the place of the busy rush of the morning, and M——, wishful to inform her friend of her news, went on, a soft light shining in her eyes, as she said, "I am saved, and so happy, I felt I must tell you." Very joyfully was the glad news received by her friend, who had often spoken to M—— about her soul, and had long been praying for her conversion.

"Tell me how it came about, I am anxious to hear," said A——.

"Well," resumed M——, "for some time past I have been very unhappy, and longed to know Jesus as my Saviour, but there has seemed to be such a barrier, which now, it is plain, lay with myself. However, yesterday being Sunday, it was my turn to stay in, while the rest went to church, and feeling very miserable, and wondering if ever I would have the knowledge of my sins forgiven, I went out of the house into the shed, to get some

fresh kindling for the fire. There my eye lighted on a scrap of paper at my feet. Feeling impelled to pick it up, I read these words, '*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*' It was a torn page of Scripture, and though I had read those words many times before, it came to me in power, as I saw it all in a way I had never done before. Was I not heavy laden, and in need of rest? And again those words '*Come unto me!*' How sweet they sounded, and I just took Him at His word, and *came*. It was so simple, all my struggles ceased, and I found rest and peace in Jesus. How full was my heart as I left the place, which had become, as it were, the gate of heaven to my soul. That scrap of paper I shall preserve as a treasure, being the voice of the Lord to me."

Dear reader, I stop here, but would remind you, that God has a voice for you—oh, hear it! It comes in many different ways, as it sounds forth so clearly, so sweetly, "*Come unto me!*" It may be your *last opportunity*. *Come now!*

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 '*Come unto Me and rest ;*
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary, and worn, and sad ;
I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He has made me glad."

ARE YOU INSURED ?



MOST householders know what it is to have a visit from an insurance agent. A short time ago one of them called on a certain lady, and in the usual way began pressing her to have her life insured. After he had about

exhausted all the arguments which he could bring to bear upon her, and saw that it was to be useless, he asked if the furniture was insured. "No," answered the lady. "What!" he exclaimed, "have you nothing insured?" "No," again came the answer, "nothing for this world, but *everything for the next*." Of course the agent did not care to pursue the subject any further, and took his departure.

We could not, however, help thinking when we heard of it, what a blessed thing it was to be able to give such an answer. Dear reader, might we put the oft-repeated question to you, "Are you insured?" We do not mean your life, as it is generally understood, nor your house, or furniture—in fact, we do not ask whether you have anything insured for this world, but in all affection we would ask, "Are you insured for the next?"

Are you one of those who, through grace, can say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of

God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1).

This is the best insurance that we know of. That word "*eternal*" makes it worth more than all the insurance companies in the world. Perhaps you think this questionable, considering that one fire and life company advertise their accumulated funds as being over thirteen millions.

That certainly seems to be a sure concern. Well, dear friend, let us suppose you have an interest in that company. It may be your life, your house, and furniture are all insured. Surely you might go about day after day with an easy mind as far as these things are concerned; but in spite of all your forethought you have not gone to the root of the matter; for there is a day coming, and coming soon, when not only your house and furniture, but the insurance company, with its thirteen millions, will all disappear. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. iii. 10).

Seeing then, dear friend, the uncertainty of all that is on earth, would it not be better for you to be insured in the heavenly company? The conditions are easy, sure, and lasting. If you would have an interest in that company, you must have an interest in Christ. Do you know Him?—Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Are you a sinner? If so,

put out the hand of faith, and take Christ as your Saviour. He will incorporate you with the heavenly company, which will last for ever. The policy, which is the precious blood of Christ, will entitle you to a share in all the benefits of the company, and it is free. There are no yearly premiums to be kept up. No, all is of grace, because all of God. It is just like God. He delights in grace.

Dear reader, we would press it upon you again in closing: Whatever else you may have a share in, be sure you have a share in this company. 'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Mark viii. 36).

A. C.

"BE IT KNOWN."



O you be it known,
 That JESUS ALONE,
 Can SAVE a poor sinner from hell!
 His life-blood was spilt,
 To cleanse from all guilt;
 The vilest He will not repel.

A Saviour you NEED,
 From sin to be freed,
 If heav'n with its joys you would gain!
 A sinner confess'd,
 You NOW may be bless'd,
 And life everlasting obtain.

It is not by works ;
It is not by tears ;
It is not by penance nor pray'rs :
It's through the work DONE,
By God's blessed Son,
Salvation to ALL God declares.

O turn not away,
For brief is thy day,
And JUDGMENT IS COMING apace !
For Christ NOW decide ;
For sinners He died,
And lingers in infinite grace.

But soon He'll appear !
The moment is near,
When Jesus from heav'n will descend :
HIS OWN He will take,
Asleep or awake,
Eternity with Him to spend.

But those who are left,
Of hope then bereft,
What sorrow and anguish await !
The Saviour they'll see ;
THEIR JUDGE, He will be ;
For mercy they'll plead, but—TOO LATE !!

CAUGHT UNAWARES.



“**C**ATCH me going to hear any of these upstart preachers. What do they know about the Bible? Men that have never been at the university? No! When I go to a preaching, I go and hear a man that can preach; a man that has gone through a proper university training for the ministry. As long as I am within reach of hearing a man like our own minister, who has been educationally fitted to fill a pulpit, you will not catch me spending my time listening to a mere get-up preacher like Mr S——.”

Thus retorted J——, after being pleaded with to come and hear a servant of God who had been used for the conversion of many sinners in various parts of the English and Scottish borders.

In response to an invitation, the preacher had come to a town in Northumberland, where a blessed work of God took place. Many a poor sinner was led to feel his load of guilt, which brought him to the feet of the precious Saviour, to hear from His blessed lips those soul-emancipating words that fell on the ears of “the sinner of the city”—“Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke vii. 48-50). Blessed! yes, thrice-blessed result this is, of going into His presence, with *nothing*—absolutely NOTHING—to commend you to Him, but your SINS, and your

deep *need* of Him as a poor sinner. Have you, dear reader, been there in that way? Oh! think of what that poor outcast sinner carried away with her from His blessed presence! "SINS FORGIVEN!" "SAVED!" "PEACE!" what a threefold treasure! Well may we exclaim, "Happy woman! happy though despised and poor."

Does blessedness like this not make you long to taste it? If so, thank God it can be yours *now*. If you approach Him as she did—a poor, *needy* sinner, I will give you a guarantee, that you will find His heart of love the very same to-day, towards the poor sinner, as it was when these blessed words first came from His lips. I have been saved well-nigh thirty years, and have conversed with many an one during that time, and let me say this, to the credit and honour of my Lord, I have never yet found one who was able to tell me he had gone to Jesus as a *lost, helpless* sinner, and He would not forgive Him. No, not one! I should have been surprised if I had; both from what I know of Him myself, and from His own blessed promise, "*Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out*" (John vi. 37).

The subject of the present narrative, J——, was a respectable young man, and a member and regular attender of the Presbyterian Church, and, as the sequel will show, was much more bigoted than his minister, for he did not keep himself entirely aloof from these special meetings. But, notwithstanding all the influence that was brought to bear

upon him by converted relatives, friends, and even the elders of his church, J—— stuck to his guns:

"But there can be nothing wrong in going, surely, when our minister goes," they said.

"It does not matter who goes, I would not bow my mind to listen to such preachers. If the minister goes, he is the more of a fool to countenance any such meetings."

Thus did he stand on his own dignity, while crowds flocked to hear the Word of God preached with great power and earnestness, many of whom got saved; companions and friends of J——'s being amongst the number.

This, then, was his attitude towards the Lord's faithful servant as he walked in from the country, where he lived, one Sunday morning to his church. Being in good time, he sat waiting in his pew the arrival of the minister; but to his great surprise, when the hour came, there walked into the pulpit a strange gentleman, not wearing the "pulpit gown."

"Whoever can that be?" said J—— to himself, as he looked with wonder at the plainly-dressed occupant of the pulpit. What can be up with our minister? was the next question that arose in his mind. He had not to wait long, however, till both were answered by the announcement that "owing to the minister having been called from home the day previous, allowing no time to arrange for getting his place filled by another minister, and as Mr S—— was in the town, he had been asked to fill the pulpit for the day." This unpleasant in-

timation placed J—— in a rather awkward position. Had he known before he came who was to preach, he would either have stayed at home, or gone to some other church. But to rise and come out, now that the service had commenced, he felt would be making too great an exhibition of his hatred to the preacher, therefore he sat still.

Very soon he felt himself in a different spiritual atmosphere from what he had been accustomed to. The opening prayer—usually very formal—had for him a most terrifying ring about it, as the preacher pleaded earnestly and loudly to God to awaken any unsaved one present to a sense of the awful danger of his position as a lost sinner on the brink of an endless hell.

When all preliminaries were over, he opened his Bible, and gave out his solemn text from Jer. viii. 20, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." The preacher entered into his subject with all the solemnity that became a servant of God dealing with sinners in the light of eternity. He used his text as setting forth the despairing *wail* of the lost in hell, after having rejected all the offers of salvation they had had in their lifetime. He specially applied it to the people of the district, and particularly to his hearers, warning them not to let the present opportunity pass, when God was so distinctly working in their midst. If they did let it pass without getting saved, it might be their last, and he could assure them, they would bitterly

remember through all eternity, amidst the torments of hell, that they could have been saved "NOW," but would not; then would the language of his text be the unceasing wail of their souls—*"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."*

He had not long proceeded with his sermon till J—— forgot all his prejudice in the intense earnestness of the preacher, and the awfully solemn statements he made, about the fearful hell of all who died in their sins. Arrow after arrow from the Spirit's quiver entered his soul, till he was wounded to the heart's core. Every bit of his *dignity* had disappeared, as he now felt himself nothing but a VILE, WORTHLESS sinner, in great danger of falling into the hell he had heard so much of that morning.

Truly glad he was to hear intimated, at the end of the service, that Mr S—— would preach again that night. J—— was present in the hope of getting something to heal his wounded soul; but no, not yet. The Spirit who wounded him by the morning sermon, deepened that wound still further, making his case, in his own eyes, well-nigh hopeless.

The preacher soon left the district, leaving J—— still unrelieved from his burden of guilt. A few weeks after, another servant of God came, whom God greatly used for ministering to the need of anxious souls and young converts. Night after night J—— hurried into the side-room, where anxious souls were spoken to after the meeting, and

he was the last to leave it every night. Still the light of God's message of love and grace could find no entrance into his dark heart of sin and unbelief, till one night the preacher (who evidently thought he was depending too much upon his talk with him) left him sitting, without taking any notice of his presence. This action at first deeply wounded him, but, as he dwelt upon it, it dawned upon him that he must have given him up as a *hopeless* case. This so overwhelmed him, that he told some of the aged Christians, who had hung on till nearly every light was put out, that he would not leave till he was saved. This made them all go down on their knees, and pour out their souls to God to save him. While they were doing so, their cry was heard. He was enabled there and then to *rest* his sin-burdened soul on the blessed Saviour, and peace entered at once, and the blessed assurance that the One he had now trusted, had *saved* him. He rose to his feet, and took his place in the *ranks* of the redeemed.

Dear reader, are you in these *ranks*? Don't make a mistake—being a member of a church, or a "Christian Fellowship Association," or a "Sunday school teacher," or "Temperance advocate," will not give you a place in the ranks of the redeemed. Redemption is not by "good works," but by "blood," and that the "*blood of Christ*" (1 Peter i. 18, 19). May you be led at once to trust the One who shed it, and thereby know its all-cleansing power.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE SAVIOUR.

(Read LUKE ii. 8-20.)



ANY people think that in order to be converted they must go through a very wonderful process. Now I have been often struck with the simplicity of what is found here in the Word. The wonderful fact has come to pass that the Saviour, the Lord of Glory, has arrived in man's world, and no one knows it. Only God knows it. Heaven does not yet know it, earth does not know it, but God in His grace begins now to send out His glad tidings, and it is beautiful to observe that the people who first received the glad tidings (and it is true of most of the early conversions to the Saviour) were men fully occupied in business. Ah, I like to see a man converted when his heart is full of the world. Some people think they will turn to the Lord when they are tired of the world, but I think it is a grand thing when a man, full of the world's pleasures and business, hears tidings that turn him right round, and make him drop at once the thing he was most wrapped up in, to make room for the Saviour, and then begin to follow and serve Him.

So was it with these shepherds of whom we read here. They were keeping watch over their flocks

by night. Go out into that starlit scene, and see these men busy looking after their sheep, guarding them from wolves and thieves, going on with the dull routine of life, and as yet thinking not of the Saviour? But, "Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid." That is always the effect when God begins to deal with a man. The felt presence of God was made manifest. And that is the thing which I covet above all for my ministry, that God Himself will be with the message.

When the glory of God went away from the earth (Ezek. x.) it went step by step, as it were reluctantly. But what do I find here? The glory of the Lord revisits the earth in connection with the birth of the Saviour, the Son of God. God's Son had come from heaven to become man's Saviour. God's glory revisits man's earth, and the angels make haste to tell the good news to these shepherds in the stillness of that night lighted up with heavenly brightness. The brightest light that man could invent or manufacture would be but dusk compared with the brilliant glory which shone that night upon the plains of Bethlehem. No wonder these men were startled. "The glory of the Lord" turned night into day for the time, and we read "they were sore afraid." It is a fine thing when a man is wakened up, and begins to be afraid. The mark of an unregenerate man is that the fear of God is not before his eyes, but as

soon as a soul becomes conscious that God is speaking to him, that God is drawing near to him, and addressing him, that moment that soul begins to have this right, this holy fear. Do you know what the fear of God is? It is a fountain of life, it is the beginning of wisdom, the stepping stone to every blessing.

But immediately after we read that these shepherds were sore afraid, we find that the angel says to them, "Fear not." The moment a sense of the presence of God works the true fear of God in the soul, that moment the gospel comes and takes away the fear. Immediately, therefore, the angel says, "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." Here is the gospel proclaimed for the first time on the plains of Bethlehem. What is the good tidings that is going to produce great joy? Tidings of Christ. That always produces joy sooner or later. I never knew a man yet who was really converted to God who did not get great joy. I have known many a person *profess*, without getting any joy, but never one who really came to Christ. I remember a young lady saying to me once, "If I came to Christ, shouldn't I get great joy?" "Yes," I said; "I came, and I found great joy; have you come?" "I have been trying to come," was the reply. Ah, that is quite a different thing. The one trying to come, has not really come to Jesus.

Look at Samaria when Philip preached the gospel there: "There was great joy in that city"

(Acts viii.). When Christ is believed on, and received, there is always great joy, it could not be otherwise. I do not say that the first effect of the gospel is to make a man happy, but rather to make him wretched. And why? Because the gospel tells me of what God is, of His justice, of His righteousness, of His holiness, and it tells me that I am a guilty, ruined, lost sinner, that I am under the judgment of God; on my road to hell, hurrying on to meet judgment. Would that make a man happy? No. The first effect when a man is awakened, and begins to think seriously about eternity, is that he is not happy, but in distress. But I tell you what the effect is in heaven when a sinner listens to the gospel and repents; as Luke xv. puts it, there is "joy in heaven." Heaven begins to rejoice when the sinner begins to repent. If I may so say, when the sinner gets miserable heaven gets happy.

When the gospel comes to a man, and he learns himself a guilty sinner, unfit for God, that he cannot meet God's claims, and that God is righteous, and will not abate one iota of His righteousness to let him escape, the man begins to get wretched, and God begins to rejoice. He knows quite well that the man who is wretched to-day, the man who repents to-day, will certainly rejoice to-morrow, so He rejoices. The first effect when the gospel reaches a man is anxiety; it makes him serious; it raises the question of his sins, and guilt, and thus godly, right, and holy fear springs up. What is the next

result? The gospel removes the fear: God's perfect love casts out fear, because fear hath torment. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the propitiation for our sins."

Well, the angel brings these tidings to the shepherds! "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Oh, what a revelation! A Saviour born, a Saviour for you! I rejoice with great joy that I am privileged to tell you that there has been born in this world a Saviour. Have you appropriated Him? Is He yours? Do you believe on Him? Do you love Him?

He is not now in this world, I quite admit; He has gone back to heaven; He is at the right hand of the Father; but as He sits on the Father's throne, He is still the Saviour. I look up to the throne of God, and whom do I see? The Saviour of whom I read here in Luke ii. Having accomplished redemption, and finished the work which enables Him to act as Saviour, He has gone up to the right hand of God. It is a wonderful thing to find out that there is a living *man* in the glory of God, Jesus, who died and rose again. And therefore I can say to any poor sinner, no matter where I meet him, There is a Saviour in glory for you, if you will have Him. Fear not, troubled soul; fear not, anxious one—a Saviour is born unto you, which is Christ the Lord.

Then the angel goes on to say, "This shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." What is the result? No sooner has this blessed news come out than "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men." If men had not believed the news, angels had; if earth be indifferent, heaven is not. The heavenly hosts, so to speak, break all bounds, and join this angelic messenger who proclaimed the glad fact which was the fulfilment of the first part of that wonderful verse in First Timothy iii.: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh . . . seen of angels." They never saw Him before, but now the heavenly troops came trooping down to earth with deep joy. Heaven is full of ecstasy, and why? Because the unsolved riddle of four thousand years is now made clear. How is man to be saved? At length the news, the startling news goes up to heaven that the Son of God has come down to earth, that He has become a Man in order that He might die for lost man, and deliver him. I say it with reverence, beloved friends, that I believe heaven was filled with ecstasy over the manifestation of God down here as the Saviour of poor, guilty, lost man. As to earth, it was utterly indifferent.

Oh, sad and solemn truth! Heaven moved to its centre, and men upon earth, save these few shepherds, untouched. But thank God, they were

touched. As they see the glory of the Lord shining round about them, and this beautiful heavenly song falls upon their ears, what effect has this marvellous revelation upon them? They say one to another, "Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known to us." They are wise men, they are in earnest, they are a company of thoroughly awakened sinners, deeply anxious, and powerfully impressed by the tidings they have heard. There is a Saviour for them, and they have learnt where they can find Him. Let us *now* go, they say. Prudence might have said, "Don't be in a hurry, better wait till the morning, lest the wolves should come and steal the sheep;" but faith said, "Let us go *now*." When a man is anxious, he does not put off coming to Jesus, he does not wait till to-morrow. And if I tell you to-night that there is a Saviour in glory for you, do not you put off till to-morrow. What about the sheep? What good would the sheep be if you missed finding the Saviour? What good would the world, or gold, or business, or position, or pleasures, be to you if you missed Christ? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

There was no unbelieving "if" with these shepherds. They did not say, "Let us go now, and see if this thing has come to pass;" but, "Let us now go, and see this thing which *is come to pass*." And they came to Bethlehem, not with the slow laggard steps with which some sinners come to Jesus,

"They came with haste." Oh, sinner, wake up now; you have been too long coming to the Lord. I thank God that when the first gospel preaching was given on earth there were ready hearers, anxious listeners, and souls that were moved by it. "They came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." They found exactly what God had told them through the angel—the Saviour as a babe lying in a manger. "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." They were splendid young converts. They believed the gospel for themselves, and then went and told others about it.

And next they "returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." They had heard that the Saviour was born, they had heard where He was to be found, and they had acted upon the truth they had heard. And when they had heard, found, and seen, they went and told everybody else. And what did they say? Not only we have heard of the Saviour, but we have found the Saviour, we have seen Him. There was no hoping, or fearing, or doubting, or uncertainty. Beloved friends, if you have found the Saviour, go and tell others. It is a sweet thing when the gospel gets into a man, and the very best evidence that it has is this, that he tells others of it. He would like others to be as well off as himself: he cannot keep it in.

Well, you know, some people say, I never speak of these things. Ah, I am afraid it is because you have nothing to speak about. But I tell you this: if you get Christ in your heart, you will find that Christ will come out in testimony to others.

Now, my reader, let me urge you again, do not put off coming to the Saviour. On the same night that these shepherds heard the good news, they sought and found the Lord: they did not stop till they reached the spot where he was. They received Him, they believed on Him, they rejoiced and thanked God, and they told others of Him too. I do not want any better converts than we have in Luke ii. They are deeply and thoroughly impressed, they believe God's message, and they rest not till they have found Jesus.

Ah, my dear friend, have you found Jesus? If so, you have God's choicest treasure for your everlasting portion; and if you have not got Jesus, you are poor indeed even if you be the richest man in the town where you live: you are a guilty sinner on the road to an eternal hell. Oh, man, whoever you be, do not put your head on your pillow to-night without the Saviour; and then to-morrow, if God spares you, tell others, I have found the Saviour. That is the way to spread the gospel.

“Jesus! how much Thy name unfolds
To every opened ear!
The pardoned sinner's memory holds
None other half so dear.”

ROLAND'S HIDING-PLACE.



IN the reign of Louis XIV., a terrible religious war broke out in the mountain district of the Cevennes in the south of France, known variously as the war of the Camisards or the Huguenots. Repealing the Edict of Nantes, which had secured liberty of conscience and worship to all French subjects, the arm of oppression was again wielded against this people. Military power, backed by a corrupt priesthood, was set in motion to crush the Protestants. The sufferings of the people were so intense, that at last the spirit of open resistance was provoked, and numbers flew to arms. Many true Christians still counselled submission and peace, but as in most such cases, unconverted men, zealous for Protestantism and liberty, in a day of comparatively little light as to the mind of God, seeing nothing before them but imprisonment, torture, or a violent death, preferred to die sword in hand in the heat of battle. A terrible war broke out, stained by awful reprisals, and with fearful loss of life and suffering on both sides.

Later on, political circumstances changed, and notwithstanding all the efforts of their powerful foes, though thousands fell, and thousands more were driven beyond the frontiers, a large number still remained, whose descendants to this day hold outwardly to the reformed faith.

Being privileged recently, with another of the Lord's servants, to labour in the glad tidings in the midst of this population, many coming to hear in places, and the Lord blessing souls, we were naturally interested in their history. Finding on one occasion we were near the village of Mas Soubeyrand, where Roland Laporte, one of the prominent Camisard chiefs, had lived, we started off to visit it, distributing little gospel-books by the way. Arriving at an ancient and quaintly constructed house in the midst of the little village, in answer to our knock, an elderly woman, infirm with rheumatism, came to the door. Entering in, she showed us the historical cupboard in the corner of the old stone kitchen, known as the *Cachette de Roland* (or Roland's hiding-place). By a clever contrivance at the bottom of the cupboard, Roland, when hard pressed by Louis XIV.'s dragoons, disappeared into a kind of underground box, where he could remain curled up till the danger was over. His ancient Bible and his halbert and pistol are religiously preserved, for the Huguenots of these days, deeply imbued with Old Testament teaching, were of the fighting sort, and preferred to die by the sword, if needs be, for the faith which they professed, to being hung or broken on the wheel at Montpellier, or spending years as galley slaves at Marseilles.

Sitting down to talk with the old lady, who showed us her treasures, we found she was a lineal descendant of Roland's brother, bearing the same

surname, Laporte, and a bright old Christian. She gave a clear testimony to the faith which was in her, expressing strong confidence in the Saviour who loved her and gave Himself for her.

Dear reader, have you faith in the same precious Saviour, Christ in glory? Have you found a true refuge, an eternal hiding-place from every foe *in Him*? He died for all. The Word of God is sure as in the days of Huguenot suffering, and endureth for ever. That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and saved the chief one, is a *faithful saying*, and worthy of *all acceptation* (1 Tim. i. 15). Hence you may rely upon it without question, whoever you are, who may read these lines.

Though thousands of the poor Huguenots who suffered so terribly through the awful bigotry of their opponents, were probably only professors, no doubt a large number were also true sheep of the flock of Christ, saved through grace, by faith in His precious name. Many were against the fighting, and sought to submit their cause to the hands of a faithful God. If all had done the same, the results might have been very different. It is far better to trust in the Lord than in an arm of flesh. Numbers are now with the Lord, awaiting the glorious resurrection. Are *you* going to meet them in that bright day? No other title can avail you but the precious blood of Christ, shed for sinners, guilty and lost, for "without shedding of blood is *no remission of sins*" (Heb. ix. 22). And

it cleanseth us *from all sin* (1 John i. 7). A mere formal profession is worse than useless. But it is impossible to avail ourselves through faith of the infinite value of the blood of the holy Lamb of God offered in sacrifice for sin on the cross, and not be found among the saved ones. He is a tower of refuge and salvation, and every one who trusts in Him is eternally saved.

Now then, whilst 'tis called to-day, bow in self-judgment before God, and believe His testimony concerning His Son, and the infinite value of His precious blood, and most assuredly you shall pass an eternity of blessing with all His own in His glorious presence.

E. H. C.

"LIKE A DOG WITHOUT A MASTER."



HE above remarkable expression was used by one of the English champion cyclists, named H——, with whom I was thrown into company in Adelaide, S.A., and who was there on cycling business. Conversation brought out how little that which occupied him rendered the satisfaction he sought. Is there not in every man a sense of the need of a controlling power, which all his boasted independency cannot obliterate?

"I feel like a dog without a master," said he, in

answer to some interrogations as to what happiness such a life as his gave. He had been thrown from his cycle, and injured his collar-bone; indeed his friends thought him dying, but he had recovered, though he was still feeling the effects of the injury, and under treatment for it.

"Happy? No, I'm not happy," said he, "at least only at times, when the beer is in, but it all vanishes with the effect of this stimulant, and then there is the fear that such another disaster as I have encountered already may prove the last. I feel indeed while wandering over the world in pursuit of pleasure and excitement like a dog without a master."

I sought to present Christ to him as the alone source of happiness to man, and the only One who could possibly fill the blank his heart felt, and become a master to a poor wandering dog, and found him quite accessible to the truth, to which he listened eagerly.

But our brief interview soon closed, and we parted; I to go my way in seeking to serve my Master, however poorly; and he possibly still to feel his need of one. The next day he sailed for England in pursuit of fresh victories on the wheel.

Happening to take up a paper some months after, and looking down the English cablegrams, I saw that H——, still one of the champion cyclists, had been thrown from his wheel at a certain race and killed! This recalled the conversation which had

taken place less than twelve months back, and awoke many reflections in my heart.

Had he sought and found the Master he so sensibly needed? Or, had he continued in the service of that master, who tries, however ineffectually, to hide the bonds by which he leads his victims to hell? Was he, when he passed off this scene, consciously the free man of the Lord Jesus Christ? Or, was he unconsciously the bondsman of Satan, led captive by him for his will? God only knows.

Reader, you have lately entered upon a new year. How did you enter upon it? "Like a dog without a master?" Like the scavengers of the East described in Psalm lix. 15, which are more wolf than dog, who return at evening, and go round about the city, who wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied? Shall one of the months of the present year ring your knell? If so, how will you quit the year? How will you exchange time for eternity?

Ah! leave it not to chance! Avail yourself now of an offered Christ as Saviour, His blood for your sins; Himself for your heart, to satisfy your affections, and to control your wanderings here for His own glory. In other words, let Him be your Master.

No one can tell but He, how poor H—— passed off the scene (save H—— himself indeed), whether to be with a Master who loved him and gave Himself for him; or, whether to lift up his eyes in Hades

being in torment. But, my reader, you may know, if you think it worth your while to know, how it is with you *now*.

Do not put it off! The principles of God's judgment-seat are already made known. "There is no difference, for *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Therefore, dear reader, *you* have sinned and come short of His glory. Plead guilty to this *now* in the depths of your being before God, and you shall know *now* that you are "justified *freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24).

Then come peace, and grace, and glory! A Saviour; a Friend; a Lord (Master)! Then you shall no more complain as a dog without a master. Rather, like the Psalmist who knew his Master, you shall, in the words of the Psalm already referred to, say: "But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy" (Ps. lix. 16, 17).

If in such a case you pass from this scene during 1900, your friends may lift up their voices in thanksgiving, knowing that all wanderings are o'er, and rest and peace are yours for ever.

Reader! accept the Lord Jesus Christ as thy Master. He will engage thee!

G. J. S.

"JUDGMENT TO COME."



ELIX, the Roman governor, sent for Paul his prisoner, and heard him concerning "the faith in Christ." The result was that Felix trembled. What was there in "the faith in Christ" to produce this tremor? What caused the proud

Roman to quail?

He wished to learn the doctrines of a faith which was daily spreading and becoming more influential. Wherein lay the charm? What was the secret which made its confessors so bold?

Doubtless Felix had prepared himself for a disquisition on a peculiar system of religious philosophy, a quiet and quieting lullaby of wisdom, in which were hidden ideas of love and laxity, or perhaps, a plan of sedition and tumult. What could this faith be? He was full of curiosity. He had obtained, together with his wife—the adulterous Drusilla—a private audience of Paul. He listened, he learned, he trembled. Did Paul disclose the mysteries of the faith? Did he announce all the treasures of that Christianity of which he was a steward? Did he preach the gospel in its rich wealth of saving grace?

Well, Paul was a wise master-builder, and knew perfectly how to do his work.

He had before him, in this private interview,

two specially guilty people—sinners of no ordinary type. Their position was high, their moral character very low. This honoured servant of Christ was not there to curry favour, or to seek, by false and flattering terms, to obtain a relaxation of his punishment. It was not for him to condone sin, or to speak unfaithfully.

Here were two souls, immortal, responsible to God, and fully guilty.

To them he would present no sentimental theory of a mercy that could act without judgment, or of a salvation that could be had without repentance. He had facts and not theories to deal with. He had God before his mind, and sin and eternity, and guilty souls. He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come—plain, solid, awful facts! and, as he reasoned, Felix trembled!

And why?

Unrighteousness and intemperance are followed by "judgment to come," as certainly as day is followed by night.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Felix was both unrighteous and intemperate—his conscience cried aloud—the evidence of his guilt was at his side—and hence, all too plainly, "judgment to come" was his inevitable doom. This he saw, and he was "filled with fear."

Is there any evidence of his repenting? Alas, no!

Fear and repentance are far from being identical. Devils trembled. He procrastinated, and trifled,

and hoped for mercy. He left both Paul and his own conscience bound. Of what use to a man, in such a condition, would have been the gospel of salvation? He was not sick, nor did he need a physician! He was not broken down under a true and penitential acknowledgment of his guilt, nor did he cry for pardon!

Paul was divinely wise in driving home the fact of "judgment to come"!

Guilt, and the Bar of God, the sinner, and the great White Throne go together.

Responsibility and "judgment to come" are correlative.

There are times when it is well and wise to preach "the faith in Christ," and to show that, at His cross, judgment was passed on man, and that there the race reached its end, morally speaking, before God, so that from that, as a new starting point, God begins wholly afresh in the work of a new creation; but for the apprehension of this truth, souls must be subjects of grace already. How could a Felix appreciate such deliverance? No, "judgment to come" is a truth justly preparatory to all others, and the example of the apostle may well be followed by us in dealing with all, whether outwardly guilty or not, who have never truly repented before God.

Yes, reader, I beg you not to blind your eye or dull your conscience as to the fact of "judgment to come"!

To escape from that judgment, turn to Calvary,

and see One bearing our sins in His own body, so that by faith in Him, our blessed Substitute and Saviour, there might be "no condemnation" for us.

J. W. S.

"I WILL GO ALONE."



AND will you never go to a dance again because you are a *Christian*?"

The words were spoken indignantly by the owner of a handsome face, whose large, dark eyes were flashing their ire upon her sister, some two years her junior, who had lately been brought to know the Saviour's love, and was seeking to make it known. "Because," the speaker continued, "I think it is utter nonsense. There is *no* reason why you should not come with me as before."

K—— and M—— were in former times constantly together in all the gaieties which the village life afforded, but now a change had come over M——, for, since knowing Christ and His love, these things had no attraction for her, which was altogether unaccountable to her worldly sister, and hence the above conversation, to which M—— gently, but firmly, replied—"No, dear, I cannot go with you any longer; I could not. To do so would be dishonouring to Christ. I have no pleasure in the things of the world, and dear though you are to me, Christ is more dear; and I long for you too,

dear K——, to know the love of Christ—you would find the world's pleasures to be, as they are now to me, a vain and empty show."

Here M—— paused, and her sister quickly replied, her eyes again flashing angrily—"I am sure *I* do not want to be a Christian, if to be so means giving up everything! There's time enough when one is obliged, and if you cannot come with me *I will go alone!*"

Unsaved reader, there are many like poor deluded K——, and possibly you are one of the many, but if you are determined to have the world and its so-called pleasures, you, too, must "*go alone.*" How awful to be without Christ—oh, what utter loneliness without the knowledge of His love. What eternal loneliness when He rises and shuts to the door, and you, if unrepentant, will be outside, *alone* for ever, as far as Christ is concerned. *Nothing* then will avail—the world you sought will have gone, and the pleasures you courted will all, *all* have ended, and given place to pain and endless remorse.

If death should knock at your door now—he is a constant visitor here—how terrible for you if *still* a neglecter and rejecter. You will then have no choice, *alone* you *must* go into eternity.

Stop and consider. Will you go *alone*, or like Rebekah of old, when asked, "Wilt thou go with this man?" say as she said (beautiful answer), "*I will go!*" (Gen. xxiv. 58). I pray you decide for Christ *just* now.

"GOD IS FOR ME."

(Ps. lvi. 9.)



OD is for me," joyful tidings!
 Who aught to my charge shall lay?
 "It is God that justifieth,"
 And my guilt doth put away.

Blest to know that Christ, my Saviour,
 Bore my judgment on the tree,
 And that I, believing on Him,
 Have redemption, full and free.

Need I fear that He will fail me,
 Weak and worthless though I be?
 No, for with a love eternal,
 God, my Father, loveth me.

In His Christ He me hath chosen,
 Ere He spread abroad the skies;
 Ere He called forth light from darkness,
 I was precious in His eyes.

In His book of life were written,
 Earth's foundations long before,
 All the names of His redeemed,
 Though by nature vile and poor.

Love with us is now made perfect,
 Since from judgment we are free,
 In God's Christ are we accepted,
 "As He is," e'en "so are we."

Praise Him, praise our God and Father,
 Sing His matchless grace and love,
 Let all worship and adore Him,
 Who His boundless mercy prove.

THE THRONE AND THE ALTAR.

ISAIAH vi. 1-8.



IN this very sublime passage of Scripture, we notice two prominent objects, namely, the throne and the altar; and, moreover, we perceive the action of these two objects upon the soul of the prophet. The entire scene is full of interest and instruction. May we gaze upon it aright!

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." This was a solemn and soul-subduing sight. It is ever a serious matter for a sinner to find himself standing before the throne of God, with the unanswered claims of that throne bearing down upon his conscience. Isaiah found it to be so. The light of the throne revealed to him his true condition. And what was that light? It was the moral glory of Christ, as we read in the Gospel of John, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him" (chap. xii. 41). Christ is the perfect standard by which every one must be measured. It matters not what I may think of myself, nor yet what others may think about me: the question is, What am I as viewed in the presence of Christ? The law may tell me what I ought to be; conscience may tell me I am not that; but it is only when the bright beams of

Christ's glory pour themselves around me, that I am enabled to form a just estimate of what I am. Then it is that the hidden chambers of my heart are flung open, the secret springs of action are revealed, the deep foundations of character laid bare.

But perhaps my reader may feel disposed to ask, "What do you mean by the moral glory of Christ?" I mean the light which shone forth from Him in all His ways when He was down here in this dark world. It was this light that detected *man*, that disclosed what he was, that brought to light *all* that was in him. It was impossible for any one to escape the action of that light. It was a perfect blaze of divine purity, in view of which the seraphim could only cry out, "Holy, holy, holy!"

Need we marvel, then, if, when Isaiah saw himself in the light of that glory, he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone"? Nay; this was the proper utterance of one whose heart had been penetrated to its very centre by a light which makes all things perfectly manifest.

We have no reason to suppose that Isaiah was in any respect worse than his neighbours. We are not told that the catalogue of his sins was heavier or darker than that of thousands around him. He may have been, to all human appearance, just like others. But ah! my reader, only remember, I pray you, where the prophet stood when he exclaimed, "Woe is me!" It was not at the foot of the burning mount, when "the

ministration of death and condemnation" was given forth amid thunderings and lightnings, blackness, darkness, and tempest. It was not there he stood; though even there a Moses had to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake;" but it was in the presence of the glory of Christ, the Lord God of Israel, that our prophet stood when he saw himself to be "unclean" and "undone." Such was his condition when seen in the light which reveals men and things just as they are.

"I am undone." He does not say, "Woe is me! I am not what I ought to be." No; he saw deeper than this. He stood revealed in the power of a light which reaches to the most profound depths of the soul, and discloses "the thoughts and intents of the heart." Isaiah had never before seen himself in such a light—measured himself by such a rule—weighed himself in such a balance. He now saw himself standing in the presence of Jehovah's throne, without any ability whatever to meet the claims of that throne. He "saw Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up." He saw himself a helpless, ruined, guilty sinner, at an immeasurable distance from that throne, and from the Blessed One who sat thereon. He heard the cry of the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy;" and the only response which he could send back from the depths of a broken heart was, "Unclean, unclean, unclean." He beheld a gulf of guilt and uncleanness separating him from Jehovah which no effort of his could ever bridge. Thus it was with him,

in that solemn moment, when he gave forth that cry of a truly convicted soul, "Woe is me!" He was wholly engrossed with one thought, namely, his own utter ruin. He felt himself *a lost man*. He thought not of comparing himself with others, nor of seeking out some fellow-sinner worse than he. Ah, no! a divinely-convicted soul never thinks of such things. There is one grand, all-pervading idea, and that idea is embodied in the words, "I am undone."

And be it carefully noted by the reader, that the prophet, when under the convicting light [of the throne, is not occupied with what he had done or left undone. The question before his soul was not the evil he had done, or the good he had left undone. No; it was something far deeper than this. In a word, he was occupied, not with his *acts*, but with his *condition*. He says, "*I am*"—what? Defective in many things? Far behind in my duty? Deplorably short of what I ought to be? No. These and such-like confessions could never embody the experience of a heart on which the bright beams of Jehovah's throne had fallen in convicting power. True it is "we have done that which we ought not to have done, and left undone that which he ought to have done." But all this is merely the fruit of a nature which is radically corrupt; and when divine light breaks in upon us, it will always lead us to the *root*. It will not merely conduct us from leaf to leaf, or from branch to branch; but, passing down along

the trunk, it will lay bare the hidden roots and thinnest fibres of that nature which we inherit by birth from our first parents, and cause us to see that the whole thing is irremediably ruined. Then it is we are constrained to cry out, "Woe is me!" Not because my *conduct* has been defective, but my nature is undone.

Thus it was that Isaiah stood before Jehovah's throne. And, oh! what a place for a sinner to stand in! There are no excuses there—no palliating circumstances there—no qualifying clauses there—no blaming of men or things there. There is but one object seen there—seen in its guilt, its wretchedness, and its ruin, and that object is SELF; and as to that object the tale is easily told. It is all summed up in that most solemn, weighty, suggestive word, "UNDONE." Yes; self is undone. That is all that can be said about it. Do what you will with it, and you cannot make it out to be aught but a hopeless, undone thing; and the more speedily and thoroughly this is understood, the better.

Many take a long time to learn this foundation-truth. They have not, as it were, stood in the full blaze of the throne, and, as a consequence, they have not been led to cry out with sufficient depth, emphasis, or intensity, "I am undone!" It is the glory that shines from the throne which evokes the cry from the very depths of the soul. All who have ever stood before that throne have given utterance to the same confession; and it will

ever be found that just in proportion to our experience of the *light* of the *throne*, will be our experience of the *grace* of the *altar*. The two things invariably go together. In this day of *grace*, the throne and the altar are connected. In the day of *judgment* "the great white throne" will be seen without any altar. There will be no grace then. The *ruin* will then be seen without the *remedy*; and as for the *result*, it will be eternal perdition. Awful reality! Oh, reader, beware of having to meet the light of the throne without the provision of the altar!

This conducts us, naturally, to the second object in the interesting scene before us, namely, *the altar*. The very moment Isaiah gave utterance to the deep conviction of what he was, he was introduced to the divine provisions of God's altar. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

Here, then, we have the rich provisions of Jehovah's altar, which, be it well remembered, is seen in immediate connection with Jehovah's throne. The two things are intimately connected in the history and experience of every convicted and converted soul. The guilt which the throne detects, the altar removes. If in the light of the throne, one object is seen, namely, ruined, guilty,

undone self; then, in the light of the altar, one object is seen, namely, a full, precious, all-sufficient Christ. The remedy reaches to the full extent of the ruin, and the same light that reveals the one reveals the other, likewise. This gives settled repose to the conscience. God Himself has provided a remedy for all the ruin which the light of His throne has revealed. "*This hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.*" Isaiah was brought into personal contact with the sacrifice, and the immediate result was the perfect removal of *all* his iniquity—the perfect purgation of *all* his sin.

Not a single spot remained.

He could now stand in the light of that throne which had just detected and exposed his uncleanness, and know assuredly by that self-same light, that not a speck of uncleanness remained. The very same light which manifested his sin, made manifest also the purging efficacy of the blood.

Such, then, is the precious and beautiful connection between the throne and the altar—a connection which may be easily traced through the inspired volume, from Genesis to Revelation, and through the history of God's redeemed, from Adam down to the present moment. All who have been really brought to Jesus, have experienced the convicting light of the throne and the peace-giving virtues of the altar. All have been made to feel their ruin, and cry out, "I am undone!" and all

have been brought into personal contact with the sacrifice, and had their sin purged.

God's work is perfect. He convicts perfectly, and He purges perfectly. There is nothing superficial when He carries on His mighty work. The arrow of conviction penetrates to the very centre of the soul, only to be followed by the divine application of that blood which leaves not a stain upon the conscience; and the more deeply we are penetrated by the arrow, the deeper and more settled is our experience of the power of the blood. It is well to be thoroughly searched at the first—well to let the chambers of the heart be fully thrown open to the convicting action of the throne; for then we are sure to get a bolder grasp of that precious atoning blood that speaks peace to every believing heart.

And, my reader, let me ask you to pause here for a moment, and mark the peculiar *style* of the divine action in the case of the prophet.

We all know how much depends upon the way in which a thing is done.

A person may do me a favour, but he may do it in such a style as to do away with all the good of it. Now in the scene before us, we not only see a marvellous favour conferred, but conferred after such a fashion as to let us into the very secrets of the bosom of God. The divine remedy was not only applied to Isaiah's felt ruin, but applied in such a way as to let him know, assuredly, that the whole heart of God was in the application: "Then

flew one of the seraphims unto me." The rapidity of the movement speaks volumes. It tells us distinctly of Heaven's intense desire to tranquillise the convicted conscience, bind up the broken heart, and heal the wounded spirit. The energy of divine love gave swiftness to the seraphic messenger, as he winged his way down from Jehovah's throne to where a convicted sinner stood confessing himself "undone." What a scene! One of those very seraphim, that with veiled face stood above Jehovah's throne, crying "Holy, holy, holy," passes from that throne to the altar, and from the altar away down to the deep depths of a convicted sinner's ruin, there to apply the balmy virtues of a divine sacrifice. No sooner had the arrow from the throne wounded the heart, than the seraph from the altar "flew" to heal the wound. No sooner had the throne poured forth its flood of living light to reveal to the prophet the blackness of his guilt, than a tide of love rolled down upon him from the altar, and bore away upon its bosom every trace of that guilt. Such is the style—such the manner of the love of God to sinners! Who would not trust Him?

Beloved reader, whosoever you are, I feel there is a sacred link connecting us; and in the power of that link, and in earnest desire for the welfare of your immortal soul, permit me to ask you if you have experienced the action of the throne and the altar? Have you ever retired from all that false light which the enemy of your precious soul would

fling around you, in order to prevent your getting a true insight into your total ruin? Have you ever stood where Isaiah found himself when he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone"? Have you ever been brought to own from your own heart, "I have sinned"? (Job xxxiii.). If so, it is your privilege to enter this moment into the rich enjoyment of all that Christ has done for you on the cross.

You do not need to see any vision. You do not require to see a throne, an altar, a flying seraph. You have got the Word of God to assure you "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). That same Word also assures you that "all that believe *are* justified from *all* things" (Acts xiii. 39).

And is not this far better than ten thousand visions, or than ten thousand seraphim? Isaiah believed that his "iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged," when the angelic messenger told him so. And should you not believe that Jesus died for you, when the Word of God tells you so?

But perhaps you say, "How can I know that Jesus died for *me*?" I reply, How can any one know it? Simply by the Word of God. There is no other way of knowing anything. But you still object, "I do not see my name in the Word of God." No; and even though your name were mentioned, this would in no wise satisfy you, inasmuch as there might be hundreds bearing your name. But you see your state, your character, your condition. You see your photograph flung, with divine preci-

sion, upon the page of inspiration, by the action of that light which makes all things manifest.

Do you not own yourself to be a lost sinner? If so, the death of Christ applies itself as perfectly to you as the "live coal" did to Isaiah when the seraph declared to him, "This hath touched thy lips." The Word is, "If any say I have sinned." What then? He will send him to hell? No; but "He will deliver him." The very moment you take your true place, and cry out, "Undone!" all that Christ has done, and all that He is, becomes yours—yours now—yours for ever. You need not make any effort to improve your condition. Do what you will, and you cannot make yourself anything but undone. A single effort at improvement is but the evidence that you know not yet how bad, how incorrigibly and incurably bad you are. You are "undone," and, as such, you have but to stand still and see the salvation of God—a salvation, the foundation of which was wrought out over eighteen hundred years ago—a salvation which the Holy Ghost reveals on the authority of that Word which is settled for ever in heaven, and which God "has magnified above all His name." May the blessed Spirit lead you *now* to put your trust in the name of Jesus, that so, ere you lay down this paper, you may know that your "iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged"! Then you will be able to follow me, while, in a few closing words, I seek to unfold the practical result of all that has been engaging our attention.

We have seen the complete *ruin* of the sinner; we have seen the complete *remedy* in Christ; let us now look at the *result*, as exhibited in whole-hearted consecration to the service of God. Isaiah had nothing to do for salvation, but he had plenty to do for his Saviour. He had nothing to do to get his sins purged, but plenty to do for the One who had purged them. Now he gave unmistakable expression to his readiness to act for God, when, on hearing that a messenger was needed, he exclaimed, "Here am I; send me." This puts works in their proper place. The order is absolutely perfect. No one can do good works until he has experienced, in some degree, the action of the "throne" and the "altar." The light of the former must show him what he is, and the provisions of the latter must show him what Christ is, ere he can say, "Here am I; send me."

This is a settled, universal truth, established in every section of inspiration, and illustrated in the biography of the saints of God and of the servants of Christ, in every age, in every clime, in every condition. All have been brought to see their *ruin* in the light of the throne, to see the *remedy* in the provisions of the altar, ere they could exhibit the *result* in a life of practical devotedness. All this is from God the Father, through God the Son, by God the Holy Ghost—to whom be all the glory, world without end! Amen and Amen! C. H. M.

WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES.



WELL, I've done something for the poor blacks of this colony, and that'll tell something for me in that day."

The speaker was a Police Magistrate in one of the towns of Queensland; a shrewd man of position and

education too.

The topic of conversation was, as the reader may suppose from the above, what would stand a man in stead in the day when God should call "for every man's peculiar book"; when He would no longer brook delay, but call each to a settlement of the long outstanding question of the life here, and the deeds done in the body.

That which he referred to was no doubt commendable from a human standpoint, for there was, and is, certainly room for the improvement of the condition of the poor aboriginal inhabitants of these colonies; not only on account of their native degradation, but on account also of the way in which they have been treated through the lusts and cupidity of their white superiors who have taken possession of their lands; and naturally a man might boast himself somewhat if he *had* done something for them.

"But," was the rejoinder to this, "are you upon that ground *before God*? Do you think that your

good deeds will be put over against your bad deeds, and a balance struck which will decide your eternal destiny?"

"Of course I do," said he; "don't we read of being weighed in the balances?"

"Quite true, but you haven't finished. It reads thus: 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.'"

This was written of one who had impiously used the vessels of God's house for a drinking bout; but it speaks in solemn tones to every man who to-day has no other standing before God but that of his own responsibility.

Man thus before God is like the trees on a selection which has not long been taken up; they stand, for the time being, upright to look at, but they are all "rung," and it is only a question of a moment and they will fall. They stand upright now, but they are rung!* Dying!! Dead!!!

So are the men of the colonies, and of the world. It is written of them as of Belshazzar, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" (Dan. v. 25).

"And this is the interpretation of the thing" (v. 26).

"Mene: God hath numbered thy kingdom (and your days, reader!), and finished it" (them) (v. 26).

This is repeated, "because the thing is estab-

* A tree is said to be "rung" when a ring of its bark is cut clean off, which of course kills it.

lished by God, and God will *shortly* bring it to pass" (Gen. xli. 32).

"Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (v. 27).

"Peres: Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians" (v. 28).

Thus, the handwriting on the wall spake God's voice to Belshazzar; and thus God speaks to man at large to-day. There was of course that which was peculiar to Belshazzar in this, but which has its application to *all* to-day.

Unsaved reader, *thy* days are numbered.

"*Thou* art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

That which *thy* heart is set upon is passing to others.

But ere the execution of the sentence, which in Belshazzar's case occurred the *same night*, God is offering *mercy*.

Who will give up his supposed goodness, and *as a sinner* accept at God's hand a present settlement of the whole question of sins?

Mercy's full tide may be known now; but he that enters the scale to be weighed in that day will find the present sentence true, and he will *kick the beam*.

Reader, depend not upon your good deeds to outweigh your bad ones, but rather do as one did, who at first derived some hope from this source. "There," said he at last, "there, chuck 'em all together, they are all ONE!" Depend upon God's

mercy! But mercy can only flow to you through the death of another in your stead. That other was Christ, the Son of the Living God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved.*"

G. J. S.

PAUL, FESTUS, AND AGRIPPA.

"Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."—ACTS xxvi. 16-18.



HAT a wonderful commission! "To open their eyes." That is the first thing we need. I wonder if your eyes have ever been opened yet. When a sinner's eyes are opened he is conscious that he has no light and that he is in

darkness. A man may have never so good eyes, but he cannot see with them in the darkness, and he gropes about. That is just how I felt the night I was converted. I felt like a man groping in a dark night; I wanted light, I wanted truth, I wanted Christ, and I wanted salvation. I did not know how or where I was to get Him.

Let your eyes be opened, and you will soon find you are all wrong; that you are a sinner in your

sins, and that you are on the wrong road. It is a wonderful thing when a man is turned "from darkness to light." It is a great change. I quite understand that perhaps you do not think so, and I will tell you why. You have never gone through the change.

Now, my Christian friend, you, who were converted five years ago, what happened when you were converted? "I was in midnight darkness," you say, "when the glorious light of the gospel burst upon me. I saw that Jesus had loved me, and died for me; that He had forgiven me, and that through faith in His name, I got into peace and liberty."

Exactly so; and do you dare to tell me, my unsaved friend, that you do not believe that testimony? I will tell you why. You are in the darkness, and the very fact that you do not believe that you are, is the most powerful evidence that you are there. I will tell you why. I was once where you are; forty years ago, I was standing on the same ground as you are on this minute. I was a sinner in my sins. I do not mince matters. There are only two classes on earth—hell-bound sinners, and glory-bound saints. What makes the difference? One class is in sin, and unbelief; the other is in Christ, and all their sins are washed away in His precious blood. A great change took place in the moment of my conversion; it was as if I had slipped from darkness into light, and I have enjoyed the latter ever since.

It was a wonderful commission that Paul received, and I am quite clear upon this point, if the Lord had not known the necessity of it as regards the souls of men, He never would have given it. All need to be turned "from the power of Satan unto God." Every man is absolutely under the power of Satan, until he is under a sense of the grace of God. I hear some one say, I do not believe that. For many a long day, I did not believe it; but I believe it now, because I have learnt what the blessedness is of getting out of darkness into light, and of knowing the Saviour's delivering power.

What is the result when you are turned from Satan unto God? Your heart at once gets into the enjoyment of peace, in the knowledge that you are forgiven. The moment you turn from Satan to God, what do you get? The due reward of your sins? Judgment for your sins? No! You "receive forgiveness of sins." Think of that! What will you get, if you turn just now to the Saviour? You will get your sins forgiven. That is not to be lightly esteemed; but there is still more, for you receive "inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." That is, you get a portion and a place among God's people. You may think that too great and good a transition. Not so, and you cannot move too soon from the platform of the sinner on to the spot where the saint is, by grace. But you say, I thought the saints were all in heaven. A great many are; but there are a good many on earth. What! saints,

you say; I did not think people were saints on earth. Then you are mistaken, my friend. Saint is the family name; that is the name by which God's children are called in Scripture. The word is used by Ananias when he does not want to go to Saul. He says, "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem" (Acts ix. 13). Let a man turn to the Lord, and he is then and there given, though he may not immediately take, his place among the saints.

Friend, are you to be henceforth classed among the sinners, or among the saints? You say, I would not like to take the name of saint. Why? Because if I were to take the place, and be known as a saint, people would look for a saintly walk on my part. That is quite right; I do not object to that. If you accept Christ, there ought to be a walk and conversation becoming the gospel. Do not be afraid, young fellow-believer, you will find that if you follow the Lord He will help you. I do not mean to say that the Christian does not sin, but he is told not to (1 John ii. 1). His sins are forgiven the moment he becomes a believer, and if he should sin he has to go and confess all to God, as his Father. The gospel meets you where you are, as a sinner, through the atoning work of the Saviour; and through the precious blood of Jesus all your sins are washed away and forgiven, for the heart that trusts in Him gets all the benefit of the work He has done. I want you to see this, for

your help and comfort. Do not think that it is a mistake, if you are a Christian, to boldly confess that you are such. The nine-and-thirty years that have passed since I was converted, have been years of profound happiness, and joy. I will say more; the last year was the best, and I am expecting better still, as I get into my fortieth year. Let me encourage you, my friend.

When converted, Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but went out at once calling upon Jew and Gentile to repent, and turn to God. The Jews opposed him, but having "obtained help of God," he could say, "I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts xxvi. 22, 23).

As he went on with his tale, on the day he was arraigned before the Roman governor, and the Jewish king, Festus broke out. His conscience was a little bit touched; he felt that if he did not stop Paul, he would very likely be converted. What a mercy it would be if you were converted, and if you turned to the Lord. Listen to me. Come to J  sus; yield your heart to Him now. Do not be like the foolish king, and governor here. "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee

mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." What had he said? He had only told them of the Son of Man in glory. He knew his own sins were forgiven: he had been on the road to eternal judgment when he had been turned to God; and from that time forth he began to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and warned others to follow in his steps.

Jesus, risen from the dead, had commissioned him as a light-bearer. Thus commissioned to carry a light from God unto the world, he had with deathless energy gone on in His blessed service. Happy man! Splendid servant! You are a mad-man, says Festus. "I am not mad, most noble Festus," he emphatically but very courteously retorts. "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." Sometimes people have said of me, I think that man is mad. I wish you had only half my malady, my dear friend; from the bottom of my heart I wish that. Nay, I will go further—I would be deeply thankful if you had ten times as much fervour and earnestness for Christ as I, and God give it to you. If you had only half the peace and joy I have, you would be a downright happy man from this time forth, and I too speak the words of truth and soberness, when I affirm the blessedness of knowing and serving Christ.

Paul was quite sane as he spoke to Festus. What he was before he was converted, he tells us

himself: "And being *exceedingly mad* against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts xxvi. 11). Then he was mad, if you like, but, as a witness for Jesus, he was in his right mind. Oh! my reader, you come to Jesus now, and then bear witness for Him, and though your friends call you mad, never mind. You will be on the winning side of the field. The man who follows Christ is sure to win.

Hear Paul speak again: "I am not mad . . . but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner" (vers. 25, 26). Then he turns round on the king, and asks: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Almost! Ah! poor man, not altogether. Almost! Is that your position, my friend? I want to know have you believed on Jesus? Has He saved you, pardoned you, forgiven you? Or are you a miserable, procrastinating sinner, who will yet work your way into hell, with a determination worthy of a better cause? Men abound who cannot be in earnest; who may be touched by the gospel sometimes, yea even impressed, but yet let the whole thing pass away again. What a lot of followers Agrippa has! "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," said he to Paul, and so say all his

followers to the soul-seekers, who would fain win them for Christ.

Well did Paul reply, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both *almost*, and *altogether* such as I am, except these bonds" (ver. 29). That was a grand rejoinder, and I would like to say a word on it. "*Almost*" and "*altogether*" in this conjunction are like a coin of the realm. You have the Queen's head on one side, and on the reverse, some other design. What is the obverse of "*almost a Christian*"? Do not forget, it is "*altogether lost*." The soul that is only *almost* decided, is *altogether* lost. Oh, let me urge you, with all the fervour and affection of my soul, from this hour, be decided. What is wanted is decision. What you want, what all want, is deep, downright, decision of heart for Christ. God give it to you. Oh! do not continue to be "*almost a Christian*" any longer. Be "*altogether*" persuaded. I glory in being a Christian; may you do so too.

May God enable you to begin your Christian course now. You cannot be too devoted to Christ, and it is better far, be your life long or short, to be able to look back upon that life as spent in the service of the Lord. Forgive me, if I speak of myself. But if I had not come to the Lord nearly forty years ago, what should I have been doing all my life? I should simply have been serving the devil, sin, and the world, just pleasing myself, whereas now by grace, for all these years I have been seeking to serve Jesus, my blessed Saviour.

Oh! that He were your Saviour, and Lord, and Master, as well. In Him there is such greatness, such tenderness, such encouragement! I have a wonderful Master; and I commend Him to you. Oh! that He were yours.

Make up your mind now. On bended knee, before the Lord, yield yourself to Him, ere your head is on your pillow to-night. Turn, and say to Him, "Lord, I believe." "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" will not suffice. Away with the word "almost." Let "altogether persuaded" be the language of your soul. Let there be a true ring in your voice as you say: "Lord, I believe; I am decided. Christ for me, from this hour forth." God grant it, for His name's sake!

W. T. P. W.

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 compassed 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 your feeling of fear is a very just feeling in THE LIGHT 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 hath 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: who was **RAISED** from the dead, and is now **SEATED** at the right hand of God.

READER, DO YOU BELIEVE IN HIM?

J. M'D.

COME BACK.



SERVANT of God was returning home one dark night, after proclaiming the precious gospel in a neighbouring village. Owing to a dense fog, he lost the road, but wandered on hoping to gain the right track, when he heard some one shouting after him. He stopped and listened, when he heard the words, "Come back, come back!" uttered in the most earnest tones.

Presently he discerned a glimmer from a lantern, and next saw a figure approaching, crying out, "Come back, come back!" Heaving a sigh of relief, the caller exclaimed, "Thank God! a little farther, sir, and you would have been killed; *you were walking straight for the chalk-pit.*"

Unsaved reader, yet another call has reached you. Hurrying on you surely are, not to some dangerous chalk-pit, but to a never-ending hell. Unperceived its mouth yawns ahead of you, and earnestly we call, "Come back!" You may think the warning unnecessary, and that the preachers and writers are alarmists who see visions of judgment when judgment is afar off; but remember God has said, "He that being often reprovéd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." You may be the next to be

"SUDDENLY DESTROYED."

You may have heard of a man dropping down dead only the other day; and who knows but that death may pay you an unexpected visit and suddenly cut you off; and if unsaved, your case would be

"WITHOUT REMEDY."

To-day the offer of salvation, through Christ, is made to you. To-day the voice of mercy calls you back from the paths of sin into which you have wandered. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."

E. E. N.

"ONE SOWETH AND ANOTHER
REAPETH."

(JOHN iv. 37.)

CHAPTER I.



SUPPOSE you are well stocked with artillery for your summer holiday," said a friend as he shook my hand and said "Good-bye."

"Artillery," I replied ; "what do you mean ? I am not off shooting."

"Oh no, I referred to your usually well-stocked bag of tracts and books," said my friend.

"I am sorry to say that this time I purpose only to *visit* houses in the outlying districts. I am almost sceptical about the value of books and tracts ; I have distributed thousands, and I cannot say I have seen any good results, neither have I very definitely heard of any resulting from the hard work of others. I confess to being in such a difficulty about the matter, that on this holiday trip, at all events, I have none with me."

My friend looked his surprise, but merely said, "May God in His own way encourage you, both as to the distribution of tracts, and the proposed visits to the cottages."

Off we went, the whole family, and when we had comfortably settled down in our seaside lodgings,

I started off in search of the open doors, and to see if I could speak a word for the Master.

My first visit was to a small village, nestling amidst trees, down in a hollow where the river joined the sea. It was the ferrying station across the river. A brisk walk of about three miles from our apartments on the sea-front would bring me there. The route lay up the cliffs, across the green, through wooded lanes, and then came a burst of view, from the top of the hill, which lingers in one's memory. The sea sparkled on the right, down at our feet the river and the hamlet, and all around waving corn-fields and signs of God's goodness to His earth and creatures.

In one spot, where the woods broke away into open country, I noticed a farmhouse with many surrounding outbuildings, so clean and tidy, with well-clipped hedges, gravelled walks, and freshly-painted gates; fifty or so chestnut trees dotted over some grass land on one side, and a splendid fruit orchard on the other.

There was something about the whole place which fixed my attention, so clean, tidy, sober and well-to-do, and what was of still deeper interest to me, I espied amongst the chestnut trees a large round tent, and a notice board in the front telling of gospel services held nightly.

I felt half inclined to make my first call at this evidently Christian home; but as my object was a visit to the ferry village in the hollow, I passed on, with a word of praise to God that the Good

News was being proclaimed in this corner of the harvest-field, and a hope that I should soon know more about the work in the tent, and the Christian farmer and his family; a history I shall hope to record another day. "

Arriving at the ferry, I got into conversation with the ferryman, a bright young fellow of say six-and-twenty. I soon discovered that his heart had been won for Christ, and I desired to know the story of his conversion.

Can there be any story so interesting as that which tells of God's gracious leading out of darkness into light, out of distance into nearness, out of misery into joy, out of bondage into liberty.

"Come into my cottage close by," said my new friend, "and I will tell you the story, for there will be no customers for the ferry until the tide rises." Nothing loath, I at once entered the open door, hoping to be the preacher, but really to be the one preached to, and to learn a lesson which, as I look back, I can only bless God for.

"Well, you must know, sir, that six years ago this village had the worst reputation in all the country-side around; we were a set of hell-going sinners and no mistake. Sin of all kinds abounded, and many remnants existed of the old days, when this river entrance, with its ferry village, was one of the chief centres of the smuggling industry. That beer-house over there was the meeting-place of all that was lowest and worst for miles around, and week-days and Sundays it was all the same;

drink and vice, bad words and often hard blows, made the village a very hell. I was the leader of a set of young fellows up to every kind of devilry. One of our chief sports was to tease, annoy, and insult some half-dozen dear old fishing fellows, whose godly ways and words annoyed us. You see that little box of a place at the corner of the road, and at the edge of the sands; well, that is the chapel, or, as these old Christians call it, their 'Throne of Grace Room.'

"A gentleman up yonder built it for their use some years ago. It will only hold twenty of us. That place on prayer-meeting nights was the centre of our many larks. We used to pelt with grass and mud, from safe vantage ground round the corner, every one who came to the prayer-meeting, and then we often rushed the place when we heard the Hallelujahs ringing. My heart is sad when I think of it all now."

"I hope matters are different now," I said.

"Different! That is not the word for it; darkness is light, night is day, a perfect hell a comparative heaven."

"Well, tell me how it all came about," I rejoined.

"I fear, sir, 'tis a long story, but if you will sit down and have a cup of tea with us, my Mary and I will do our best to tell it."

Gladly I consented, for I really began to get seriously interested. Very soon the busy young wife had made matters snug, and tea being duly served, we sat down to the business of serious narrative.

"It was just five years ago this very summer that a lady visitor at F—— yonder used to make daily excursions into all the districts around to visit the cottages, and more particularly to distribute tracts and books. The persistency of that good lady was remarkable; she would not take 'No' for an answer; with a most winning smile and gentle word she managed to get her way everywhere, and tracts and books were to be found in her train wherever she went. In hedges, in chinks and corners, yea, in every prominent and available spot, a large type tract was pushed in. The whole country-side seemed only to her eyes to be a kind of hunting ground for advantageous spots to place tracts—it was tracts here, there, and everywhere.

"Her dress was most simple, and we used to call her the 'Quaker lady'—no offence, of course—but she dressed in that kind of simple style. I shall never forget the first and the last time I saw her, God bless her. I never heard her name, and know not where she came from or went to. Her visit was like that of one of those bright rushing stars, which at times brighten the heavens as they pass from apparently nowhere to nowhere, leaving behind them a long bright evidence of the place they once filled.

"One evening I was standing by my boat when I was surprised to find at my side the Quaker lady I had so often heard about, but had never before seen; she desired to be ferried over to the other side, and asked if there would be time for her to make a

special call some little distance inland, and if I could wait for her return. There was hardly time for all this, as the tide was running out-fast.

"Just before she decided whether to cross or not, she made a dive into her hand-bag, and turning up many books and papers, was evidently searching for something of special interest. Closing her bag, after an apparently unsuccessful search, she turned to me and asked if I would be there ready for her an hour earlier on the next evening. This I promised, and she left me.

"I felt strangely drawn to the lady, a most sobering feeling stole over me whilst in her quiet presence which I cannot describe, and I determined, whoever else might have to wait, I would be there to time next evening."

G. W. H.

(To be continued.)

"THEN DREW NEAR UNTO HIM ALL THE PUBLICANS AND SINNERS FOR TO HEAR HIM."

THE late Mr Frank Buckland said in a somewhat recent article, that there were known to be one hundred and fifty-three different species of fish. It is interesting to notice that this is the exact number which the disciples took when, after the resurrection, at the Lord's command, they cast the net at the right side of the ship.

As if the Master would have us know that His power is able to save all sorts of sinners. The gospel net encloses fish of every kind.

W. J. F.

"THE GOODNESS OF GOD."



"**IS** soul! How do you know that man has a soul?"

"I know it, sir, from the Bible. We read in Genesis ii. 7, that God 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.'"

"I don't believe in the Bible! It is full of contradictions. It presents God in the worst of lights, and makes Him out a cruel Being."

"You may say what you please on that score, only you will find that the contradictions in the Bible are in your misapprehension of its teachings and not in the Bible itself. Man became a living soul by an act on God's part which was accorded to no other animal. Man is responsible to God."

"I don't believe anything of the kind. Man lives and dies, and that is his end. I am an atheist!"

Bold words and boldly spoken, but after all it is easy to speak boldly on subjects of which we may be profoundly ignorant. Let us remember that by our words we shall be justified, and by our words condemned.

I sat with five young men in a railway carriage on a line in the South of Scotland. I had just asked the young fellow in front of me a question once put by the Lord—"What shall a man give in

exchange for his soul?" but, before he had time to reply, one who sat beside me rapidly interjected the above statement—"His soul! How do you know that man has a soul?"

All had entered my carriage at the same station. Three of them were evidently local men, one was a stranger and spoke with a broken German accent. His appearance was Jewish. This turned out to be the atheist!

He was not ashamed of his colours—black enough though they were. He is a very bold man, or else a very great fool, who denies God in His own creation.

This man's loud positiveness was somewhat staggering, yet only for a moment. He had hardly stated his ground when, as we reached another station, three of the young men left the train, one of them saying, "We canna live wi'oot a Creator."

Capital, thought I, "Nor be redeemed without a Saviour," I added, and the carriage door was closed.

The conversation was continued. Much was said that need not here be repeated. The arguments of atheism are loud but feeble. This German Jew had a few Bible facts at his finger-ends, the moral bearing of which he did not understand, and as to the "contradictions of the Bible," it was soon clear that he did not know what he talked about.

He sank gradually into his corner, as though he had had enough. He felt his ground unsafe.

One point, however, I could not allow to pass. The Bible presented God as a cruel Being! Is that likely?

What biographer would misrepresent himself?

Nay, the Bible presents God as sovereign, but sovereign is not cruel!

The Bible presents God as just, but just is not cruel!—as holy, but holy is not cruel! The Bible speaks of the punishment of sin, but whose fault is that?

The Bible announces "judgment to come," and "the lake of fire," but the announcement is the warning; and "to be forewarned is to be forearmed"—at least, to the prudent man! Cruel! nay, never!

Omnipotence is not cruelty, nor is omniscience!

Thank God that He is omnipotent! How could He be otherwise? And that He knows everything. Such knowledge may startle and terrify the sinner; but, if God be God, this must be. It need not alarm.

Cruel—ah! never say that He who so loved the world as to give His only Son is cruel!

Don't say that He who loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins is cruel!

Don't say that He is cruel who has borne with you the whole of your life, in goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, so that his goodness might lead you to repentance, and "who is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"—say not that such a God is cruel!

Your conscience resents the charge. Atheism is a poor thing in view of Creation ; it is poorer still in view of Calvary !

It is a feeble thing in view of Omnipotence, and infinitely feebler in view of divine Love ! The Bible declares that " God is love," and shows that His every attribute has been exerted in seeking the blessing of guilty man, even the atheist.

All that God is, is involved in the work of redemption. Had God hated, would He ever have redeemed ? Never !

Creation, with its boundless phenomena, its wealth of wonders, and infinite design, was the result of a word—" He commanded, and it stood fast."

But redemption necessitated the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Creator ! He " made peace by the blood of his cross," and the glories resulting therefrom shall eclipse incomparably those of a mere material creation. Power creates—Love redeems. How immense the difference !

But, to this world of wonders, blind atheism is a total stranger ; and so I had to finish my conversation with its unhappy advocate, by saying that the God he hated, and whom once I, alas, had also hated, because I knew Him not, now I could thankfully call my Father and my God, and love Him in return for His great love to me. " We love him because he first loved us."

Atheism ! What is it to be an atheist ? It is to be " without God ! " What a state ! How awful !

Christianity! What is it to be a Christian? It is to be a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus—an heir of glory!

Again, how immense the difference.

To be without God for time is bad, and note, many are without God who are far from being professed atheists; to be without God for eternity is one of the chief horrors of hell!

Therefore, dear reader, see to it, yes, see to it most diligently, that you are right with God—that you are a true Christian—and that for eternity. May the goodness of God lead thee to repentance!

J. W. S.

ONE LEAF OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE father of the late Lord Chancellor Herschell has told the world how he himself was drawn to Christ. Early in this century he was a poor Jew in London, and in great sorrow over the death of his mother. He bought some groceries which were wrapped up in a leaf of the New Testament. On the creased, soiled page he read, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." These and words like them went to his heart. He had never seen a New Testament before, but after much searching he obtained a copy, and soon came to believe that Jesus of Nazareth must be the Messiah promised to his fathers. He became an earnest Christian, and persuaded five of his brothers to believe in Christ.

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

"Cast thy bread upon the waters : for thou shalt find it AFTER MANY DAYS. . . . He that observeth the wind shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. . . . In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand ; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good " (Eccles. xi. 1, 4, 6). "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass " (Isa. xxxii. 20).



THESE verses of Scripture are pregnant with meaning. They give Christ's servants plain injunctions, and clear directions to go diligently on with the Lord's work, in the full assurance that seed sown will bring forth fruit, although many days may elapse before the fruit be seen. They are very cheering also, for the assurance that they who sow beside all waters are blessed of God may well encourage our hearts anew to go on with the Lord's work. The Lord loves to cheer His servants. He is the God of all encouragement, and some of the cheer He has given me lately, I should like to share with fellow-labourers.

Last evening (Lord's Day), at the close of an after-meeting, succeeding a gospel service, a middle-aged lady came up to me and said, "I can tell you your text of this night thirty-four years ago."

"Indeed," I replied, "what was it? Pray tell me."

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark' (Gen. vii. 1). You spoke from that text on the 1st of April 1866 in the Society of Arts Hall in this town, and that night I was turned to the Lord. I did not find full peace till next day, but my mind was made up, I decided for Jesus that night."

"And He has kept you ever since?"

"Ever since, and He will till the end."

I remembered the occasion, when called to my memory, and also the deeply anxious young woman to whom I spoke in the after-meeting that night, but it was very sweet, after a lapse of four-and-thirty years, to find that the incorruptible seed of God's Word had brought forth such good fruit, as her happy face, and manifest delight in the Lord, indicated.

One Saturday about two years ago I attended a meeting of Christians in a town in the south-west of Scotland, where many had gathered together for fellowship and ministry of the Word. Between the afternoon and evening meetings a cup of tea was provided. Among those who were bearing round refreshments I observed a middle-aged woman, whose bright happy face quite attracted my notice. Catching my eye, she came up to me and said, "I should greatly like to shake hands with you, Doctor, for I have never seen you since the night I was converted."

Shaking hands with her cordially, I replied, "And when were you converted?"

"It is so long ago that I can scarcely fix the date, but do you remember preaching the gospel in the kitchen of a farmhouse at Ardlamont, in the Kyles of Bute, more than a quarter of a century ago?"

"Yes, I remember it perfectly, and the date also. It was twenty-eight years ago last August. Were you in that meeting?"

"Yes, I was then a girl of seventeen, living in a gentleman's house near by. I was asked to the meeting; I went, and God spoke to me through your lips that night. I was turned to the Lord. It changed my whole life, and I have been happy in the Lord ever since."

At the time I did not know of any one who was converted at that meeting, though the farmer's twin lassies of twelve years of age became very interested, and found Jesus a night or two after at another meeting. It was a great joy, therefore, to meet this child of the gospel after so many years, and her joy in meeting me was very reciprocal.

On the Monday following I was present at some similar meetings in the town of Airdrie, and during the tea interval a weather-beaten man came asking a grip of my hand, saying, "Ye ken I was converted through you."

"Indeed," said I, warmly shaking him by the hand, "and where did you hear me preach?"

"Oh, I never heard you preach, it was through ane o' yer little books, but it is twelve years syne. I was then living in Belfast, a careless, godless man. Ane day when I came in to my dinner, I saw my little lassie sitting by the fireside twisting, and about to tear up a little bookie. My wife at the moment exclaimed, 'Take that book from her, do not let her destroy it.' I took the booklet and read the title, 'God says I am saved.' I said to myself, 'That's a queer title, I canna say that,' and no heedin' my dinner I stood and read the little book through. It was very simple, I thought, so simple, only to look to Jesus and be saved, that when I had finished it, I read it through a second time, and then I said to myself, 'If that's all a man has to do, why should not I be saved?' I read it through a third time, and the light burst into my soul, I saw the truth, just as the dying girl did, of whom it speaks, and like her I could say, 'I'm only a poor sinner—Jesus died for me—I believe in Him—God says I am saved, and so I know I am.'

"Turning to my wife, I said, 'Where did that book come frae?' 'Oh,' she said, 'a sack of coals came in this morning from the coal merchant, and when I untied it, there on the top of the first lump was the little book.' Was it not wonderful? But I found Jesus then, and I have been rejoicing in Him ever since, praise His name. Who put the book into the sack I dinna ken, but God spoke to me through it."

How wondrous are God's ways, and how happy will the person who put that book in the sack be, when he or she finds out it was the means of present and eternal blessing to an immortal soul. This tale should cheer and stimulate tract-distributors. If we sow the seed, God will bless it.

Last week I received the following letter; it speaks for itself, but it filled my heart with joy.

DUMFRIESSHIRE, *27th March 1900.*

DEAR BROTHER,—You will be surprised to hear from me. It is now over two years since I entered the Freemasons' Hall in Edinburgh, and thank God I was saved that night. I shall never forget it. My conversion was most wonderful. Seven days before I gave myself to God, I tried to take away my life, but thank God, He kept me from doing so. I will tell you how it came about.

I remember I quarrelled with my mother, because she would not let me go to such places as theatres, and balls, and dances; but I was determined and very worldly, so I told her I would go away, and she would never see me any more. Of course she did not believe I would do so, so I took the last train at night for Edinburgh, when I thought I would not be seen, leaving all those who were dear to me far behind.

I remember when I landed at Princes Street Station I was rather taken up with the gaiety of the city, and I was sure I would soon get plenty of companions, which I soon did. I got into a good place where I could get out almost every night, and I went right in for everything that was worldly. There was not a night but I was at the theatre, or a dance, or something or other. I never for a moment thought of my little cottage home in the country, where a dear mother was praying to God to bring back her wandering child to her, or of the many who were on my track looking for me, but it seemed all to be in vain to them.

Of course things went well and smoothly for three years with me, my parents knowing nothing of my whereabouts. The people whom I was serving then left the city, and I was left to look for another place. Of course I had not a very good character, and this kept me from getting one, and there I was, left in the great city, without any friend, and no money. I had wasted it all on my companions, and they turned their back on me because my money was spent. I went home to my lodgings in the Lothian Road which a dear woman was willing to give me for a week. I went to my room and threw myself on my bed and cried, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" All the world seemed to be against me; no one loved me. Never did I think for a moment all these three years of uttering a prayer or cry to God, till I was in utter despair, and penniless. Oh, I had been a wicked young woman, and led a wicked life, and now the time came for God to punish me, and I rightly deserved it.

I was in this condition for seven days. The seventh day happened to be Sunday. The night before I had a terrible night, I could not sleep. I prayed all night to God to forgive me for all I had done, as I intended to take my life away the next day. The next day dawned, so I thought I would go out at night to the chemist, and get a bottle of poison. As I was on my way to the chemist's shop, I met a friend who asked me to go to the meeting with her, which I did, and I shall never forget it. I think I hear the words of the preacher yet. It was this, "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD! THIS NIGHT THY SOUL SHALL BE REQUIRED OF THEE!" I seemed struck dumb at these words, but the words of the preacher seemed to get sweeter. He came to another text, it was this, "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," and I gave myself to Him, and He did not turn me away, thank God for it, and I went on my way rejoicing, and I wrote home that night and asked my mother to forgive me.

I was very anxious about getting a letter back, but I did not get one, she came straight away as soon as she got my letter. I shall never forget that day we met one another, she threw her arms around my neck and cried bitterly. It was a joyful meeting ; so I came home after that only to see her die. I broke her poor heart ; she is now in heaven with the angels, and many a time I sit down and have a good cry when I think of all I have done, but I know that the Lord has forgiven me, and I am trusting in His precious blood, and I know that I will meet her in heaven some day.

You are at liberty to read this letter in any of your meetings, as it may be a help to some one in trouble.

Now, dear brother, I will draw to a close, and may God bless you, and spare you long to preach the glorious gospel of Christ Jesus.—I remain your affectionate sister, in our soon coming Lord Jesus Christ,

L. I.

How good of God to permit us “after many days” to hear of such cases of soul-blessing—received whether thirty-six, twenty-eight, twelve, or two years ago—through His precious Word, preached or printed ! Blessed be His glorious name, for ever, and ever ! To Him be all the glory for blessing vouchsafed to weary, sin-burdened souls ! The grace is His, the gain theirs, the joy, in the knowledge thereof, ours.

Fellow - Christians, let the foregoing instances of God's grace stimulate us all to go on diligently in the Lord's work. Preachers, tract-distributors, and those who perhaps can only invite, or better still, bring with them an unsaved soul to a gospel meeting, have good ground for ceaselessly going on with their work.

Reader, are you a real Christian yet, or only a

lifeless professor of an unknown Christ? Possibly you may be nothing but a worldling, and thoughtless as to eternity. Of this be assured, it is only the soul that really knows the Lord Jesus that is safe and satisfied, and the sooner this is your condition the better will it be for yourself and all around you.

W. T. P. W.

THE BELIEVER—THE BACKSLIDER— THE SOW THAT WAS WASHED.



HERE are three different conditions in 2 Peter which are exceedingly interesting in the history of souls, inasmuch as nearly all the cases that are met with to-day may be classified under one or other of them.

The first two of these are given in chapter i. 5-9, and the last in chapter ii. 20-22.

The first two are in contrast to each other, and present two possible states of soul that a believer may be in, as the result of either diligence or negligence on his part; while the second and third although apparently approximating closely as to external conditions, are really internally separated by an infinite moral distance. In spiritual things, that, which is internal is *eternal*.

In the first two cases Peter addresses those who

had "obtained like precious faith with us"—i.e., those who had been the recipients of faith obtained only from God, who, through His righteousness, or faithfulness to His promises as the God of Israel (for Peter wrote to Jewish Christians), had bestowed upon some of His ancient people this faith in common with the apostles.

Now, this faith was precious to them, inasmuch as it brought them into present relationship with a heavenly Christ, and made them the depositaries of exceeding great and precious promises surpassing all those made to an earthly people. They became also partakers of the divine nature, and were enabled to live above the corruption that is in the world through lust, God having conferred upon them not only this precious faith, but also all things that pertain to life and godliness.

I. THE BELIEVER.

In the first of the three classes, then, is found the one who diligently makes use of all these things that divine power has furnished him with, and adds to his "faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity" (vers. 5-7). Here the soul, in the energy of a living faith, maintains the sense of the grace that has dealt with it, and rejoices in it. It thus becomes neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus

Christ while here, and having made its calling and election sure, awaits assuredly an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Happy, thrice happy! the soul who thus goes on in the blessed confidence of faith, and learns increasingly here the glory of the Person of Him who has saved it, and walks calm and serene above all the perplexities and difficulties that beset it in this world through which it passes as a pilgrim.

This is the full Christian character of the believer as a pilgrim on earth awaiting the glory.

II. THE BACKSLIDER.

The second class (ver. 9) is set forth by one who also having had ministered to him from the same source "like precious faith," and having rejoiced in the first fresh joy and outgoing of faith in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins, has alas! been negligent of availing himself of "all things that pertain to life and godliness"; and instead of adding to his faith valour (virtue), &c., has, on the contrary, been gradually overcome by the corruption that is in the world through lust. Thus, instead of maintaining a clear conscience, he has rather laded it with thick clay, until, putting away a good conscience, he has made shipwreck of the faith, and has become blind, shortsighted, and forgotten that he was purged from his old sins, and is, as to his present happiness and knowledge of forgiveness, in no respect different, to an outward

observer, from a man who has never been purged at all. Nor would it be right to accredit such a one with being one of the Lord's people ; although it is a relief to know that it is not in our province to settle his case for him, but "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. ii. 19).

This man is a backslider—a poor, wretched, miserable backslider—of whom there are doubtless thousands in this Christendom of ours, this world-church system that surrounds us on every hand. Should this meet the eye of such, let it encourage him or her that it is not said here that such a soul was *not* purged ; but that he has *forgotten* that he *was* purged. God cannot in righteous government on earth permit one who indulges in lust and worldliness to *enjoy* the knowledge of forgiveness of sins, nor the glory of the Person of Him who purchased it.

But for such there is hope. "He restoreth my soul" is written, and He delights in restoration. "Turn unto me, and I will turn unto you," He says. But beware ! He may have to chastise you before you turn if you continue in your present ways. You may have to say with Ephraim, "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art the Lord my God" (Jer. xxxi. 18).

If the backslider who may read these lines will but take up the language of the following verse, "Come and let us return unto the Lord : for he

hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up," all will be well. And then shall he know if he follow on to know the Lord.

Oh, that such would turn now! They will find that God is a God ready to pardon and to cleanse. His principle is that of *confession* for governmental forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

III. THE SOW THAT WAS WASHED.

The third class is altogether of a different nature. Separate as the first two classes must be all the time of their earthly sojourn, this is separate from both *for eternity*, although it may have mingled at times with both on earth. It is set forth in chapter ii. 20-22 by one who, having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, becomes again entangled therein and overcome. Here is one who through the knowledge that is spread abroad throughout Christendom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been restrained from giving the rein to his desires; has maintained a decent outward appearance, and made a *profession* of Christianity. But he has never obtained a new nature, was never born again, born of God; and so after a time of decent outward profession, he begins gradually to feel the irksomeness of this imposed restraint, and listens to the great swelling words of vanity of

some one or other of the false professing teachers of Christendom, and, allured through the lusts of the flesh, turns back to the true habits of his nature, and becomes entangled therein and overcome.

Alas for him ! It has happened according to the true proverb, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Better for him not to have known the way of righteousness ! The last end is worse with him than the beginning.

How many such there are also in Christendom ! How many young men there are who through the influence of the opened Word of God in the house have been thus restrained, until, listening to false teachers, and through desire to find an excuse for their own lusts, they break out suddenly, as it may appear (though how gradual the way to it has been they know, and *God knows*), and show what their true nature is. Like the tiger's whelp that was reared by an officer as a pet, which, when once it had tasted raw flesh, burst its chain and betook itself to the jungle again. It was always a tiger, never anything else. So also in Peter ; it was always a dog, always a sow, always unclean in nature, although its *ways* for the moment were cleansed by the external influence of the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Who can tell the difference between these last two cases, looking upon them from an outward point of view ? And yet how immense the dis-

tance that separates them morally. Yet while life lasts God would encourage hope, and we can say to all, there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared. May the Lord help the reader to gauge his state before God.

If unsaved, salvation is still offered. Oh, turn ye, turn ye ; for why will ye die ?

If a backslider, a patient God awaits your return that He may fill you again with joy.

If a believer, slack not thy hand ; go forward. Add to thy faith daily, and so in present joy await an abundant entrance into the presence of thy Lord.

G. J. S.

"WORDS WHICH WENT THROUGH ME."



FEW months ago an elderly man, living in a little town in Wales, who had led a very careless and ungodly life, suddenly gave evidence of a great change, and commenced to attend certain popular religious meetings. All who knew him could not fail to remark the new course of life he was pursuing.

Shortly afterwards he fell ill ; and one day a Christian woman having called at the house, was asked in by his wife to see him. After speaking to him about his illness, and expressing how glad she was to hear of the change in him, she added

"It is a good thing for you that —— came to this town."

"Oh," he replied quickly, "don't you give the credit of it to them. I go to their meetings, because I feel myself too degraded to go anywhere else. But," he added emphatically, "*it was this which did the work.*" And as he uttered these words, fumbling in his pocket, he drew out a worn and well-thumbed copy of *The Gospel Messenger*. How the book had got there, he said, he could not tell. But one day, when he went out as usual into his field, putting his hand into his pocket, there it was. On opening it, his eye fell on "*words which,*" to use his own phrase, "*went through me.*" It was a moment he never could forget. The tears rolled down the old man's cheeks as he thought of his long life of sin and forgetfulness of God, and recounted the blessing he had received through grace.

It appears that his visitor had been in the habit of leaving this silent messenger every month with his wife; and it was she, no doubt, who had put it into her husband's pocket. And God in His rich grace had been pleased to use its contents to the conversion of his soul. A short while after, the old man passed away happily to be for ever with the Lord.

"Words which *went through me.*" The Word of God is living, powerful, and operative. It is sharper than any two-edged sword; and it pierceth to the dividing of bones and marrow asunder. It

discerneth the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12). Dear reader, *has it gone through you?*

God is working in grace, and meeting and saving poor sinners on all hands. He would have His house full. Have you had to do with Him? Your only opportunity to become the recipient of His grace will very soon be past. We are in a death scene, and each one's natural life hangs, as it were, upon the very slenderest of threads. He who gave it may take it again at any moment. And He is the Holy One, to whom each must render an account of the deeds done in the body. Are you prepared to meet Him? Can you conscientiously reply, Yes? If not, arouse thee, dear soul, at once. There is not a moment to be lost. The eternal future is at stake. You had far better never have been born than miss the salvation of God. The awful alternative is an eternity in darkness and banishment from God.

Now, blessed be His name, he lingers over this poor lost world under judgment to the very last moment, not willing that any should perish. But there is a limit to the day of His longsuffering and grace, and that limit you might reach *at any moment*. If you meet Him in your unconverted state, there is not a single ray of hope for you. It is impossible that a sinner in his sins can enter and abide in His holy presence; yes, *utterly impossible*.

But in His great grace, fruit of the love of His

own heart, He has provided a great Saviour and a great salvation for all. That Saviour is Christ, His Son; and the ground of that great salvation is His finished work on the cross. Troubled soul, He offers now that precious Saviour to you. What think ye of Christ? None other can meet your deep, deep need. *His precious blood alone* can cleanse you from all your guilty stains. *His work alone* can deliver you from sin and Satan's power. God has been glorified in Him, and as a just God waits to justify. Unconverted soul, you are under His judgment, but God's beloved Son took judgment's bitter cup at the cross and emptied it, that He might righteously save you.

Whosoever as a self-judged sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall never reap judgment. *Pardon and peace are his now*, with the bright and sure prospect of eternal glory. Is this *your* portion, dear reader? If not yet, we pray you consider it ere it be too late. There is danger ahead, eternal danger! Have to do with God now, in this the day of His grace. Own your guilt, confess your sin, cry "lost." Then *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*. God will cast all your sins into the ocean's depth. He will remember them *no more*. He will justify, reconcile, and save you with an everlasting salvation. May He graciously grant that *His word* in this little paper may *go through you also*, that like the old man of whom we have written, you may be saved.

"ONE SOWETH AND ANOTHER REAPETH."

(JOHN iv. 37.)

CHAPTER II.

JOHN'S CONVERSION.



"**WAS** at my post in time the next evening, and prompt to the minute my 'Quaker lady' turned up. Without a word she got into the boat, and when half across the river she spoke a few words about the 'river of life' and the 'river of God.' I forget all she said exactly, but it was sweet and good. As she left the boat for the inland house she bade me wait her return, and whilst I waited, she asked me to read a paper she put into my hands.

"Now, I had long since made up my mind never to be caught either psalm-singing, or tract or Bible reading; but there was something about this Quaker lady I could not resist, and I looked at the paper. On the front was a picture filling the whole page. It was life-like, and I took the whole scene in at a glance. A fleet of fishing boats off Yarmouth; in the background and overhead deep dark clouds, broken here and there by zig-zag lightning flashes; a troubled sea underneath; and all the smacks making for the harbour mouth. I knew the place so well.

"I had often been in like circumstances, and knew that to miss the opening of the Yare, between the Yarmouth Sands and Girlston Jetty, meant shipwreck and ruin. My eye and mind followed the whole living scene; would yon vessel reach the goal? was that one being handled in such a manner that port was certain? and so on.

"My interest deepened as I looked at the picture; I presently thought I should like to read about it, and turning over the page, saw the heading—

'THE COMING STORM.'

"Before I began to read, I felt somewhat uncomfortable, as I knew the way of these tracts, and how one was insensibly led on from the story to the moral of it. But this time I felt too much interest to desist, and read I must. The picture was a living one, I have said, but I found the story more so.

"It told the sad tale of a terrible day off Yarmouth; I remembered many of the detailed circumstances; a story of hard, heroic work, of lives saved and of lives lost, of boats so near home that hopes for their safety ran high, but one sudden gust of wind, and a heavy lurch of the boat, and all was over. Before I knew what I was doing, I found myself reading the only too apparent moral to the story. The day of darker judgment coming for this poor world; the sunshine of blessing for ever darkened by the fierce clouds of judgment; the port, so easy

to make in clear days of God's grace, for ever shut to the doomed, who have slighted the warnings of coming woe, and failed to enter God's harbour of safety in time.

"I was thrilled, appalled, and arrested. The 'Quaker lady' just then returned so silently that I did not notice her until I found her in the boat. Almost dazed, I rowed her back. She gave me a parting word, a look, and was gone.

"It may be we shall only meet again when we shall know as known, and all bear the Master's name and likeness. I know not. I pulled my boat up the beach feeling I must now or never face my past, and that in the presence of the future judgment. Do what I would I could not rid my mind of that picture of dark, black, judgment clouds, and those helpless and lost boats and crews: their fate and my doom got so interwoven in my mind, that to escape it, I felt I must seek the refuge I had so often spurned. I went home; tea was nearly ready; 'twas just such another evening as this, and about the same hour.

"Mary had lighted a little fire, and a few embers remained in the grate; I pulled my chair near to the fire, for I felt fairly out of sorts. My heart was breaking, and my eyes filling fast with scalding tears.

"I was ashamed to let Mary see my state, so with my back turned to the window I toyed with the poker, and again and again stirred up the dying embers in the grate.

“‘Come along, John, tea is ready,’ said the wife, but still I gazed at those fast fading coals.

“‘Come, come ; do come, tea will be cold.’ Still I sat on in restless silence. Presently Mary noticed something was wrong, and came up asking most earnestly what was the matter.

“I could stand it no longer, and fairly broke down. Sob followed groan, and groan followed sob. The more anxious the inquiries of the wife, the more troubled did I become ; until at last I cried out, ‘Mary, we are both lost, unless God saves us, and saves us *now*. Long years ago, wife, you and I went to Sunday-school together, and before we married we promised one another that we would live to God ; but God and His Book have been both shut out of this home. Let us ask His forgiveness.’

“With broken hearts and tearful eyes Mary and I knelt down by the table, and we asked God to forgive and save us for Christ’s sake.

“For long the darkness seemed only to grow deeper ; I felt almost in despair, and I need not say we had no tea that night. I read the paper, which had so impressed me, to Mary, and we not only drank in the story, but every word of loving warning in the application.

“We got no peace, however. Oh, how we prayed the good Lord would send us some one to help us in our distress. We cried, and cried, but no one came. Presently, I remembered that this was the prayer-meeting night in the little meeting room,

so I resolved that I would go and see what help I could get there.

"Out I went, not straight to the room, but round the corner yonder, and over some sand-hills, and then I peeped through the window. There they were, I knew them all, dear old men, full of the love of God.

"It was a long time before I could command sufficient courage to go to the door, and it was only after carefully looking this way and that, to make quite sure no one saw me, that I put my hand on the handle, gently turned it, and went in.

"They were all on their knees, praying most earnestly, one after the other, and nearly every name in the village was being mentioned: I felt sure my name would come next, and sure enough it did. 'O God! save John,' and 'Amen! amen!' was the response from every mouth.

"My heart leaped into my mouth, I was fairly broken down, and I dropped on my knees crying out aloud, 'Do, please, dear Lord, do!' The scene at once changed; none in the room knew of my presence, and my loud appeal for help seemed to be such a wonderful answer to their prayers, that everything after the orthodox order of the usual meeting vanished.

"Loud cries to God to save me, from half-a-dozen mouths, all at once filled the room, and louder still the deep 'Amens' were heard. The dear old fellows crowded round me, a poor broken-hearted sinner, weeping on the floor.

"Presently light broke in, I felt the mighty load roll away. My Saviour's work for me filled me with gladness and praise, and with joyful 'Hallelujahs!' we closed that never-to-be-forgotten night.

"One or two of them came home with me, and before the night closed in, Mary and I could rejoice together in a new-found joy, and in the knowledge of 'the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'

"Well, sir, that was only the beginning, but it was a grand one: the devil's power was broken in the place, and many have since turned to God."

John's touching story finished, we all knelt down together to thank God for His much goodness, and to ask Him to enable us to get together to read His Word, and deepen His work in the souls of these two dear people. When we had further conversed a little, I asked, "Can you tell me anything about the tent up yonder in the farmer's walnut-field?"

"Ay, yes, that I can; my story is wonderful, but that farmer's story was still more so. I can't wait any longer to-night, but when you next come, I will tell you all about it."

I retraced my steps home to my lodgings that evening with the feeling deep down in my soul that God had indeed been giving me a lesson, which the preacher, my new-found friend, knew nothing of. I determined at all events to get down a few books and tracts, and seek grace to count on God to use them to His glory.

G. W. H.

(To be continued.)

THE FATHER'S KISS.*

"But when he was yet a great way off, his father *saw* him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, *and kissed him.*"—LUKE xv. 20.



YOUNG woman sat in her room late one night reading. It was past twelve, and all in the house were asleep, but she read on. God had aroused her to a sense of her need of Christ, and she sought to find the Lord through the book in her hand. It was a collection of narratives and addresses for young converts and anxious souls.

At last she laid it down with a sigh of weariness and disappointment. Every soul spoken of in the book seemed to find Christ with such ease—some-

* Thirty years have rolled by since this narrative occurred. The writer of the paper is telling her own conversion. The night she speaks of I first saw her at a Lord's Day Evening Gospel Meeting in this town, when I was speaking on the importance of *Decision for Christ*. She was thoroughly aroused by God's Word, had a long conversation with me on the necessity of decision for Christ, and then went to her home. Having found the Lord that night, she boldly confessed Him to all her friends next day, and followed Him faithfully ever after. Just a year ago, after a long and painful illness, she entered peacefully into eternal rest. From the day of her conversion she was always on the quest for souls to lead them to Jesus. Some papers written on her death-bed, telling of God's grace to others through her, will appear in future pages of this magazine.—[Ed. *G. M.*]

times through a word opportunely spoken, sometimes through a passage of Scripture, but none of them were exactly like her. The writer of the book closed with a few words to the "unsaved," and she felt but too keenly, "That is I, shall I ever be saved? How wonderful it would be if I could say I was *saved*."

It was getting late. One o'clock struck, but all inclination for sleep had fled. She knelt and prayed, "O God, I want Christ, I want to know Him, I want to be saved." She felt "a long way off." Like the prodigal son in the fifteenth of Luke, she knew not that when she was "a great way off" the Father saw her *then*, starving for lack of the bread of life, her soul perishing with hunger, and none giving unto her. But the Father saw her and was on His way to meet her and satisfy her, for His word is, "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul" (Jer. xxxi. 25).

She took up another book, which opened with the writer's hope that the reader, before finishing it, would get salvation. "I wonder whether I shall," was her thought. She was not "anxious" this soul, she knew not that she was *lost*; but God, in His infinite grace, had caused her to taste the emptiness and unsatisfyingness of every earthly joy.

Earthly happiness, earthly pleasures, intellectual pleasures, philanthropic schemes, she had tried them all, in a greater or less measure, only to find

them utterly insipid, and unable to satisfy her heart.

A life of self-abnegation and living for others she had tried too, only to find again that no earthly occupation can satisfy the heart. The soul is created *for God*, and nothing short of being brought *to God* will satisfy its cravings or soothe the restless heart. "And I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?"

"I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and *this* was the portion of my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, *all was vanity and vexation* of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." "That which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be numbered" (Eccles. ii. 10, 11, i. 15).

Dear reader, possibly you too are seeking your happiness here below; there is but *One* worth living for, but *One* worthy of all your mind, of all your heart, of all your soul; you know who I mean—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. He who died that *you* might live! That precious Lord who, "though he was rich, yet for *your* sake became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich!" (2 Cor. viii. 9). Matchless love! "For a good man some would even dare to die, *but God* commendeth *his* love toward us, in that while we were *yet* sinners, *Christ* died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

The subject of this narrative turned one page after another of her book. It spoke of "joy and peace in believing," but for her there was no peace. She longed to know God, but He seemed farther off than ever. She knew not that the Father "had compassion and ran," and was even now about to give her the Father's kiss, that pledge of love and reconciliation with which He greets the returning soul. It was this she longed for, though she knew it not yet. For, reader, mark this, none know what the Father's kiss is but they who have received it.

Friend, do *you* know it? have you received it? If not, you are yet far off from God, for none come to Him without experiencing it. It is your own fault if you have it not, for "he that seeketh findeth." God is waiting to receive you, and give you the sense of His love, and of your perfect acceptance on the ground of the finished work of Christ, if only you will come. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. *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, 22).

God is waiting to receive and welcome you, even as He received the one of whom I write. She was just at the end of her book, and there came this question, "Does God love *sinners*?" Tired with the late hour, and her fruitless search

for salvation, she turned the page with a feeling of disappointment. Reading was no use, nothing helped *her*. But the words on the next page seemed to her startled gaze to be written almost in letters of light. She started up, exclaiming, "But, is it true? O God! is it true? Is it possible that God loves *sinners*! loves me?" And then falling on her knees, she burst into tears with the words, "Oh, *my Father*, my God, I thank Thee!"

It was the Father's kiss. "And he had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, *and kissed him*." How long she wept and blessed God I know not; time is not measured by hours, when the prodigal returns home, and the father, falling on his neck, gives him the kiss of reconciling love.

What were the words she saw? Words from the Scriptures of the living God! Words to *live* and *die* upon! "HEREIN IS LOVE, NOT *that we* loved God, but that *he* loved *us*." "For God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for *us*" (1 John iv. 10; Rom. v. 8).

Dear unsaved soul, here is *love* and *life* for you. It is for *sinners*. If you are not a sinner, you have no chance. Nay, if you are not a *lost* sinner, God's salvation is not for you. The Lord Jesus Christ came to seek and save the *lost*. I beseech you, settle it with your conscience, honestly, in the sight of God—Am I *lost* or *saved*? You are either the one or the other. Do not slight the love of God. "*Herein* is love, not that we loved God,

but that he loved us." And what is the proof of His love? That He "sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." While you are neglecting God, forgetting Him, living without Him, He loves *you, a sinner*, and has shown His love in sending His beloved Son to die for you, to be the propitiation for *your* sins, and you—who have read this short tale—will you lay it down, and go away *unsaved*, though God has done all He could for your salvation? Truly, my friend, if you make your bed in *hell*, you deserve it.

The soul I have written of took the whole verse to herself. Do you do likewise. She read, not only that God loved her, a sinner, but that He had sent His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of *sinners*, and so He had made propitiation for *her* sins, and she *believed* the Word of God.

"If Jesus died to save sinners," she said, "of course I am saved, *because* I am a sinner, and I have come to Him." Truly "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). She saw, too, that the value of the blood of Christ was so great in God's eyes, that no soul trusting in it could ever be lost, because, to quote a sentence of her favourite book, "God's *perfect* appreciation of Christ's *perfect* sacrifice is my *perfect* security." "When *I* see the *blood* I will pass over" (Exod. xii. 13). She trusted God's estimate of the value of the blood of Christ.

Dear reader, will you not do the same *now*? Take God's salvation, take Christ. "As many as

received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John i. 12). God grant you may know the unspeakable sweetness of the Father's kiss, and I pray you, do not be satisfied without receiving it, without *from the heart* being able to say "*my Father,*" and none can say it but those who have been born of God, and *are* "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), and who have received the "Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" and "when he who is our life shall appear, *then* shall we also appear with him in glory" (Rom. viii. 15-17; Col. iii. 4).

H. R.

BE INSTANT—IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON.

A YOUNG Christian, when walking in the Melbourne Cemetery, was asked by a stranger, "Is there only one way into this cemetery?" "Yes," he replied, "but there are two ways out of it, the resurrection of the just, or of the unjust."

OUR conviction is daily strengthened that wherever the gospel is faithfully, prayerfully, and lovingly preached to the unconverted, the same Holy Spirit, who has blessed the message in the past, continues to do so in the present. Experience proves this.

CERTAINTY.

(LUKE i. 4.)



HE other day a gentleman asked the ticket-collector at H—— Station the way to D——. He got plain directions, and as I was following up behind, coming to where two ways met, there was a finger-post pointing the way to D——, so he looked for a moment and read, and on he went, confirmed that he was on the right road. A little down the road a friend with a waggonette met him, who took him up and drove him to D——.

Now, I thought, this is a fine illustration of the way seeking souls—those who are inquiring the way to heaven—are met by the grace of God. First some one directs them, like Peter in Acts x., "To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Then, like the Bereans (Acts xvii.), who "*were more noble* than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so," they are helped. The Thessalonians were good ground hearers. They heard what Paul preached as the Word of God, and not as the word of men, but the Bereans went to the Scrip-

tures, and saw all clearly. They were like the man looking at the finger-post. He had heard the way from the ticket-collector, then he read it for himself, and thus assured, on he went with certainty. But when his friend met him, took him up, and carried him, there was no more inquiry about the way to D——.

So the Spirit of God is come to carry and guide us all the way home; He is the guide and teacher—the power to carry right to glory. In John xiv. the Lord said, “Ye know him.” When Paul came to Ephesus and found believers, he asked them, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”

The man in Luke x., who was taken up from the roadside, was carried, and so Rebekah in Genesis xxiv.

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

Now, dear reader, where are you, whither bound? Doubtless you would like to go to heaven. No one wants to go to hell, yet many are on that road. To get in at the strait gate, you have to be in earnest, and be in time. Do not rest until you know for certain you are bound for glory, and that you have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, as your guide and power to lead and carry you on.

"UP YONDER."



HAD been for some weeks attending upon Mrs H——. An incurable disease slowly, but certainly, was shortening her days, but, God be thanked, as the outer man grew weaker and more attenuated, the inner man developed in vigour and power. She had known the Lord many years, her heart was in the enjoyment of His love, and, as she felt the chill hand of death each day more firmly settling on her, her spirit brightened as the prospect of soon beholding Him who had loved her and died for her became more distinct before her soul. Two or three days before she passed away I said to her, "I am going to speak this evening at a cottage meeting in a village; there will be many young people there; have you any message for them?" She looked surprised at my question, and replied—

"I do not know them; how can I have any message for them?"

"True," I said; "but you are on the very verge of eternity, on the border land, within sight of the gates of glory; have you no word to send back to those that are young and careless?"

For a minute she fixed her eyes on me in silence, and then, deeply feeling the words she uttered, and which came with great power and solemnity, she replied, "Tell them to come to Jesus, and bid them come *now*, and warn them not to put it off till a

death-bed, for it takes it all——" Here her strength and breath failed, and she could not finish the sentence.

I gathered her meaning, and responded, "By 'It takes it all,' I suppose you mean that when the death-bed is reached the body is so racked with pain, and the mind so feeble, that the affairs of the soul, if not previously settled, are neglected then, as the body claims such attention." She nodded her head in full assent, merely adding,

"Yes, bid them not put it off."

I then said, "Good-bye! I will take your message; we shall not meet down here perhaps any more, but we shall meet by-and-by, shall we not?"

Slowly she withdrew her emaciated hand from beneath the bed-clothes, and, pointing with one finger upwards, softly replied—

"Up yonder."

They were her last intelligible words to me; I have never forgotten them though years have rolled by since they fell upon my ear, and sure am I that "up yonder" I shall meet her.

And now, dear reader, permit me to ask, Shall I meet you "up yonder"? Will you form one of the ransomed throng that will gather round the Lamb, and swell the chorus of redeeming love "up yonder"? I hear you say, "I hope so." This will not do; it must be more than hope. With you hope means uncertainty. In Scripture it never does; there, it is the heart's bright anticipation of things not seen as yet, but which it *knows* it possesses.

The personal knowledge of Jesus alone can give this. Have you come to Him? If not—oh! I beseech you, give heed to the pointed word of warning above related.

If unconverted, the enemy knows well how to whisper in your ear, "There's time enough." God's saint replies, "Warn them not to put it off till a death-bed." Friend, this is a true witness; beware, lest thou shouldst despise her testimony, and find at length that instead of being "up yonder," as you vainly "*hope*," your portion is in "outer darkness," and your bed in hell for ever. This is the inevitable issue and final condition of all procrastinators. If you would be "up yonder," you must respond to the words, "Tell them to come to Jesus, and bid them come *now*." Yes, *now*, even NOW, while this paper is in your hand. Come, simply as you are, to Jesus. Your sins are no hindrance. For sins and sinners Jesus came—to purge away the former, to deliver and save the latter. If you come to Him by simple faith, He will not put you away, but He will give you to know that by His death and blood-shedding He once and for ever put your sins away from God's sight, so that they can never rise again, and further, that in His own death a foundation is laid in righteousness on which you can stand before God "clean every whit," your heart also now possessing the blessed assurance that through His love and finished work you will shortly be with Himself "up yonder."

W. T. P. W.

GOD'S MEANS.

"Yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him."—2 SAM. xiv. 14.



ABSALOM had murdered his brother and fled from his father, and was three years in the court of his mother's father, Talmai, king of Geshur. "And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom" (xiii. 39).

But David was king, and righteousness stood in the way, for he knew that "he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." And so David's desire was from year to year unsatisfied. Would not the people of God cry out if the king should extend grace to his son at the expense of righteousness?

Now Joab, with his worldly wisdom, knew that the king longed after Absalom, and he judged that the people who loved their king would be glad to see him yield to the affections of the father's heart, even if at the expense of kingly justice; and he fetched a wise woman from Tekoah that she might enact a parable before king David, and draw out the grace that was in his heart. This she does by representing herself as a widow having two sons, one of whom had killed his brother, causing all the family to demand the death of the murderer, which, as she graphically described, would quench

her coal that was left, and leave to her husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth.

David is moved, and assures the woman that the revengers of blood shall not touch one hair of her son.

This she then applies to himself. He would act in grace towards one of the people; but he thinks wrongly of the people of God by not accrediting them with the same feelings towards himself. Why doth not the king fetch home again *his* banished? We must needs die, she urges, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. God respects no man's person, be he king, or one of the common people. Yet, oh, wonderful and blessed fact, God does devise means whereby His banished be not expelled from Him.

David detects Joab's hand in all this, and yields to it, saying, "Behold now, I have done this thing; go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again" (ver. 21). Grace (which is not grace) and fatherly affection reign at the *expense* of righteousness.

But the thing is not settled. There has been no confession, no atonement; the feelings created by a wicked act on either side have not been removed, and for two full years Absalom dwelt at Jerusalem, but *saw not the king's face*.

But this is not God's means, nor does it illustrate it, save by way of contrast.

Let us for a moment glance first at the application to ourselves of the wise woman's aphorisms,

in verse 14. Part of the truth of Romans v. is there—"We must needs die." Why? Because, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon *all men*, for that all have sinned" (ver. 12). Not only must Absalom die, but the unsaved readers of the *Gospel Messenger* must die also. But, you may object, I have not murdered my brother! Probably not; but you come from Adam, through Cain, who did so; and many a fratricide has marked the genealogy since. You at least have the same nature, and have sinned in other ways, and for this you, too, must die,—
 "It is appointed unto men once to die."

Again, "We are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again;" so Romans v. 6: all are "without strength." None can help *himself*, let alone *others* in this controversy between God and His sinful creatures, who have utterly failed in all their original responsibilities to Him.

"Neither doth God respect any person." All alike must give an account unto God, each for himself. Neither the dignity of the king nor the misery of the beggar; the riches of the wealthy nor the poverty of the indigent; the learning of the wise nor the ignorance of the foolish, can blind the eyes of *divine* justice, when every man shall give an account of HIMSELF before God.

What, then, are God's means whereby His banished be not expelled from Him?

There are two sides to this at least, viz.:—

1. That which satisfies God's throne and heart.

2. That which changes my state of enmity.

That is to say, the righteousness of God's throne must be satisfied before the affections that are pent up in His heart towards His fallen creatures can flow out. This is the objective means.

And then the state of my heart must be changed before I can enjoy that which His love so freely provides. This is the subjective means.

How blessedly has God accomplished the first! Outside of ourselves, and independently of us, He has acted when we were sinners, without strength, and unable to act for ourselves. His love has provided that which His righteousness demanded, and forth from Himself came His own well-beloved, only-begotten Son, come forth to express the desires of that Father's heart, that His banished be not expelled from Him, and at the same time to accomplish the only means which could righteously satisfy the claims of His throne. That means was to take the sinner's place, to die the sinner's death, to bear the sinner's judgment. None but He who was God could do this, and come forth from the awful conflict, for all the wrath of God against sin must be exhausted ere one sinner can stand before Him.

But—oh, most blessed news!—all is done! Jesus died! Jesus rose again! Jesus has ascended to the right hand of God! Every claim of the Throne has been satisfied! All has been accepted! And

a man upon the throne is the proof that God has devised means that His vanished be not expelled from Him. Here is an *object* for the sinner—Jesus a Man at the right hand of God.

But who cares to look there? Who of His righteously banished ones cares to get into His presence again? Reader, do YOU?

Alas, how many, like Absalom, would like to be recalled from banishment, like to be accredited by power, desire even to see the king's face; but there must be no humbling himself, no confession, no recognition of wrong-doing, no exercise of that hated principle—*grace*. Such would come in upon an equality, but only to use the very position to endeavour to devise means whereby God should be dethroned, Christ and His grace ignored! Such are unregenerate hearts. They will draw near to God in official nearness, but they know not the Father's heart. Alas for them! "Their judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

What need, therefore, of the second part of God's means, and this, too, from Himself—a change of state before Him! This is not the work of God's Son *for* us, but the work of God's Spirit *in* us. The enmity of the heart must be subdued, the alienation removed. And this, though wrought in us, imposes responsibility upon us for its acceptance; as the apostle in 2 Corinthians v. beseeches: "Be ye reconciled to God." But what does he urge as a reason? Oh, listen! That God "hath made

him who knew no sin, to be sin for us!" Can you withstand such an appeal? God loves! God gave!! God hath made Him to be sin!!!

Reader, will not you yield to such a manifestation of God's love? Will not you be reconciled? Then, and at once—though more fully displayed by-and-by—shall you become the righteousness of God in Him. Then shall the love of His heart be enjoyed; then His affections answered to; then shall His face be seen.

As the heart quivers beneath the play of His affections upon it, what joy to retrace all the means devised, and carried out at such a cost, that all this bliss may be the portion of His banished!—a full share in His own joy, though He shall exceed as ever. No seeking to dethrone our David as we gaze upon His unveiled face, and behold His resplendent glory, but even now shall there be an ever-increasing moral likeness to Himself—a changing from glory to glory into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This work in us must go on ever while here, answering to the raptured gaze upon His glory who has wrought so wonderfully for us.

Is my reader still banished from Him? Will not such means bow your heart to Him? The true David—Jesus Christ our Lord—is the only rightful King of your heart. Oh, enthrone Him there! "Now, then, *do it!!*"

G. J. S.

THE BIBLE AMONGST THE HEATHEN.



T Bonhooghly, a little village near Calcutta, there lived a family of musical instrument makers — father and sons. (In India, the sons follow the profession of their fathers, and alas! too, the religion. How many a

man has said of Hinduism, "This religion is good enough for me, for it did for my forefathers.")

One of the sons went into Calcutta frequently to buy the catgut needed for the fiddles. On one occasion he was commissioned to make some small purchase in the town. What it was I know not—whether spice for his wife's cookery, or a jewel for her nose or ear, it matters not. Round the purchase the shopkeeper wrapped a piece of printed paper.

On his long walk home the youth, to beguile the way, read the torn paper, became much interested, and read it again to father and brothers on his arrival at home. "You must find out what book that is from; we must hear the whole of that good book," was their comment on it.

On his next errand into town the young man made inquiries about the torn page, and was told, "Oh, that is the Christians' book."

He quickly purchased a Bible, and the father and his six sons and their wives were practically

Christians when an English missionary discovered them nearly thirty years ago.

The way in which he found them out was that in one of his preaching tours, he noticed that the gospel story did not seem quite new and strange to his attentive listeners.

He questioned one man—"Have you heard this before?"

"Yes," was the reply, "the people of the Book have told us this."

The missionary found that not only did this family meet together daily for the reading of the Word, but they prayed to God. The Holy Spirit Himself had surely been their teacher.

The old man is no longer alive, but his sons are true Christian men.

E. M. S.

LOVE'S GIFTS.



LOVE will often express itself by a gift, and the appreciation thereof will be according to the strength of the love reciprocated.

A glance at John x. will enable us to see how this was exemplified by Jesus on the cross.

Verse 29 teaches us that the sheep were the Father's gift to Jesus ("My Father . . . gave them me"), and He, receiving them as such from His

Father's hand, showed forth, in the perfection of His love, His deep appreciation of this gift, by laying down His life for the sheep (ver. 15, "I lay down my life for the sheep"); and this act of His we learn, from verses 17 and 18, was associated with the further and highest display of the absolute devotion of His heart to God—"I lay it down of myself;" thus furnishing (as observed by others) fresh motives for the outflowings of the Father's love towards Him—"Therefore doth MY FATHER LOVE ME, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again."

He could say, "I do always those things that please" the Father (John viii. 29); and at the close of many years' unrecorded sojourn here, He received this testimony, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark i. 11). The bright sunshine of the Father's smile was ever His (Luke ix. 35; John xii. 28); but the hour was coming when those on earth should know, as well as in heaven, that His sole object was His Father's will and His Father's glory. Verse 17 of chap. x. has already shown us that the *Father* knew it. A reference to chap. xviii. 11, makes it clear that the *Disciples* should have known it (. . . "the cup which the Father hath given me shall I not drink it?") And, as regards the *World*, we read in John xiv. 31, "That the world may know that I LOVE THE FATHER; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

What rest of heart it gives to the believer, and what a theme for his contemplation, is this aspect of the Divine love between the Father and the Son! To think that those who were so helpless and graceless in themselves, should have been chosen as that which could suitably serve as a factor in the medium for its display, and that too in such a character as a gift (the Father's love-gift) to the Son, who, we read in Ephesians v. 2, "also hath loved us, and hath *given himself* FOR US an offering and a sacrifice TO GOD for a sweet smelling savour."

Does my reader anxiously ask, Whereby may *I* know that *I* belong to Jesus?

Let me ask, Have you ever really come to Jesus? For He hath said, "All that the Father giveth me *shall come to me*; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

May the language of your heart be:—

"Just as I am—without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am—Thy love, I own,
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come."

"ONE SOWETH 'AND ANOTHER REAPETH."

(JOHN iv. 37.)

CHAPTER III.

THE FARMER'S CONVERSION.



LAD to see you so soon again, sir. I felt sure you would come. I see you have brought the good lady too this time. Mary will be pleased."

"Yes, John, the story you so simply told me when we first met has moved all our hearts, and my wife would not let me rest until I had promised to bring her with me to hear some more of God's work in this place."

"Very glad to see you both. We will go indoors. I wanted to see you, for after you had left us the other night, Mary said, 'What did he mean, John, when he asked God to lead us on into the full knowledge of Himself and His mind and will?' I could not tell what you meant, but I have often felt, sir, that there was 'more to follow,' as the hymn says, and we both want the 'more and more' if it is His will."

"Well, John, strange enough, this was just my thought too. Shall we arrange for a little Bible-reading in your cottage, say to-morrow evening? You can get a few of the dear men who love the Lord in with you."

"Just the thing, sir, if you will come ;" and so it was arranged.

"Well, John, for to-night, do let me hear about the conversion of the farmer up yonder. You promised me the story."

"Yes, I did. Well, it was all through that Quaker lady ; of course God sent her, I know, but then you see *she came*, and I cannot forget this.

"You noticed, I suppose, that simple country-looking public-house round the corner ? In those very dark days that house was the centre of all that was evil in the place. Sundays and week-days it was all the same, the only difference being that on week-days the front door was open, and on Sundays the back door ; no one could sleep in the village until long after closing time because of the noise and uproar.

"The private parlour of this inn was reserved for a few choice spirits who nightly made the place their snuggery. Several farmers from the district used to ride in, put up their ponies, and late indeed it was each night when they drained their last glass and dispersed unsteadily for home.

"Farmer J——, from the Hilltop Farm, was one of the most regular attendants at the carousals. Year in and year out he had never been known to come home sober. I do not say his conduct was peculiar, for in fact it was characteristic of the neighbourhood.

"But a sudden and wonderful change came about in this way. It was a magnificent autumn night,

the full moon shining in all her beauty. Closing time was long past, and climbing the hill might be seen Farmer J—— on his trusty nag. The effort of the farmer was to steady himself on the horse, and the effort of the horse was to get his master safely home, without what looked like an inevitable fall. The way to the farm led across a field, and to enter the field roadway a gate off the main road needed to be opened. The horse pulled up as closely as possible to the slip-pin of the gate, and Farmer J—— mechanically placed his hand on the pin, the horse at the same time pressing the gate open and entering.

"As the farmer thus passed in he noticed that he had not only clasped the pin of the gate in opening it, but a printed piece of paper which remained in his hand.

"With both hands—for they were free, the bridle reins being loose on the neck of the horse—he opened the paper out. As he did so, the almost dazzling moonlight seemed to make two sentences printed in large red type stand out of the paper in letters of fire. They were:—

'ETERNAL FIRE.' 'ETERNAL LIFE.'

(Jude 7 and 21.)

"The man was transfixed by the words; he could not move his eyes from the paper. All his guilty life passed before him, and he felt himself to be what he was, a hell-going, hardened sinner, and deserving 'Eternal Fire.'

"As by a miracle the farmer was at once sobered; no trace of the night of folly remained. His soul was brought up sharply to face God, and God's eternity of 'vengeance' or 'life.'

"He placed the horse in its box, and lighting a stable lamp, sat down to read the whole tract. In it the folly of those who lived for the 'pleasures of sin for a season,' but whose end would be the 'vengeance of Eternal Fire,' was contrasted with the blessedness of those who, having learnt their deep need and God's great love (John iii. 16), found themselves in that 'love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life. 'Eternal Fire' and 'Eternal Life' seemed to be burned into the man's soul.

'Down he went on his knees, and in that dimly lighted corner of the stable, a poor guilty sinner and a loving gracious Saviour met for the first time; the one to cry for mercy and pardon, and the other to minister forgiveness and peace.

"How long or how short the time spent in the stable Farmer J—— never could tell; but he had no sooner got the God-given blessing himself, than he thought of wife and children.

'Into the house he went with unusually firm and steady tread. His wife meeting him, could scarcely conceal her surprise that for once her husband had returned home a sober man. Her surprise turned to amazement when his first words were, 'Wife, have we got a Bible in the house?' 'A Bible! Why, John, 'tis many a long year since we

opened the old family book ; I expect it's on the shelf.'

'Wife, get that Bible, and call up all the children; we must read that Bible to-night and now, for we stand in danger of 'Eternal Fire.'

"The family gradually assembled, filled with wonder almost bordering on terror. Something dreadful had surely happened; such a scene had never before been witnessed in that house. Farmer J—— at the head of the table, all the family around, and the big Bible open before him at the scriptures mentioned in the tract:—

'To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'—Rom. iii. 26.

'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 the hope of the glory of God.

'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

'And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

'And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

'But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

'Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through 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.

'And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.'—Rom. v. 1-11.

'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up :

'That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through him might be saved.

'He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

'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. 14-19.

"These verses were read, and the story of the meeting in the stable between the sinner and the Saviour told out, with broken voice and streaming eyes; then all knelt down, whilst Farmer J—— in simple words gave thanks to God for His great goodness, and asked a blessing on every one.

"God heard that prayer, sir, for that household is now the active centre of gospel work in this place. Every year the gospel tent is pitched in their orchard, and God blesses the work."

"And where did this wonderful tract come from?" I asked.

"Oh! the Quaker lady pushed it in the gate-post, and God used it, you see, sir, for I believe she

prayed over every tract she placed; God bless her!"

Long ere this story was finished, I had definitely come to the conclusion that God did bless the distribution of tracts and books, and that what had been lacking was my faith, and not His blessing.

"Good-night, John. To-morrow, God willing, the reading, and 'more to follow,' you know. Thank you for your two wonderful stories. Surely when God works, who shall say Him nay?"

G. W. H.

(To be continued.)

"VERY BEAUTIFUL!"

"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."—HEB. x. 26.



WRONG idea prevails to-day. It is that something must be added to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, in order to fit the soul for the presence of God.

The Word of God declares that that sacrifice alone, without any addition whatsoever on our part, appropriated by faith, places the soul before God in peace and joy and full assurance. Hence we read that "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

Yes, thank God, we *have* peace with Him! Only

think of the idea, the false and blasphemous idea that we should or could add anything to the value of Christ's sacrifice!

But how do we know that it is sufficient, or that God requires no addition?

Simply because "God raised him from the dead!"

And His resurrection is proof of one thing at least, viz., that God is fully satisfied with what I may call the payment which our Lord Jesus made on Calvary.

"If Christ be not raised . . . ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. xv. 17); but, conversely, if Christ be raised, ye are not in your sins.

What a blessed contrast!

Now, God is most desirous that the infinite worth of this sacrifice should be known and accepted.

If the devil can take from its value, or detract from what has been well called its "*solitary dignity*," and thus fling souls into darkness and hopeless legal effort, he certainly will.

God states that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin" (1 John. i. 7), and what God states is absolutely true!

Think, dear reader, "sin," "all sin," "cleansed," "by blood," "the blood of Jesus Christ," "the Son of God"! I beg of you to weigh these words; to view them singly and together; to admit that you are a sinner for whom that blood was shed; and to make your own the cleansing, therein stated, from all your sins.

Having done this, you are put at once in the enjoyment of peace with God. How blessed! What satisfies the creditor pacifies the debtor!

Let me illustrate. I had occasion, the other day, to pay a small account to a Roman Catholic tradeswoman. I placed the bill, and the payment in full, on her counter. She receipted the bill, but placed a wrong date upon it. Noticing the mistake, she at once corrected it, saying that she would not have asked for repayment of this account. That I quite believed.

But in order to lead to higher thoughts, I said—

"Would you not have asked for half?"

"Oh, no," she replied.

"Nor a quarter?"

"No, no," she reiterated.

"Nor even a tenth?"

"No, never," she rejoined.

"My one full payment suffices?"

"Yes, it is all I want," she said.

"Now, in spiritual matters, do you not think that the payment made for sin by our Saviour when He died on the cross is quite enough, and that God requires no further payment?" I asked her.

"Oh! but we must be sorry and penitent for our sins," she said.

"Quite true," I replied, "only notice that our penitence cannot add to the payment. Thus, sorrow for my indebtedness to you could not affect, in any way, the settlement of your charge.

That could alone be done by an equivalent in money. It is money and not sorrow that pays the debt." I then quoted the wonderful verse (1 John i. 7) before given, to which she said, "*Very beautiful.*" And it *is* a beautiful verse; but how easy to admire a divine truth without admitting or adopting it.

Many admire the beautiful life of Jesus and idolise His cross as well, who, at the same time, have never owned His authority nor accepted His salvation.

The supplementary "good works" of the Protestant, and the "continuation of the sacrifice" in the Roman Catholic mass are equally an insult (however pious the intention) to the completeness of the sacrifice, and a denial of the resurrection of Christ in their full and blessed justifying power. He was raised for our justification (Rom. iv. 25).

To work from salvation is a very different thing from working for it. The blessed Lord did this in the throes and agony of Calvary, when "he was made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him," so that, thus freed from every load, we might work out our own salvation in the expression of that same beautiful life that He lived when here below.

God calls Christ's blood "*precious*"; and, dear reader, see to it that you attempt not to add anything to its atoning value.

"By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).

J. W. S.

THE VALUE OF EARNESTNESS.

"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh."—
MATT. xii. 24.



YOU can't preach to a *company*. No! but you can speak or write to an *individual*. Let me tell you an *illustrative incident*, just to encourage you.

She was a sick nurse. I had never seen her before. A mutual friend brought her in to see me. There was something in her face that called forth all one's pity at once somehow. Disappointment, hope, fear, signs of a long and useless struggle against failing health and strength, a sort of hungry look for *something*, and yet a look of rebellion as if against everything, seemed to be all there conspiring to hide a natural sweetness of expression that would *sometimes* declare itself in spite of all.

It was necessary to lay her up. The face almost got sulky, but the few particulars that could be gleaned in spite of her studied reticence, let one into the secret of the unequal fight to earn money to help a relative, and pick up arrears.

In a day or two, a "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment" was proffered; barely taken; apparently unread for some time. An occasional brief word as to God and His Christ, brought only a very short response, with a half-frightened and half-annoyed look.

The time came for her to go to the country. For the first time her Bible was on the table by her side. Taking it up, I noticed inside in clear writing:—

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.”

“I hope that is true of you?” I said.

“I thought it was once,” was the reply, but little more could be got from her except some feeble objections to the truths of the Scriptures.

Having written her, and sent on loan “Many Infallible Proofs,” I received the following letters:—

2/10 —

“Dear Dr —,—I return your book, with many thanks. The author seems clearly to prove the inspiration of the Bible and the divinity of Christ. His remedy for doubting disciples is “immersion in the Word of God”—a remedy which I purpose trying. But I do not see in the life of the average professing Christian much to admire, or to give me the desire to become one. I have watched the lives of many, carefully and closely, and the result is invariably the same—they do not *live* up to the religion they profess.—Yours very truly,
————.”

8/10 —

“Dear Dr —,—I am very grateful to you for so kindly endeavouring to help me out of my difficulties, though they had ceased to trouble me until you spoke to me while in the hospital. May I tell you that, though greatly surprised to hear a medical man speak of religion, your earnestness on that occasion made a deep impression on me, and the

message, which from a clergyman or minister whose duty it is to look after such matters, would have been lightly dismissed, became the subject of careful thought.

You have pointed out very clearly the way of salvation. I see it quite plainly in all its simplicity. But the *life* of the "possessing" Christian would neither be easy nor simple—to me it seems an altogether impossible life. I could not live up to it any more than the people I have condemned. Your advice . . . brings me no comfort, for I do not think I should *feel* the prayer answered. With many thanks for your kindly interest.—Yours very truly, ———."

23/10 —

"Dear Dr ———,—The few earnest words spoken by you some time ago, and since aided . . . were not in vain.

I have received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I believe in Him, love Him—though that, as well as the desire to serve Him, is but feeble yet. His love, hitherto unknown, unrealised, has "broken every barrier down," dispelled all doubts, cleared away all difficulties. He has saved me ; oh ! that I may trust Him to *keep* me. I shall not attempt to thank you for the time and patience you have devoted to me in connection with this matter, . . . yet I would remind you of the words, "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever ! Your *earnestness*, more than anything else, convinced me that there was something in Christianity. . . . Yours very truly,

———."

She is now reading "The Believer Established" (a helpful Vol. by C. A. C.), and getting on ; growing in grace.

Let us be *earnest*. We are great blunderers, but an earnest blunderer is often used.

S., *Australia*.

THE BLOOD AND THE HYSSOP.

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. . . . And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning."—EXOD. xii. 13, 22.



ISRAEL'S redemption and exodus from Egypt are a striking type of the gospel and its effects now.

These verses show us God's way of salvation, and the way man must act in order to avail himself of God's rich and wondrous provision for his need. Judgment was about to fall on man. Egypt and all its households were exposed to this sure and certain judgment, the Israelite as much as the Egyptian—true figure of the world's present condition, with God's eternal judgment of sin looming in the distance. Death is at the very threshold. The Judge is passing by. Can His righteous wrath be averted? Can His entrance in this terrible character be arrested? These were the momentous questions of that night, and are the same to-day.

Reader, can you answer them? Unless you know in reality the meaning of the two verses I have quoted, you cannot do so; but if still in darkness, may God in His infinite mercy open your eyes.

There are a great many people who would tell

you without hesitation that they fully believe the Word of God as to the death of Christ being the only ground of a sinner's hope before God, that they had given up all idea of self-righteousness as a means of averting the coming judgment—and yet they are not saved. Why is this? They believe Jesus died, and yet they are not saved. Why is this? "Oh," you say, "they have not faith." I suppose that is at the root of it. No sensible man—no man honest, no man who has a notion of what God is, but must come to this conclusion, "I stand in danger." And then too he must believe as an historical fact the death of Jesus. Still such are not saved. The reason is, the blood is still in the basin, and not sprinkled on the lintel and two side-posts. This is an illustration of what I mean.

It is as though you had gone into the house of an Israelite that night and put the question to him, "Do you believe judgment is coming? Nine woes are past, but do you believe the last worst woe is coming?"

"Oh yes, I believe it, and I have done as God commanded: the lamb is slain, the blood is shed."

"Is the blood in the basin?"

"Yes."

"Is it on the lintel and side-posts?"

"No, not yet."

"And why not on the lintel and side-posts?"

"I do not know how to put it there."

"But are you safe from the destroyer?"

"I am not sure; I hope so."

Now this is just your case perhaps. You believe the blood of the Lamb has been shed; you know Jesus died. You know there is only shelter beneath that precious blood, but there has been no real application of the death of Christ to your own soul. Why is this? There has been no taking the bunch of hyssop and sprinkling the blood with it. The bunch of hyssop is a very insignificant thing—a poor contemptible thing—and people are not willing to go down so low as to use it.

Knowledge may ruin a person if there is not the application of the thing known to the heart. Remember you may go down to hell with the Bible at your fingers' ends, for knowledge is not faith nor repentance. But the bunch of hyssop, though a very poor, insignificant thing, is a divine necessity. Had it been a bunch of cedar, you could have understood it—the cedar with its lofty grandeur that could almost shelter an army beneath its wide-spreading branches. Solomon spake of all things "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall" (1 Kings iii. 33)—a little thing that does not take root in a decent fashion even, but springs out from between two stones! The cedar and the hyssop are the two extremes in nature, the highest and the lowest. You must take the blood up with a bunch of hyssop; that is, you must go and shelter yourself under that precious

blood with the full consciousness that you are a *lost* soul without a particle of innate worthiness or goodness.

In Leviticus xiv., where the leper is cleansed, the hyssop was *buried* out of sight; in Numbers xix., where the defiled man is restored to privilege, it was *burned* out of sight. David says in Psalm li., "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." There is no mistake about that man; he needed cleansing. "I will take hyssop," says David. "Oh, cast me where you will, treat me as you will, only cleanse me. 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'"

But further, it was on the end of a bunch of hyssop, that spake of the lowest and most degrading thing in nature, they gave the Lord Jesus a sponge of vinegar in the day of His death, when He was suffering to put away sins. Yes, they could taunt Him with the bunch of hyssop in the hour of His agony, His deep, untold suffering—His suffering for us; and Jesus in the graco of His heart received it, and said, "*It is finished.*" What does that mean? It means He there was undergoing from the hand of God the wrath, the dark, bitter agony that was due to you and me. *He died for us that we might live with Him.*

Are you prepared, dear reader, to accept the bunch of hyssop yourself; in other words, to take the place of repentance and self-judgment before God? Mark! there never entered an unrepentant

soul within the doors of heaven. Faith and repentance go together. Using the bunch of hyssop is a man going down before God in the acknowledgment of his true lost and ungodly state; not resting content with saying, "I know Jesus died, but I must *wait* till I go through some edifying experience, as I have heard of others having done, before I can know I am saved," but sheltering himself as a lost man under cover of that precious blood—applying it to his own heart. "But," you say, "I never saw the blood of Christ." Nor did I! I never saw the blood of Christ, and never shall see it, but I believe what God has told me about it. It is not when *you* see the blood, but God says, "When *I* see the blood *I will pass over.*"

But you ask, "Why sprinkle it only on the lintel and on the two side-posts? Why not on the ground, why not on the floor or basement?" I will tell you why. Because it is left for a careless soul like you to trample the blood of Jesus beneath the feet—to despise and scorn it. What does faith do? Faith looks up to it, shelters beneath it and says, "I stand beneath a bloodstained canopy." There was but one eye saw the blood that night. No Israelite saw the blood. They simply obeyed the Word of God, they put it on the *outside* of their houses in *faith*, and they remained *inside* in *peace*, secure under its shelter; and if God has told you that on the cross His blessed Son died to put away your sins, what have you to do? Simply to repose on

the truth of what God has told you. God bids us shelter ourselves beneath that blood, that precious blood which has been shed (Heb. ix. 11, 12). Christ's blood has been shed on the cross, and He having there suffered in our stead, once, and once only—having borne the judgment—has entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. On the ground of what He is, and what He has done and endured, we can enter in also.

Christ having borne sins, having taken them upon Him, having been on the cross made sin, put Himself in grace as a substitute in a place, out of which He could not extricate Himself save by putting away those sins. He was there on the cross with sins upon Him. He was on that tree under the judgment of sin, not His own, blessed be God, but *ours! OURS!* On the cross, in the deepest grace, He hung in the sinner's place. He endured the wrath for the sinner. He died for the sinner. He was *sacrificed for us*. "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." "*Sacrificed for us!*" Charming word! It might charm the heart of the most hardened sinner. He *sacrificed Himself*. Yes, He SACRIFICED HIMSELF FOR US, and yet *you* have never sacrificed a single half-hour for Christ. You never sacrificed a bit of pleasure for Christ, you never sacrificed your own will or your own way a single moment for Christ. You have sacrificed many a thing for your own pleasure, but nothing for Him. Is this not so?

Pause, think for a moment. He *sacrificed Himself* for us, and then passed into the Holy Place, having obtained Eternal Redemption for us. And the apostle then adds, "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" If, in Exodus xii., the blood of the Lamb could preserve the greatest sinner all through that long night, so that no death or destruction could enter in there, "*How much more,*" O anxious sinner, "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"—the blood that has met the claims of God—that precious blood that has silenced the accuser—how much more shall it bring a defiled, guilty sinner into God's presence, pardoned, blessed, forgiven, saved, to serve *Him*! Magnificent word, "*How much more!*" Scripture all through speaks of the blood of Christ, and points the sinner to the blood of Christ that has met God, and satisfied His claims, and now there is nothing for you to do but trust it. If you despise it you must perish; if you shelter beneath it you receive eternal life.

It is an awful thing to despise the blood of Christ. Mark well the words in Exodus xi. which God whispers as it were in the ear of Moses to tell to Pharaoh. "Yet will I bring one plague more." Mark it, you who care not to be ranked among the despised followers of Jesus, who have trampled under foot His precious blood, there remain for you two plagues more—*two plagues more*—and oh!

tell me, what will you do when these plagues overtake you? Will you try and escape? Impossible! Impossible! Will you say as a dying man, a rich man, once said to his physician when he told him the plain truth that he could not live much longer? "Oh! doctor, I will give you all I possess if you can only give me one day more of life." Impossible! Impossible! That day he died. And, sinner, what will you do the day that plague overtakes you, the day the iron hand of Death seizes you in its relentless grasp? "It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this the judgment.*" That is the second plague, and it is eternal in its duration.

God had only "one plague more" for Pharaoh, but, O Christless soul, God has two plagues more for you! Death first, and "*after this the judgment!*" How will you meet them? Oh! if you have never decided for Christ before, will you not decide for Him now? Will you not come to Him now? Will you not put yourself under the shelter of His precious blood before this coming judgment day arrives? I put my queries to you specially who have been moved under the Word of God before, but are still undecided for Christ, still unsettled. Oh! I appeal to you, risk no longer meeting these two plagues more. No longer let the god of this world blind your eyes to the coming danger, or harden your heart. Let not procrastination lead you astray.

I would you knew my Saviour! my Jesus! the

Saviour I know, the Jesus I know—my blessed, precious Saviour. Now just tell me, would not you like to know Him? Does not your heart sometimes long to know rest and peace? You will find it nowhere else—but you will find rest in knowing Him. Do you tremble to meet these two plagues more—these two coming plagues, from which there is no escape? Then listen to this. "*So Christ* was once offered to bear the sins of many." "*So Christ.*" If my sins demand death and judgment—so Christ was once offered, bearing sins, and enduring judgment from the hand of God to bring me salvation! "I am content," I say, "I am content." Beneath the shelter of that precious blood I will crouch—I am safe, I am happy. I am to stay in the house until the morning peaceful and happy, keeping the feast within—feeding on Christ, enjoying Christ—feasting on Him each day.

May the Lord bless your soul, and give you strength and courage to receive Him and to come clean out of the world, and to live only to please and serve and follow Him. Do you think that is hard work and dreadful bondage? That is because you know nothing about it! It is hard work and dreadful bondage to labour in the brick-kilns of the world, and then go down into the depths of hell at the end. I call that dreadful bondage, to go on serving Satan now—and then to go down with him where no drop of water shall ever cool your tongue—where the

voice of God is never heard—into the darkness of an eternal night, which no ray of light shall ever penetrate. Shut out from Jesus? Yes, shut out from Him then for ever! Oh! decide for Him now. You must decide for yourself; no one can decide for you.

What a difference! Shut out from Him for ever, in the depths of hell, or going to be for ever with Him! Oh, will you not decide? I made my choice long ago; so now I know that death and judgment are behind me, and only Jesus before me. Will you not make your choice and choose Him just now? The Lord grant it. God has provided the "Blood," do you use the "Hyssop."

W. T. P. W.

THE BIBLE AS WASTE-PAPER.



HERE is a woman named Soné attending the hospital at Tokio, Japan, as an out-patient, who brings a little baby with very bad eyes. She and her husband keep a second-hand furniture shop. One day a chest of drawers came in, and on opening it they found a number of papers and books. They said they were about the Christian religion, so they tore the covers off and threw them aside to sell for waste-paper. Two newer-looking books they reserved to look at

again. Among this waste-paper, however, the woman's eye fell on one or two sheets of a Bible, and these she read carefully, and found that there was another God, the only true God.

Soon after, her baby's eyes became very bad, and all her friends said she ought to go and worship Yasensli, the god who is supposed to heal eyes, and one brought her a paper charm from the god for her to worship. Having just read about this other God, she did not feel she could worship this charm, so she just hung it up on the wall. One day she remembered having seen the sign of the Akasaka Hospital as she passed along the road, so she took the baby there. It very soon began to improve, and perhaps this inclined her to listen to what the Biblewoman told her of the love of God. Faith began to kindle in her heart, and she told her husband all she heard. To their surprise they found that the two books they had set on one side were the Old and New Testaments, and now they read them diligently every day.

They told the Biblewoman that they saw now why the baby's eyes were bad — because God wanted to lead them to know and love Him. They want her to visit them every day and explain the Bible. As they live quite a distance away, she will go when she can. She believes they will become true Christians. Thus the Lord causes here and there a grain forgotten to germinate in fruitful soil.

Extracted.

THE SHEET ALMANAC.



OD had spoken to me in various ways during my childhood, but I did not know the joy of His great salvation until I was fourteen years of age.

My parents were Christians, and the Word of God was read, and prayer made daily in our home; but the gospel in all its fulness had not been made clear to me, therefore my thoughts were all centred in myself.

I knew I was a sinner, and daily I cried for forgiveness, and tried to do things to please God, &c., but I was still a stranger to that peace which can only be enjoyed by those who know a living, loving Saviour in glory.

The burden of my sins seemed to get heavier, and my prayer was the language of the 51st Psalm, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

About this time I obtained a situation in a town near my home. It was a relief to my weary burdened heart when I entered my new bedroom, and saw on the walls some Scripture texts; and also to find that those with whom I lived were Christian people.

This was Thursday, and on the following Sunday one of my new friends recounted to me how the Lord had met her in her deep need, and saved her.

I listened almost breathlessly, for it came home as the very thing I was longing for—to know my

sins forgiven and to have such rest and peace. But I was very reserved, therefore my friend did not know what passed through my mind. My cry to God now was to give me this peace and joy, and He soon answered that cry.

The following Wednesday my eyes fell on the words—

“Every minute expecting He'll call me away,
And that keeps me bright all the livelong day.”

They were lines in a piece of poetry on the bedroom wall, entitled “The Man in the Glory.”

They pierced me like an arrow, for I knew I was not looking for the return of the Lord Jesus, neither was it the bright hope of my daily life.

I fell on my knees, and again cried to God to save me, and make me ready for the return of the Lord Jesus.

As I rose from my knees, I saw on a large sheet almanac the following words—

“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, how I drank in those blessed words, for they were words of life straight from God to me, and I believed and rejoiced, knowing on the authority of His Word that I should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Many a time did I look up into the sky that afternoon, and wonder if the Lord Jesus would

come that day; and I rejoiced that I was now ready for Him.

Dear reader, this is now thirteen years ago, and though I am still here, yet I can look forward to the moment when He will return to claim His own, knowing that I shall be caught up with them to meet Him in the air, and so be for ever with Him.

You may be inclined to ask me if I have never doubted Him. Could I doubt such marvellous love and grace as that which shone out in the lowly Saviour when down in this world?

He came to do His Father's will, and to finish His Father's work, and what did that involve?—a shameful death on the cross.

But it was to make a way for poor sinners to be brought from the depths of sin into the joy of the love of God.

Perhaps you are praying, and striving to gain rest and peace by your own efforts. I trust you may be led to look away from yourself and anything you can do, and by faith see that the Lord Jesus has done every jot of the work, and is now seated in the bright glory of God.

“Cast your deadly doing down,
Down at Jesu's feet ;
Stand in *Him*, in *Him* alone,
Gloriously complete.”

God's wondrous love in giving His only begotten Son has been shown to men, and it is your privi-

lege, as a poor needy sinner, to accept His way of salvation, and rejoice in His love.

May He give you to see your deep need, and in simple faith turn to Him, saying—

“Jesus, I do trust Thee,
Trust Thee with my soul ;
Guilty, lost, and helpless,
Thou canst make me whole.”

R. E. P.

OPEN-AIR FRUIT.

ON one occasion I was holding an open-air service in the East End. A gentleman passing on a car was arrested by the Word, and leaving the car, listened until the close of the meeting. Following the crowd, he took his place inside, and towards the end of the address he rose and said, “Sir, will you pray for me?” I met him at the end of the meeting, and he told me that on the previous night he stood on Glasgow Bridge, and looking down into the river, said, “One plunge, and all will be over.” As he stood there the verses of a hymn learned in the Sunday-school returned to him, and saved him from the suicidal act. “When I joined the car to-night I had no idea where I was going. I have lost situation after situation through drink ; only yesterday I received notice that I ceased to represent my firm, and my salary of £400 per annum is gone. Oh, surely God led me here to-night.”

ANON.

"ONE SOWETH AND ANOTHER REAPETH."

CHAPTER IV.

"PERFECTLY SECURE," AND "SECURELY
PERFECT."



ELL now, I never saw it in that way before; I always thought I had to hold on to Christ, but now I see it is Christ has hold of me."

This was one of the closing remarks at our first Bible reading in John the Ferryman's cottage. This meeting was duly held, as arranged, on the evening after we had heard the story of the conversion of the farmer on the hill-top and his family, chronicled in the previous chapter.

We are hardly likely to forget that first Bible reading. On entering the little cottage we noticed how everything had been made clean and tidy for this very special occasion. The room was full of bright hearty souls, only too glad to be together to get, as they called it, "a sip by the way."

After hearty greetings, we began by looking to the Lord for help and guidance, and had no sooner concluded our own little prayer, than one after the other the men who were present joined in, and with tones of thunder besieged "the throne of

grace." Having thus once got on our knees, it seemed likely we should spend the evening there; but seizing a little pause, we suggested getting to our Bibles; and thus commenced a series of simple "Bible talks" which lasted for several evenings during the following fortnight.

We began with a scripture so dear to every Christian's heart, John iii. 16—God's great love from yon far back eternity, in giving His Son, and how that in "the fulness of the time," "the Father sent the Son," and then how He came, the "Good Shepherd," to give His life for the sheep in order that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. And further, that such was His *love* and His *power*, that those for whom He died, and to whom He had given eternal life, were so secure that "not any"—neither man nor demon—could pluck them out of His blessed hand; and as if this were not enough, as if to make the assurance doubly sure, we were, as in His hand, again enclasped in the Father's hand, and certainly none could pluck us out of the Father's hand (John x. 27-29).

It was after thus opening up these precious scriptures, which tell us of God's great love in giving His Son, and the Good Shepherd's great love in coming and dying, and the blessed love which having found "its own" will hold them and love them to the end (John xiii.), that one of the dear men, with tears rolling down his bronzed cheeks, exclaimed, "Well now, I never saw it in that way

before ; I always thought I had to hold on to Christ, but now I see it is Christ has hold of me."

The next night we had a happy time digging together in Hebrews x. How our hearts burned within us as we dwelt on the "better things provided for us"; how that we believers are sanctified, not by the repeated "offering of the bodies of those beasts" but "by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once*"; how that by that "one offering" the sanctified are "perfected for ever," and that therefore the Holy Ghost can now witness to us, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," and seeing therefore that there is eternal remission, there must of necessity be "no more offering for sins," with the blessed result that the believer can now with "boldness enter the holiest"—a way once of death, but now a way both "new and living"; so that we who were once "afar off" in our sins and guilt are instructed and invited to "draw near."

A deep silence and deeper attention had fallen on our meeting this evening; the dear earnest souls eagerly drank in the precious truths of Hebrews x., and, as we closed, a silent holy pause fell upon the little company. This was broken by one dear man saying, "Well then, sir, if last night we saw that we are 'perfectly secure,' to-night we see we are 'securely perfect.'" A simple yet happy commentary, we thought.

One of the favourite hymns with our new friends was—

"Lord Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine,
My Rock and my Fortress, my Surety divine,
My gracious Redeemer, my song shall be now,
'Tis Thou who art worthy, Lord Jesus, 'tis Thou';"

and one night this little hymn became our theme, and that "we love him because he first loved us." This love is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us" (Rom. v. 5), and "this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John. v. 3). "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. . . . Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv. 10, 14). Thus we saw that we were not only "perfectly secure" and "securely perfect," but also that "his love was perfected in us," or as one of the dear men said, "All sure without, and all sure within."

It was the last Saturday evening of our little holiday, and we went out on the sea-front enjoying the lovely summer sea breeze, but at the same time feeling sorry that with the end of the holiday, would come also the end of many pleasant visits in the country, to the Ferry village, and particularly we should miss our new friends John and Mary his wife. With our minds thus engaged, it hardly seemed strange that we should see coming towards us the very two persons we were thinking most about.

"Why, John, thoughts of you and yours were just at this very moment filling my mind; I am glad you have come over to see us."

"Well, sir, Mary and I have been thinking and praying over our Bible readings, the Book and the truth and the Saviour seem now to us all so different. And then, sir, our last reading was, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' We do love Him, and we desire to love and serve Him better, but then you said something about 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' His last loving words—almost a command—to His own. And we have come to see you, and to ask what we ought to do; we should indeed like to show thus our love to Him."

"Indeed, John, how good of the Lord to be leading you on thus; can you be here at ten o'clock to-morrow, and we will go to the meeting together at W., and then you shall see how a few of those who love the Lord seek to answer to His love to them in His own appointed way."

John came well up to time, and how he did delight in that morning meeting where all were free to not only eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of His precious love, but to lift their hearts in praise and worship to the Father who seeketh such to worship Him.

After the meeting John seemed too full for words, but presently said, "May *I* not thus remember my precious Lord?"

And so it happened that although we had to return homeward on the following Monday, we found ourselves again at F. within a fortnight, so that we might have the great joy of not only remembering the Lord according to His own gracious

and loving word, but of doing it in company with dear John for the first time.

And what a meeting that was. I well remember it, although years have rolled along, and both John and Mary have gone to see His face. We were quietly waiting, when I heard John say in broken voice, "May we sing Hymn 100?"

"Now in a song of grateful praise
To our dear Lord, the voice we'll raise,
With all His saints we'll join to tell
Our Jesus hath done all things well."

And we did sing it as, it may be fancy, I never heard it sung before or since; and then John got up to give thanks in the midst of His people for what God had wrought. It was only a few heartfelt broken words, no elaborately arranged sentences, but the pouring out of the heart to Him who had filled that heart with His own love.

We sang, we wept, we joyed together, and surely the sweet savour of that meeting was precious to Him who not only seeks the lost, but seeks the worship of our hearts in spirit and in truth.

Dear reader, do you know John's Saviour as *your* Saviour and Friend? If not, seek Him *now*, yea He seeks for you and would enfold even you in His everlasting arms. It may be you do know Him as Saviour; do you answer in His own appointed way to the desire of His heart? He is soon coming; may He find you amongst "His own" seeking to "keep his word and not deny

his name." He seeks *your* love, He delights in *your* worship.

Dear fellow-labourer in God's great harvest-field, *you* shall reap if you faint not; one may sow but another shall reap. A Paul may plant and an Apollos water, but the increase-giving God is over all in blessing.

Go forth, and go on then, ever in heart near to Him, and "the day" shall declare the full treasures of result and reward.

G. W. H.

THE GREEN TREE AND THE DRY.

(Read LUKE xxiii.)



HE wondrous story of the death of the blessed Lord Jesus stands alone in the annals of this world's history, though oft told in the pages of Holy Writ; there it is four times recorded. One short chapter suffices to tell of creation, but, when the birth of Jesus is the theme, God delights to tell it to you twice. Matthew i. and Luke i. and ii. are devoted to the lovely tale of the Saviour's birth, but, will once or twice suffice if His death is in question? No! *Four times* God blessedly tells of the Saviour's death. And why? Because on that death hangs everything, on that death hangs your eternal safety.

We have before us in this chapter one of these

records which God has given us of the Saviour's death. And what do we first see? Oh! what a dreadful thing when you come to ponder it deeply. "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves" (ver. 12). Oh, my unsaved reader, do not spend your eternity with those who were made friends over the murder of Jesus.

Herod made light of Jesus, and so have you. Pilate would fain have let Him go, but he was under the power of this world. He looked upon Jesus as one whom he would like to shelter, but he wanted to keep in with Cæsar; and you, my friend, want to keep in with the world. You are thought much of in the circle in which you move, and you would be spoilt were you to become a Christian. Spoilt for what? For this world? Yes, but blessed for eternity.

I have often thought Pilate, in measure, must have known who Christ was. He was not a scoffer, he was a worldly man, and so are you. You say, "You give me a dreadful character." Is it not a true one? The world rules you, and governs you, and you are unwise enough to risk your immortal soul for what does not even make you happy. "Does not make me happy?" you say. No! there is no real happiness without the knowledge of the Saviour, and you know you are not really, truly happy. But now, I say to you, do not be like Pilate. If Pilate could speak to you at this moment what would he say? "Oh, man!

oh, woman! do not do as I did. I feared the frown of the world. I sided against Jesus. I delivered Him up to His murderers."

What was the end of Pilate's vacillating weakness? Jesus was led forth to a graveyard, and we read, "There followed him a great company of people, and of women which also bewailed and lamented him." Oh! what stories could that crowd tell of His goodness. The women wept as they remembered how He had healed the sick, given sight to the blind, and made the lame to walk. Reader, have you ever wept for Christ? Can you say in the words of M'Cheyne's immortal hymn—

"Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,
I wept when the waters went over His soul,
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree
'Jehovah Tsidkenu'—'twas nothing to me."

Oh! unsaved soul, weep now for yourself. Very likely no tear has ever rolled down your cheeks for your own sake. "No," you say, "why should I weep?" Listen: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us."

Yes, beloved friend, I feel assured, if you die in your sins, you will say, "Oh, would that my mother had never brought me forth, would I had

never seen the light." You may say to the mountains, "Fall on us," and to the hills, "Cover us;" but no, my reader, no mountain or hill can cover you from the face of Him whom you must meet, for Jesus then most tenderly and solemnly added, "*For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*" (ver. 31).

Are you a green tree? Has God had any fruit from you? No! Jesus was the only green tree. From His birth to His death He was true to God. Was there a bit of self in Jesus? Not one bit. He was the absolutely holy One, He was the only One true to God in this scene. Oh, reader, look at Him. He was the "green tree," and God saw the fruit and the sap always coming out from Him. Was there any sin in Jesus? None! Is there any sin in us? Yes, we are full of sin. Jesus was perfectly devoted to God. What are you? Devoted to self, and if you are honest you will own it. Christ never thought of self from first to last. "I came not to do mine own will," I came down to "seek and to save that which was lost," He could truly say. Perfect holiness, perfect truth, perfect love, everything perfect, was in Christ, and yet what did man say? "Away with him, away with him," carry Him to the graveyard.

If these things happened to Christ, what will happen to you, unsaved sinner, what lies before you? "But," you say, "Christ never ought to have died." Quite true, but He did. He went into death for the glory of God, and for guilty man,

but God raised Him from the dead. And now, I ask again, what will be your end—The sinner's end? Scripture tells us what this is, very plainly. "What shall be done in the dry?" What happens when you put a dry tree into the fire? Why, it is the very thing to burn, and "The wicked shall be turned into hell," "where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." A scene where hope never enters, where joy never comes. You say you do not believe it. Very likely, but you will be converted some day. There are no infidels in hell, and no scoffers there, because it is a scene of terrible reality, but its occupants have believed too late. May God write this on your soul as you read this paper.

There are four remarkable "ifs" in this passage. The first is Christ's, "*If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*" The other three are the blasphemous "ifs," of, first, the rulers, then the soldiers, and lastly, the impenitent thief hanging by Christ's side. The rulers mock Him, saying, "He saved others, let him save himself, *if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*" But does He save Himself? No! blessed be His name, because He came to save *us*. Then we read the soldiers mocked Him, saying, "*If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself,*" but He will not, and lastly one of the malefactors, a bold, daring, blasphemous infidel, "railed on him, saying, *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*"

He had no faith in the person of Jesus, nor

knowledge of his own need. Friend, is this your case? Do you doubt His person? Do you doubt His love? Then listen to what He says, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

But what do we read now? This blasphemer's companion, as wicked hitherto as himself, speaks, and what does he say? There is no "if" on his lips. He had looked on the Saviour, he had heard His prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," and he reversed the world's decision, and cleared the person of Christ with his testimony in that dreadful hour. To the other robber he says, "*Dost thou not fear God?*" to the world, "*This man hath done nothing amiss;*" and to Jesus, "*Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.*" I know You will come back one day in Your kingdom, and when You come, oh, remember me.

This was the cry of a true soul, a really penitent heart. But does Jesus keep him waiting? No! when Jesus saves, He saves on the spot. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." It will not do to bless you hundreds of years hence; no, I will save you to-day. And what has Jesus got for you, my reader? A present salvation. Has the Lord Jesus heard from your heart such a word as this, "Lord, remember me"? If so, His answer is, "To-day." How long did it take to save that thief? Not half an hour even. He first listens, then looks, believes, repents—condemning himself—reverses

the world's sentence, clears the character of Jesus, and finally simply commits himself fully to the tender mercy of the dying Saviour by his side, and receives the assurance of a present salvation on the spot. And as the Saviour passed into paradise that day, what did He take with Him as a trophy? A thief, a poor wretched robber.

But do not forget, my reader, that the man who was by His side, and who had an "if" in his heart, and on his lips, was the next to die, and where is he now? In hell, I fear. Oh, soul! leave everything, lose everything, but do not lose Christ, do not lose your soul. Rest simply on His blood now, and then spend eternity with Jesus. God forbid you should make a fifth in hell with Pilate, Herod, Judas, and the infidel blaspheming thief.

W. T. P. W.

A GOOD RESOLVE.

It was my sorrowful duty and privilege recently to visit a mother whose son had died from typhoid fever. He was a bright Christian lad of twenty years. As I was coming away the mother showed me the following lines which he had written in his note-book:—

"I am but one,
But I am one;
I cannot do everything,
But I can do something;
What I can do
I ought to do;
What I ought to do,
God helping me, I will do."

ANON.

"THAT WORD CONVERSION."



HATE that word *conversion*," said a preacher in a certain town the other day; "one would think, to hear some folk talk, that a person had to undergo some great change."

Evidently he had not undergone any change, for it is a great change to be turned from *darkness* to *light*, and from the power of *Satan* to *God*. It is a great change from rushing down to Hell, on the broad road, to marching on the narrow road to Glory.

Conversion is a real thing. The Apostle Paul was before his conversion a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious. After his conversion he became a most devoted servant of the Lord, and strengthened his brethren.

Do you, dear reader, hate that word conversion? Scripture says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19). Why, we love that word conversion, and would not be unconverted lads for all New Zealand.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Conversion is an absolute necessity if you are to be saved. Are you converted?

WILL AND WILL.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.



WHILE visiting an aged Christian in one of the London Hospitals, I inquired about a young girl who had occupied a bed in the corner of the ward, and who, I was then told, had just died.

"I hear Susanna has gone home. It must have been a happy release from pain, for when I saw her she was suffering sadly."

"It was indeed," replied my friend; "her sufferings were great, but oh! her death was so happy."

"Were you with her?" I asked.

"Yes," said she, "I sat up all that last night; she died about three in the morning."

On my inquiring the particulars, she gave me a short account of Susanna's conversion, and subsequent short career as a Christian.

"When first Susanna came in," said my friend, "she was just like other young girls. Of a pleasant cheerful disposition, she thought she had done nothing so very bad, and had no idea of her need of a Saviour. I used often to speak to her, and read with her, for she was a well-disposed girl. I specially brought forward those portions of the Word of God which show that 'there is none righteous, no, not one,' and that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

"One day I observed her weeping bitterly. 'What is the matter, my dear?' I inquired. 'Oh,'

she said, 'I have been such a sinner, my sins are so many, how can I ever hope for forgiveness?'

"As she was an upright and well-conducted girl, I knew that her present grief could only proceed from seeing her real state as a guilty sinner in the sight of God, so I said, 'I am very glad that you feel yourself to be a sinner, for otherwise you would not desire the Saviour, and now you feel your need of Him?' 'Oh yes, I do indeed, but my sins are so great, how can they be forgiven?' I read some passages of God's Word to her, but no comfort could she get, and for some days she continued in this downcast state of mind. But one morning she called me and said, 'Mammy, is it true that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?' 'Yes, dear, surely, for God says so,' I replied, and fetching my Bible I read her that verse "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from *all* sin.' She took the Bible and read for herself, 'from all sin.' She repeated 'from all sin,' and immediately added: 'Then it will cleanse me from all mine. Oh! I am so happy.'

"She lay back in her bed, for she was getting weaker, and nearing her end, though she did not know it. A week later, a lady visiting her, saw she was dying, and said, 'If you do not get better, are you afraid to die?'.. 'No,' she answered brightly, 'I am not afraid of dying, but the doctor thinks I shall be able to leave the hospital next week.' 'And if you do not, dear, are you ready to die ' 'Yes, I am, for the blood of Jesus Christ

his Son cleanseth from all sin.' The lady read some portions of the tenth chapter of John, showing the eternal security of those who belong to Christ and, having again spoken of the Saviour's love, and of the efficacy of 'His precious blood to blot out all sin, she wished Susanna good-bye, expecting to see her again, but before she came back, Susanna had been summoned home by the Lord.

"After this visit Susanna grew much worse, but, though suffering, she was always happy in the thought that the blood of Jesus had cleansed her from every stain. The last night her mother had been in, but though aware that her daughter was dying, and might not live till the morning, she went away. It was well that her daughter had found a Friend who would never leave her nor forsake her, for when He lays the sheep on His shoulders, He carries it all the way *home*. I said to her, 'Susanna dear, you are dying.' 'Yes,' she replied, 'I am going home, I am going to Jesus, and, Mammy, you won't be long, you will come soon.' Then she asked, 'Will you sing me, "Safe in the arms of Jesus"?' Another patient coming in, sang it with her, and she became partly unconscious, murmuring 'Safe—safe on His gentle breast.' Soon after this her spirit passed away to be for ever with the Lord, to dwell where

'No thorn the foot e'er pierces,
No teardrop dims the eye.'


"She went from a bed of suffering to dwell with Him who, when on earth, was the One before

whose presence pain and sorrow fled away, and who now soothes the dying believer with the smile of His never-dying love."

Reader, do you know this Jesus? He looks down from heaven and says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlv. 22). Again I ask, do you know this Jesus? Do you know the cleansing power of His blood, shed on Calvary's tree, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life? Susanna proved its efficacy, will not you?

H. R.

"I HAVE NO PEACE TO MAKE."



T often happens that when people get troubled about their souls, they begin to work in order to get relief of conscience, something like the poor Israelites of old who cried for deliverance, and were then put to work all the harder, but all their hard toil did not bring them one bit nearer the desired deliverance. No, they had to learn, like Jonah, that "salvation is of the Lord;" and that man is powerless to lift a finger, or even move an eyelash, toward his own salvation.

A gentleman who was troubled in soul, took up visiting the sick, thinking thereby to obtain rest

of conscience. One day he entered a house where an old man lay upon a sick-bed. Sitting down beside him, he said, "Well, my old friend, have you made your peace with God?"

To his surprise the old man replied, "I have no peace to make, sir."

"Oh, I think you misunderstand me," said the visitor. "Remember you are an old man, and in a very short time you will be dead, and you will have to appear before the bar of God. Now tell me, have you made your peace with God?"

"I tell you I have no peace to make," said the old man. "*The Lord Jesus, more than eighteen hundred years ago, made peace through the blood of His cross.*"

"Well, you have more than I have," was the frank confession of the district visitor. "I am trying to get peace for my soul. I visit in the parish, and go to the Lord's table, and I have not got peace."

Said the old man: "You will never get it in that way, sir. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

Reader, have you peace with God? Maybe you are seeking for it in sacraments, religious performances, and the like, but you will not find it in them. *Peace has been made*, and if you would be the happy possessor of it, you must receive it from the hand of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Cease working, and trust the finished work of Christ.

“HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US.”

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”—2 COR. v. 21.



N old man sat in the room in which the meetings were held in one of the towns of Tasmania, which room he kept in order, and into which he frequently retired for a little quiet with the Lord, and to chew the cud of some precious

scripture, and get thus its present application to his soul.

Expecting to find him there, I entered the room one morning, and as he sat poring over the large-type Bible, said—

“Well, Charlie, what scripture are you feeding upon this morning?”

Looking up, on hearing my voice, he replied in tremulous tones, “I’m thinking over this verse in 2 Cor. v. 21; and look’ee here, I can’t get over this part of it, ‘He hath made him to be sin for us’! Now that, to me, is marvellous! Did God make Him, who was His Son, who knew no sin, to be sin for *me*? Then, if that is the case, the other part of the verse is easy. Oh! if He who was God’s Son was made sin for me, what may not God do with a poor wretch like me? He may well make me to become the righteousness of God in Him!”

Now, beloved reader, this witness is true, and God had given to His beloved child the true clue to the understanding of this verse. If we get hold of the immensity of the fact contained in the first part of it, we shall have no difficulty in understanding the full scope of the last part of it; and the two parts must be equivalent.

The full foundation of the gospel is here: God hath made Christ *to be sin* for us—made Him the very thing that had destroyed us, as in type God had said to Moses, "Make thee a fiery serpent" (Num. xxi. 8). Not make the similitude of it, but make the thing itself. The brazen serpent was, of course, but the similitude of the thing that had bitten them, but the language is couched so as to bring out the full force of the fact in the anti-type, that Christ was actually *made sin*. Oh! the intensity of the actuality of the fact!—that stupendous fact! Dwell for a moment upon it. God hath made HIM (who knew no sin) *to be sin* for us! Was there ever, or can there be, any transaction upon earth equal to it? Is it not the basis upon which all God's purposes for time and for eternity, whether on earth or in heaven, can be carried out in Him, and consistently with God's nature and character?

Because of this, all God's thoughts of blessedness for man shall be fulfilled. Because of this, shall be accomplished His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself for man, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might head up

all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even IN HIM."

Because of this, the unsaved reader of the *Gospel Messenger* may now become the righteousness of God IN HIM.

Reader, is it thus with you?

But surely there must be more than this last to give an adequate answer to the stupendous fact which was accomplished in Him when He, the holy One, was *made* sin for us; and who shall say that this equivalent shall have been given this side the glory!

The chapter is one of a series in which the apostle vindicates the ministry of the gospel which he had received—a gospel which links with Christ in glory, and ministers thence life; the Spirit and righteousness transforming now morally those who receive it into His image from glory to glory, as they gaze upon Him there (chap. iii.).

This treasure is at present in an earthen vessel, which vessel is passing through afflictions here, but the treasure sustains (chap. iv.).

But if these afflictions end in death as to the body, as they may do, then a *New Creation* body awaits the one in whom the treasure is (chap. v. 1), and he earnestly desires it (chap. v. 2), and is always confident (ver. 6), and labours to be acceptable to Him always, whether here or there (ver. 9); for all must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (ver. 10).

This being so, the apostle is rendered all the

more earnest in his gospel ministry, and persuades men because of the "*terrors of the LORD*" (ver. 11), and judges that they who *were* dead, and live through His death, should live not to themselves, but to Him that died for them and rose again (vers. 14, 15), for already any man who is in Christ is, as to the spirit, connected with New Creation (ver. 17), and, as we have seen, he awaits a New Creation body.

Then he declares the terms of his ministry and the *basis* of it, and of all the hope that buoyed him up in the circumstances he has been describing. The basis of *all* is in the first clause of verse 21, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"!

Nothing, beloved reader, can be an adequate answer to the awful actuality of Christ being *made sin* for us but our becoming the righteousness of God in Him in the same actuality as that righteousness is now displayed in Himself, a Man in the glory of God. No question of time is in the verse to limit it; it is a question of the dignity, the infinite value, of the blessed Person of Him who was *made sin*; and the answer to it must be equivalent to that stupendous fact. In the language quoted above, "Oh! if He who was God's Son was made sin for me, what may not God do with a poor wretch like me?"

Because He was made sin for us, we are *now* the righteousness of God *in Him*.

Because He was made sin for us, New Creation

has already commenced in any man who is in *Him*.

Because He was made sin for us, we shall be displayed in the building of *God*, the house not made with hands (*i.e.*, not of this creation), eternal in the heavens.

G. J. S.

BIBLE WORK IN BRAZIL.



COLPORTEUR in the State of Parahyba do Norte was travelling with a mule-load of Bibles when he came upon a troop of pack-mules encamped for the night, and for safety he begged the muleteers to allow him to join them.

After supper, he read aloud some chapters of Scripture by the light of the camp fire, and conversed with the muleteers about what he had read. Just as he was about to roll himself in his blanket for sleep, a well-dressed horseman rode up, and asked permission to join the company.

After the usual salutations, the stranger remarked that he had had a miserable journey. His wife had recently died, and he had been to a neighbouring town to arrange for masses to be said for her release from purgatory; inveighing at the same time against the cupidity of the priest in charging him so much for the masses.

"And all for no service," said one of the muleteers, "if what this man's book says be correct."

"What book is that?" asked the stranger, turning to the colporteur.

"The Word of God," replied the latter, "and with your permission, I will read you some."

The stranger listened for a time, and then said, "Allow me to examine it myself."

By the red, flickering firelight he read on with deepening interest, and finally inquired, "Can you sell me a book like this?"

"Certainly," said the colporteur, and opened out his stock.

The gentleman selected a copy, and placed it carefully in his saddle-bags the next morning when he rode away.

Some months later the same colporteur was told of a certain captain who used to invite people to his house to hear him read a book. He set out to call at this captain's residence, a large mansion, surrounded by extensive plantations.

When they met, the captain proved to be no other than the stranger who had bought the Bible at the camp-fire, and by its means had learned the truth as it is in Jesus. He was so anxious that his friends and servants should share the same blessing, that he regularly invited them to listen to the Word of God.

ANON.

“THE THING I GREATLY FEARED IS
COME UPON ME.”



HE above text might well have been uttered by the one of whom I am about to write.

He was a labouring man, and few who knew him were aware that he ever thought of his soul, yet he did, as we shall presently see.

We had been having some gospel meetings in the neighbourhood where T—— lived, and one night, as my brother and myself were returning home, we met him in a field. As his neighbours came to the meetings, we ventured to ask T—— why he had not been. He made some excuse, but it was easy to tell by his breath where he had been, so my brother told him plainly what would be the end of his ways if he so continued.

I shall never forget poor T—— as he stood in that field, and with face bowed to the ground uttered these words: “I know very well that if I don’t change my ways, I shall find myself in a place where I don’t want to be.” But did he change his ways? Alas! no. He went on just the same, until the news was announced that one night he had staggered home and gone to bed, with only a little boy of about six years in the house with him.

In the morning the boy awoke, but strange and

startling to the little chap, his father neither moved nor spoke. What could the little fellow do? He thought of a neighbour, so, getting on some clothes as best he could, and finding a way out of the house, he ran off in his distress.

The neighbour sent for T——'s wife, who was "out nursing," and together they entered that silent chamber.

There lay the man with his eyes closed in death, and as the beer froth issues from his mouth, let us repeat his words, "I know very well that if I don't change my ways, I shall find myself in a place where I don't want to be;" and as we gaze on his face, and feel convinced that he slept in drink, and died in sleep, let us ask the question—Where is he now? Did his spirit leave that polluted body and wing its way to paradise? Ah! no.

But did he not mean to be there? Ah! yes. He, like many more, had meant to end well, but "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

But let me turn to my reader. Oh that I could look thee in the face, and warn thee in tender tones, lest thou also fall a victim to procrastination as poor T—— did.

Did it ever strike you that the tongue of the man who warns you is attached to a heart that loves you for Jesus' sake? Who warned like Jesus? Who loves like He? Why not come to Him now?

ANON.

JOHN III. 16 AGAIN.



YOU sent a tent-bill pasted on a tract, "The Lifeboat," by C. H. M., to Mrs S. She thought the tract would suit an old man at B——, but intended before sending it to remove the tent announcement, but, finding it firmly stuck on, she sent it with the tract, as it was, in an open envelope.

Some days after she saw the old man, and asked if he had read "The Lifeboat."

"Ay," said he, "and I think I be in it."

"But did you read the tract carefully?"

"Weel, anyhow I'll tell you what I read. I read that"—pointing to "GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE," which was printed at the bottom of the notice—"and I saw in it what I never saw before. I saw that God loved the world, and I be of it; and there's 'whomsoever,' and I be one of they, and I read it over I should say a twelve times and more, and I be just brought to say what Moses said, 'Stand still and see the salvation of God,' for I come to see I can do nought of myself."

E. C.

A TENT STORY

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it."—PROV. xv. 23.



H! why did you not speak to me on Tuesday night?" said a lady I met a few days after closing some Tent services; "I just wanted a word of help, and waited behind in the Tent for it."

I felt and looked my surprise, and stammered out, "I hardly understand you, surely you have been on the Lord's side for years; I never doubted you were His."

"Yes," she said, "*you* thought so, *all* thought so, but the question never really came home to me until the Tent Meetings, and then, night after night my longing for blessing deepened, and at last the joy of salvation is mine."

"Oh, do please tell me all about it; I am surprised, and very thankful."

"Well, you remember I came to the Tent Meetings almost from the start. I did not like them at first. I got startled; I had never thought of the love of God, the work of the Lord Jesus, and the deep need of my soul in the way it was presented. As the days passed on, I yearned to know the reality of a Saviour's love as my own portion, but I was ashamed to confess my state, almost ashamed to admit it to myself.

"The last week of the meetings came, and I was still unblessed. Oh! how I longed for some one

to speak to me ; I constantly lingered behind for the after-meetings, and still no one spoke to me. Last Sunday night I felt almost desperate, but waited for Monday ; no light, no blessing came on Monday, and Tuesday was the last meeting. I never shall forget that meeting ; I was too much disturbed to pay much attention to the preaching, but at the close you asked all who could to rise and sing—

‘ My heart is fixed, Eternal God,
Fixed on ‘Thee,
And my immortal choice is made,
Christ for me.’

“ I dared not rise, the solemn question was *not* settled. I was in hopeless despair, a hollow professor. Oh ! how I longed for some one to lead me into blessing. But the After-Meeting closed, and I went out of the bright blaze of the light of the Tent into the darkness of the night.

“ I felt now that all hope was gone, and I got home I hardly know how. Supper was ready, but my heart was breaking so, I rushed upstairs, and fell on my knees by my bed. How I tried and tried to pray, but could only groan and groan. Finally, exhausted and only partially undressed, I threw myself on my bed and fell into a troubled, dreamy sleep.

“ In my dream I was once again back in the Tent ; I saw the bright lamps, the eager faces, and the earnest preacher, and went over once again the

whole meeting, and at last came to the closing hymn. Suddenly I awoke to find myself sitting up in bed singing aloud—

‘Christ for me, Christ for me.’

“I cannot tell you the indescribable joy of that moment: all the clouds had gone, the sense of His love filled my soul, and all was peace and joy.

“I had felt that night that I must be saved then or never, and God did it in His own way, and I bless Him for it.”

A year has rolled away, and I again met, in identically the same spot, this trophy of God’s grace.

“Well, and how is it with you now?” I asked.

“The joy brighter, and the peace deeper,” she replied.

Dear reader, may I ask if you have ever faced honestly in God’s presence the real state of *your* soul; all that which is merely external and for the eye of man must be unmasked sooner or later. It is not worth your while to deceive men, and we certainly cannot deceive God.

Can you say—

“And my immortal choice is made,
Christ for me?”

The One who loved you and died for you, bids you trust Him “just now.”

G. W. H.

THE FO'C'STLE BELL.

A MIMIC.



T was a hot, quiet afternoon, and we lay becalmed. We were on a voyage to Australia in a sailing ship, and most folk not actually on duty were enjoying a siesta. I sat under the awning on deck, and with nothing special to attract me, became interested in watching the half-hourly ringing of the bell on the quarter-deck, with its answer from the fo'c'stle bell.

As a rule on board ship the time is made by the captain—that is to say, it is never eight bells till the captain says, "Make it eight bells" (that is, noon)—a rule more especially adhered to on board a man-o'-war. The time is then struck on the main bell and carried to other parts of the ship by subsidiary bells, so that all may hear. When things are moving briskly, this is important for the watches and for discipline, but it was not of much moment at this time, as we were out of the course of ships and making no headway. The ringing of the quarter-deck bell was, in this case, for the time entrusted to a boy.

Some children were amusing themselves on the quarter-deck, and our boy in charge of the bell, interested in what they were doing, let the time slip occasionally; then recollecting himself, would

run to strike the four, five, or six bells as the case might be. The look-out man on the fo'c'stle then rang his bell, but in no case did he ring this until the quarter-deck bell gave him the time, which was ten or even fifteen minutes out occasionally.

That fo'c'stle bell is a mimic, I thought; you cannot depend upon it at all; it only imitates what is doing here on the quarter-deck. If this is right, that is right; if this is wrong, that is wrong. It does not strike because it knows the time o' day, but just imitates that which it thinks does know.

Now, so it is with many people who profess Christianity, and in whom it is no more than a profession. They try to imitate true Christians, and flatter themselves they are all right if they succeed, though this, alas, helps them but little. The devil was ever a mimic; he originates nothing, but follows in the wake of what God is doing, seeking to produce a spurious imitation of God's reality. These are they who are taken captive by the devil for his will (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26), and unless God give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, they will partake of his doom. There are two classes of these imitators; the one is composed of the hypocrites, and the other of the ritualists. Those of the first [class head straight for destruction; those of the other are not only going themselves, but are luring others also with themselves to destruction.

The object of the hypocrite is to pass himself off as a Christian for the sake of what he may obtain

here by it, and this he does, mimicking the believer, as often in that which is wrong in itself as in that which is right. Christians, alas, often do that which is wrong; but they will never contend that it is right, but own with sorrow their failure. The hypocrite, on the other hand, will argue that a thing is right because he has seen others do it; just as the look-out man might argue that he was right because the quarter-deck bell gave the time. In the latter case it would be a sound plea; not so in the former.

They may flatter themselves that as the Christian is assured of the end, so it may be well also with themselves, but in vain. Religious for what they can get—the loaves and fishes; running greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, loving the wages of unrighteousness; even in what they know naturally as brute beasts, in these they corrupt themselves, and perish in the gainsaying of Kore. The hypocrite's hope shall perish!

But the ritualist depends for salvation upon ordinances, and perishes in his ritual, as it is written of the Egyptians that they assayed to do what Israel did by faith, and perished in the attempt. Only there was enmity in the Egyptians' hearts, but none necessarily with the ritualist. The passage of the Red Sea is a figure that there is no redemption but through death, and this is what is meant by baptism. To the man of faith this is a reality, but the ritualist has no faith, and depends simply upon the ordinance, which is useless.

Many in their company may be honestly mistaken, but a mistake here is fatal, not only to the one who makes it, but to others also, for the ritualist is like the wrecker of old who lured ships to destruction, and spite of their serious mistake, those who are deceived become wreckers themselves while in that state. May the Lord awaken such ! If honest, they may eventually be delivered, but Satan is behind it all, and knows perfectly what he is doing. Such argue in this way : Are not Christians baptized ? Do they not take the Lord's Supper ? Is it not right to do these things ? If we do them, are we not right as well as they ? A thousand such questions may salve the conscience, but an honest conscience can never be satisfied thus. None of these things can meet the demands of divine justice ; none of them cleanse from sin !

On the other hand, the Christian gives the time of day to all around. He does not trust in himself, and gives a warning note as to mere good deeds. He knows, as Luther knew, that good deeds do not make good men, but good men good deeds. He tells of the utter depravity of the human race, and that Christ alone by His death and bloodshedding can deliver from judgment and its consequences. He gives no uncertain sound ; imitation, ritual, prayers, tears, and almsdeeds have no value in themselves, can never cleanse from sins. He keeps a clear reckoning, and gives the right time by being in constant touch with Christ, whose joy fills his heart and makes his face continually to

shine. Should he at any time, through unwatchfulness, strike a wrong bell or give the wrong time, he at once owns it, and seeks to put the matter right.

Consciously right himself, his desire is to help others, in the midst of whom he walks, to get right also. He knows the One who has said, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He takes his observations of the Sun that rules his day at every available opportunity, and reports to his Captain, The Sun is on the meridian, sir! Who replies, Make it twelve o'clock then! And, without being a second out, he warns all of the passing time and the coming eternity.

God turneth man to destruction, but says, "Return, ye children of men." Solemn it is to think that the mere hypocrite, though he may get for the moment that which seems so desirable, is nevertheless heading straight for the rocks and shoals of this very destruction, hastening indeed his own everlasting woe, and that the mere ritualist is not only trusting his soul to a cockle shell, which can never serve him in the billows of judgment, but is positively luring others on to the same destruction into which he is himself hastening.

Who would willingly be like the fo'c'stle bell? Who loves imitation and uncertainty? Who would not rather tread the deck of this world with conscious assurance and joy, a guide to others in the voyage of life? But one may ask, How am I

to get this assurance? Scripture answers that assurance is the outcome of faith; that faith gives full assurance; and all that faith needs is competent authority, which it trusts; just as the seaman trusts the certified charts, steering clear of all shoals and rocks, and with the fullest assurance comes into port, having given by observation the right time of day all through the voyage. Thousands of vessels have made the voyage before upon the same authority, and he doubts not that he shall reach the desired haven. So the Christian trusts the Word of God, a chart by which myriads of souls have passed through the rough billows of this life with the most perfect assurance, and landed on the other side in peace.

How is it with my reader? Time flies apace, the end is near! How will you face the Judge when He calls for your peculiar book? Will you point to deeds of merit or of ritual? Alas for you, these will never cover your devoted head. Bow at once to the name of Jesus, plead His blood and death, and you may lift your head above the storm, and run clear of the lee shore of destruction into the haven of eternal rest.

G. J. S.

"BOAST not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. xxvii. 1).

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

CHRIST'S FULNESS FOR MAN'S NEED.

(Read LUKE v.)



YOU find in this chapter four men brought into contact with Christ, all of them alike in being sinners, but all different as to their state when the Lord meets them, yet all perfectly and divinely met by Christ, and therefore all of them afterwards witnesses of the grace of Christ.

In the first three you have the direct effects of sin on the conscience and on the body. In the last, it is more a question of the heart. But whether it be conscience, body, or heart, Christ meets every one of them perfectly. And, my reader, whatever the state of *your* conscience or your heart, Christ is more than able to meet that state. The body, as a rule, He does not touch now.

When the Lord first came to earth He did heal the body, as an attestation of His divine power, but the man who only believes in Christ because of miracles has not soul-saving faith. You must get down before Christ in the sense of what Christ is personally, as the Saviour of your soul, the Saviour of man.

Christ is a perfect Saviour, the one who meets every need, and to whom the Holy Ghost would direct each heart. Let us see the way in which the Lord meets these four men.

I.—THE CONVICTED MAN CALMED.

First we have Peter. This is not Peter's conversion. He was a converted man at this time, but he did not know personally the One who converted him. He was like many souls who are not at home with Christ, not happy with Him, though they have been touched by the Word of God.

Do you ask, When was Peter converted? In John i. you get his conversion. The Lord meets Peter there, and shows He knows all about him, changes his name too, that is, asserts His authority over Him. You belong to Me, the Lord says, as it were. Peter did not learn his lesson though; and now in this fifth chapter of Luke, the Lord emancipates and brings out this man on His side.

The Lord does not say to Peter, Lend me your boat. He is Lord of all. He has bought the world as well as created it. Men may deny Him, but He is the master. I do not say all are redeemed, but all are *bought*, and the price was His own blood.

The Lord, Himself, then from Peter's boat preached to men; and then he pays Peter for the use of his boat. He is beholden to no man. "Launch out," He says, "and let down your nets for a draught." "Master," says Peter, "we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing. Nevertheless, *at thy word* (that was faith), I will let down the net." Have you, my reader, ever let down your net for a draught? Do you say,

I have toiled and striven to get peace, to know that I am forgiven, and I am anxious still. Now then, at *His word*, let down your net; at "*thy word*," that is the link between God and the soul.

Peter acted on Christ's word, and the net was so full, it brake, *i.e.*, the blessing was too great for the vessel. You are sure to be blest when you obey Christ; when you let down at His command.

When Peter saw it, he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." What was his sin? Was it sin to lend the Lord his boat? Was it sin to say he had toiled all night and taken nothing? Was it wrong to let down the net? No! What then had raised the question of sin in his conscience? Ah, when he saw the fish filling up his net that day, after his night of fruitless toil, he found out it was more than a man he had in his boat that day; he found out he was in the presence of God.

The divine glory of the blessed Lord had shone into the recesses of Peter's guilty heart, and in a moment he goes down and judges himself to be, as he was, a *sinful* man. Not merely a sinner, but a sinful man. "Born in sin and shapen in iniquity." *Sinful*, and the sins of every day running over from a nature irretrievably bad. This is always the case when the soul gets into the presence of the Lord; and yet notice, where does Peter fall? At the feet of Jesus! For at the very moment when I discover that I am not fit for

Christ, that is the moment when I feel I must have Him. I am not fit for the Lord, he says, as it were, but I cannot do without Him; and I believe that, had the Lord moved one step from him, Peter would have clutched Him.

Have you, my reader, ever known in your history a moment like this? If not, do not delude yourself with the thought that you are converted. For there comes a moment when you, in the presence of the Lord, find out you are a ruined, undone sinner; and then you also find nothing but Christ will do for you. You may not have known this in the vivid way Peter did; but if you have not known it, depend upon it you and the Lord have never met. What does Jesus say? "Fear not." He loves to say this to the trembling soul. Have you ever heard His voice saying to you, "Fear not"? It is thus Christ speaks to souls; and if you say, I have never heard Him say, "Fear not," I expect He has never heard you say, "Depart from me." You have never taken your true place as a ruined sinner, and therefore you have never met Him as the peace-giving Saviour. The two go together.

When a man learns what he is before God, he does not incriminate his neighbours: he says, "I have sinned," not "we." When a soul gets before God every other living being is left out, and the soul and God are alone. Have you, I ask, known this moment? It is a moment of blessing; for when I learn what I am, I learn also what God is.

If I learn that I am full of guilt, I learn also that God is full of grace.

Peter from this time left all to follow Christ. He had an object now in Christ that eclipsed all down here. And notice this, he left his business when it was at its best and brightest. I suppose he had never had such a draught of fish as that day.

II.—THE DEFILED MAN CLEANSED.

Look now at the next man; a man full of leprosy. Here we have the *outbreak* of sin. Sin does not only give me a guilty conscience, and make me know I am unfit for the presence of God, but there is also the sense of defilement. "Lord, if *thou wilt*," the leper says. He knew His *power*, but he doubted His *willingness*. Are you, my reader, conscious of your sin, knowing you are defiled by it. and you know Jesus could remove it, and yet you doubt His *willingness*? Oh, prove Him! Come to Him, and know this very day the touch of His hand! "I will, be thou clean," He says, and touches the leper. Here His divinity is proved again. Had any mere man touched a leper, he would have been defiled; but when Jesus touched the leper his leprosy was healed. This man had just enough faith to come to Christ, and just enough unbelief to make him doubt Christ; but he got blessing, for it was *Christ* he came to. You come to Him too, my reader. He is enough. His blood is enough to wash your sins away, and nothing but the blood of Christ is enough.

III.—THE PALSIED MAN PARDONED.

Look at the next scene: the palsied man, brought by the faith of others. Paralysed, the fruit of sin. They cannot come in by the door here, because Satan has that blocked up to keep these four and their sick friend from Christ? What do they do? They break up the roof.

It is one of the most magnificent flights of faith. What do you think the people round about said when they saw the bottom of the bed coming down through the roof. No doubt many thought it impudent, audacious. What did Jesus think of it? He was DELIGHTED! "When he saw their *faith*, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee."

Faith and forgiveness are joined together by the Lord in such a way that nothing can rend them apart. The moment there is faith, there is forgiveness. We have had, then, a man to whom sin has given a guilty conscience, and Jesus says when he draws near to Him, "Fear not." We have had a defiled man in his guilt, and He says, "Be thou clean." We have had one in his sins, and He says to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This is the Christ for you, my friend, for He is the same to-day as He was then; you come and try Him.

IV.—THE RICH MAN SATISFIED.

Now comes the fourth man, "a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom;" Jesus passes by and speaks two words, "Follow me."

There the man was with bags of gold, but he was not happy; for money never made a man happy yet. Two words fall on his ear, "Follow me," and what happens? All goes, he leaves *all*, rises up, and follows Jesus. He does not stay to gather up his money or anything. Two words from Christ changed the whole current of that man's life.

"Follow me;" and he left all and followed Him. He dropped into the feelings of the heart of Christ, and this hitherto unsatisfied man gets his heart satisfied, and goes along full of Christ! What a conversion! What a grand conversion! He had a portion in this blessed Saviour, an object to fill his heart for time and for eternity.

Rob me of Christ, I am poor indeed; but give me Jesus, and I *have everything* my heart can want. Will not you, my reader, come to Him, listen to Him, hear His own voice, and henceforward follow Him?

W. T. P. W.

SATISFIED.

SAID a dear old Scotch boddie after a little Bible-talk meeting: "I just saw this, that if God was satisfied with the work of His Son, surely a pair creatur like me micht bē, and I am."

"Sweetest rest and peace have filled me,
Sweeter praise than tongue can tell;
God is satisfied with Jesus,
I am satisfied as well."

THE BULLET STOPPED THERE.



TORIES of pocket Bibles that have saved life in battle are no novelty; but their commonness does not cheapen them, if they are true, and if their moral is not overdone.

In a recent Epworth League meeting a returned soldier told his experience with his pocket Testament. It was handed to him on the cars while on his way to the South with his regiment. He had taken a "treat" at the last station, and to use his own expression, was "feeling gay."

"All right," he said laughingly to the donor of the book, "I'll carry it. It'll be good to stop a bullet."

Some weeks afterward came the fighting at Santiago, and on the day of the famous charge of the Rough Riders the young soldier was hit, and left lying among the wounded. He regained consciousness while under the surgeon's hands, and heard him say, "That was a close call." A Mauser bullet in his breast had been extracted. It had barely reached his heart, and stopped.

"What is it, doctor?" he whispered, but the busy surgeon had hurried on to his next patient. General Wheeler's daughter was there, ministering to the bleeding men, and he beckoned to her and asked her to tell him about his wound. She brought his pocket Testament, which he had carried in his

blouse, and showed him a hole through it made by the deadly lead, and told him how narrow his escape had been. Piercing the book in an oblique direction, the missile had found exactly resistance enough to arrest it at the danger line.

For the first time the reckless soldier took an interest in the gift he had accepted with a jest. He remembered with a strange throb the flippant remark he had made on the train. He kept the Testament near him, and in the tedious hours of his convalescence he often turned the leaves and noted the texts which had been crossed by the bullet.

There was one verse that he could not get beyond. The shot had cut through the middle of it, and left its scar there like an index.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

Many times a day he read the verse over, and thought about it. His life must have been worth saving, he said to himself, else he would have been underground with his buried comrades. But everlasting life! Something for ever beyond and above fatal wounds. That meant more than the "accident" that saved one man. God has declared everlasting life to men, by Jesus Christ, His Son. The soldier became the pupil of his book. To believe is to accept. To accept is to be obedient. To obey is to make Christ the example and His teachings the rule of life. It was no delusion when his

heart told him that he was willing to accept this formula and to "live by it."

The story is not a remarkable one—in material or initial incident. Any other book than the New Testament would have 'diverted the shaft of death as easily; but its blow might not have pointed him to a word that brought a changed motive in life with it. Out of this distinction blossoms the lesson, and a natural circumstance takes an eternal character. Whether the means were casual or divine, the effect must be left to testify. The man who went to the war a scoffer came back changed in moral purpose. He had become a Christian, because he had become a follower of the Christ.

ANON.

CHRIST VICTORIOUS AND SATAN VANQUISHED.



N the reign of Darius the Mede, God's servant Daniel, who was in captivity, was *preferred* above the presidents and princes of his kingdom, because an *excellent spirit* was in him, and the king thought to set him over his whole realm

(Dan. vi. 3).

Now Daniel in many ways is a striking figure of the One of whom John the Baptist, His fore-runner, a man greater than all born of women up to that moment said, "He it is who, coming after

me, is *preferred* before me," &c. (John i. 27), even our Lord Jesus Christ. And who could be compared with Him for *excellence of spirit*, the Man of God's eternal counsel, whom God will yet set over the whole wide realm of creation?

Jealous of Daniel, this favoured servant of the king, the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against him, but they could find none occasion nor fault: forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him (ver. 4). And Jesus, the Son of God, being in this world of sin, was the holy One and the just. Absolutely without sin, the unblemished Lamb of God, He walked faultless before Him. Every thought, word, and deed of the Son of the Blessed, the true Daniel, was in perfect unison with the mind of God.

Baffled in their efforts by the consistency of Daniel, his enemies confessed one to another, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (chap. vi. 5). Satan is not particular how he accomplishes his malignant end, and hence, if baffled on one side, he is sure to attack his victim from another. He found many ready instruments in the Medo-Persian monarchy, men who, in order to advance themselves, would stoop to any wickedness, even to the destruction of their fellow. Hence, knowing that the law of the kingdom was unchangeable, and that even the king himself was bound by it, they set to work with the utmost subtlety to ruin and slay Daniel. Few

natural hearts are proof against flattery, and thus the proposal that any man who should ask a petition of God or *any other man but the king*, should be cast into the den of lions, at once met with success. The king, not yet perceiving their wicked intention, and how it would affect the man whom he had exalted and whom he esteemed, readily signed the writing and the decree, for they took good care to put the matter in plain black and white.

But Daniel was not to be frightened into unfaithfulness to the God whom he served. His heart's confidence was in Him. And so he continued as before to pray and give thanks to God three times a day on his knees at his open window towards Jerusalem. His enemies had entrapped him now, and they soon communicated to the king what they had taken good care to see and hear. And then was he displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him, labouring to accomplish it till the going down of the sun. But these men pressed the authority of the law, and the king with a heavy heart commanded that he should be cast into the lions' den. But he said to the victim of Satan's plot, "Thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee" (ver. 16). Then a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and the signet of his lords, *that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel*.

How forcibly all this sets forth that which befell

our Lord Jesus Christ! Walking here as the faithful and true Witness, at the end of His blessed path, His own judge washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person." Though yet, at the mouth of false witnesses, suborned by subtle and callous priests, and others who desired their own exaltation, he yielded the One who was infinitely superior in every way to them all, to their wicked designs. Faithful to God at all costs, and owned by Him as His beloved Son, His enemies clamoured for His death, on the false charge that *He made Himself the Son of God*, and pressed that by the law of the Jews He ought to die.

The heart of God was set upon the Blessed One, but, behind all the scenes of man's diabolical wickedness, there was no way of accomplishing the inscrutable purpose of God for His glory, and to the meeting of the whole question of sin and Satan's power, than by Christ going into death. *The holy and sinless One must die.* "Who being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts ii. 23). And again, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared, *though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation*

unto all them that obey him," &c. (Heb. v. 7-9). The blessed Lord met the whole power of Satan, the roaring lion going into death and the grave. Satan and men did their worst against Daniel, but yet, when he was delivered over apparently to certain death, divine power came in and stopped the lions' mouths. And Satan and men did their worst against Christ, and He went into death, that through death He might annul him who had the power of death, that is the devil (Heb. ii. 14). And the stone was rolled to the sepulchre's mouth (Mark xv. 46).

Now, when Daniel was in the den, the king was greatly troubled, and passed a sleepless and restless night. And he arose very early, and went in haste to the den, and with a lamentable voice he cried out, and said, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" Then said Daniel unto the king: "O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me: and also before thee, O king, I have done no hurt." Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God (vers. 18-23).

We find in this a distinct shadowing forth of the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Daniel was received from the dead in a figure, after the lions' mouths were stopped. Christ, having completely vanquished the whole power of the enemy to the eternal glory of God, was raised by the glory of the Father. It was not possible that God's holy One should see corruption (Acts ii. 27). And in resurrection-life beyond death He said, "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. 18). Innocency was found in Daniel, and holiness was found in Christ. Neither had done any hurt. Daniel was raised to prosperity in the kingdom of the Medes. Christ was raised and exalted to highest glory to the right hand of the living God.

Hear now the proclamation by letter of the great king Darius unto all people, nations, and languages that dwell on the earth! "Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions" (vers. 25-27).

And, dear reader, a far greater than Darius, even God Himself, the God of Daniel, has made a proclamation. *Unto all men upon the face of the whole earth, and hence to you included, He pro-*

claims peace. He has made it by the blood of the cross of His dear Son, and it is preached in His Name. Why should not you have it? All men are called to fear before Him, the living God; for the fear of the Lord 'is the beginning of wisdom. He who delivered Daniel and raised up Christ, is ready to deliver and rescue you from the whole power of Satan and sin. Are you groaning in hard bondage, with a bad conscience, accused by Satan, and conscious of your guilt and sin in the light of the presence of the living God, the holy One? *We present to you a victorious Christ, exalted to highest glory, who has met and overcome the whole of the great enemy's power. A living Saviour in glory alone can meet your heart's need, and His precious blood will cleanse you whiter than snow, the moment you trust therein. It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. xvii. 11). Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission (Heb. ix. 22).*

The great accuser, Satan, is a vanquished foe. He did his utmost against Christ, but his greatest apparent victory was actually his greatest defeat. The mouth of our great adversary, the roaring lion, is completely stopped. Do you know the blessed One who stopped it? If not, why should you not know Him? God preaches Him to you now. Believe on His name, and *God Himself will justify and reconcile you.* There is absolutely nothing whatever to do, for He has already accomplished all. *God has raised and accepted the man who did*

it, and presents Him as a *present Saviour* to all—to you. By faith in Him you may know that *all your sins are actually put away*, that *He is your righteousness before God*, and *be at peace with Him now and evermore* (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1).

But the accusers of Daniel, and of Daniel's God, even though they were great princes and presidents, were cast into the lions' den and died. So also with sinners in the day of judgment. God will surely judge, and that eternally, all who have lived in the enmity of their hearts against Him and His people. May He grant that *you may never be one in that day*, though surely you are one if *unconverted to-day* (for all are His enemies in the natural state), and hence in great danger thereof. Therefore, whilst it is called "to-day," *humble yourself in His holy presence, and believe His testimony concerning His Son, and follow Him.*

E. H. C.

A JAPANESE LIFE OF CHRIST.



LIFE of Christ in Japanese has recently been published at Tokio. The author explains that he is not a Christian, and that he has no other purpose in his volume than the plain statement of historical facts. The leading events in our Lord's life are related straightforwardly, often

in the actual language of the Gospels, while miraculous elements are set down unequivocally, without either apology or criticism. After giving substantially the New Testament account of the resurrection and ascension, the author concludes thus:—

“These are the facts that are believed and accepted by the vast majority of the people of the West concerning Jesus Christ. I have put them down here with no desire to propagate Christianity, but simply to make them familiar to my countrymen. I close with the language of a Jewish teacher concerning Christianity, uttered under circumstances somewhat similar to those now existing in Japan:—‘Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do . . . for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown, but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them, lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God.’ ”

The book is already being read by thousands whom books prepared by Christian writers quite fail to touch.

Who can tell what blessing may not ensue, by the sovereign mercy of God, even through such a book as this?

“CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN.”

A FEW of us were training to a Gospel meeting, and after passing tracts to all in our compartment, one of our company began to press the importance of confessing Christ. All the travellers became interested, except a soldier, who sat opposite the writer, with his head down, looking troubled, as if he wished he was somewhere else. Five weeks after, one of our fellow-labourers was at a prayer meeting: among others, a bright young soldier prayed and thanked God for His grace and goodness to unworthy sinners, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our friend recognised him, and went up and asked if he were the soldier who had travelled with us in the train. “Yes, I am,” he replied; “I was then a miserable backslider, and my heart was well-nigh breaking to think that I was unfit to confess my Saviour in that railway compartment; but I went back to the barracks, and that very night got on my knees and told the Lord all about it. He put it *all* right for me, and now I am happy.” How encouraging to confess Christ before men; to “be instant in season and out of season.”

H. J. V.

“THE life of Christianity,” said Luther, “consists in possessive pronouns.” It is one thing to say, “Christ is a Saviour;” it is quite another thing to say, “He is *my* Saviour and *my* Lord.” The devil can say the first; the true Christian alone can say the second.

SAVED AT MIDNIGHT.



E was a poor sinner. A regular drudge of the devil, sunk in heathen darkness. But at midnight the light of God streamed into his soul, and he was saved for the bright glory.

It was in the ancient city of Philippi, he was by calling a jailor, and his heart was as hard as the manacles that he bound round the wrists of his prisoners, but when God in matchless grace reached him all was changed.

Strange incidents had happened on the previous day. Two dear servants of God went to that city. The message they carried was one of love, and told of a Saviour for guilty sinners. For this, their only offence, they were dragged before the magistrates, who ordered them to be beaten with the cruel Roman scourge, their naked backs were lacerated, even to the flowing of their blood. Then the jailor took them and thrust them rudely into the inner dungeon, and made their feet fast in the stocks. Afterwards, no doubt, he ate his supper without a single qualm of conscience, and went soundly to sleep. But what of his prisoners? Were dark forebodings filling their hearts, and do we find them bemoaning their lot? Nay. The glory light was streaming into their souls, and it

MADE THEM SING FOR JOY.

Such a Saviour they possessed and such a spring of joy was theirs that the deep affliction they had passed through did not touch their happiness. Let me ask you, reader, Do you possess the same Saviour and the same joy? "And the prisoners heard them." Strange sounds indeed to fall upon their ears in such a place. But more, the voice of prayer was mingled with the hymn of praise, and that reached the ear of God. He answered by a mighty earthquake, which shook that prison to its foundation, and also shook that sleeping jailor into the sea of soul-trouble. He knew not where to turn. But the devil, who was eagerly watching his poor dupe, drove his hapless bark through those stormy waters almost on the rocks of a suicide's eternity. It was then that God arrested him, and that command of mercy,

"DO THYSELF NO HARM,"

sounded through the midnight darkness. It held him back from destruction. He called for a light, and trembling as a guilty sinner in the sight of God, he cried, "What must I do to be saved?" Quick as thought the answer came to that inquiring one, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" And there on the spot he was saved. The precious blood cleansed him, and to the Saviour's bosom that poor sinner was clasped in one eternal embrace of infinite love. There was joy in heaven, and joy in the heart of that saved sinner that night.

Friend, wouldst thou know the cause? It was the grace of God that did it; because Jesus died, He was free to do it. It delighted His heart to save that poor, hell-deserving sinner in days gone by, and it will delight Him to save thee to-day, if thou art still unsaved. Oh! flee to the Saviour, ere thy sins plunge thee into the eternal darkness of hell. Only believe Him, and He will save thee, and that just now.

J. T. M.

THE INEVITABLE.



“**HERE'S** the inevitable!” This was the expression of one of a party of gentlemen, as they drove together over the hills in one of the pleasantest parts of Australia. They had been conversing cheerily about the prospects of the colony, their own special interests in it, and the beauty of the surrounding scenery, when suddenly, upon the top of a hill, they came upon the newly-formed cemetery, with its few monuments of departed humanity. These seemed to cast a kind of half gloom upon their spirits, as one of them remarked, “There’s the inevitable!”

Such a voice in such a scene must have an effect upon the spirit of any sensitive being. Amid all that makes life here desirable, to be reminded so forcibly upon a sudden, that one cannot remain to

enjoy it, is a serious consideration to any who will spare a moment to think of it. This voice cries aloud to each in the language of the poet—

"Inevitably THOU shalt die!"

or, to put it in inspired language—

"It is appointed unto men once to die"

(Heb. ix. 27).

But why this inevitable doom? Why this divine appointment? Ah! reader, is it not because of man's sin, and are you not of that race? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). See! death passed upon *all* men, *i.e.*, it is inevitable to each, which means, "it is not to be avoided by windings or bendings." There is no path that can be taken by mere man that will not end in death.

Oh, how true, how solemnly true it is that the cemeteries planted in never so fair a scene, and decorated by all the embellishments that nature, assisted by human skill, can furnish, still cry aloud to all who have ears to hear—

"Inevitably thou shalt die!"

But death is only *the* inevitable to those who admit no more than they can see, for there are other things that are inevitable also. To follow up the thought before us a little—First, judgment is inevitable; for part of God's appointment for man is—

"After death the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

The man that dies must give an account of himself to God ; he is a responsible being, and must meet and settle the matter of his stewardship with Him to whom he is responsible. Is the reader prepared for this judgment into which, if unsaved, he must enter, which admits of no escape or evasion, and the issue of which must be the lake of fire with its eternal torments ?

If not, perhaps you may be inclined to listen to other things which, because of what God is and what Christ has wrought, are inevitable also. Death and judgment are the inevitable results of man's sin, as we have seen, because of the holiness and righteousness of God. Now, holiness and righteousness are the outcome of one side of God's nature, which is light. "God is light," and let it not be forgotten that these attributes of God will never be forfeited or sacrificed.

If there were nothing else than this in God, then there must be an end of man because he is a sinner. But the very same epistle that declares that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John i.), declares also that "God is love" (1 John iv.); and because of this it was inevitable that a remedy must be provided to meet the need of ruined man, which remedy is presented to the responsibility of man. Scripture gives both the necessity and the responsibility in these words : "The Son of man *must* be lifted up, that *whosoever believeth* on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world," &c. (John iii. 14-16).

Now, mark ! Man as a sinner stands between these two things, viz., the inevitable results of his own sin, which are death and judgment on the one hand, and the offered results of Christ's death, which in itself was the inevitable outcome of God's love, on the other ; which results, if accepted, include deliverance from both death and judgment, and introduce the soul, in the Person of Christ, into all the favour in which He as a man stands before God. So that responsibility is thrown upon all who have heard this good news to clear themselves of the doom that awaits them by a ready acceptance of the Person and work of Christ, who alone can bring them into divine favour, a favour which no man of the first race has obtained, or can obtain.

How is it with the reader ? Why stand with death and judgment before you ? Why not flee your awful doom, and seek an interest in Him whose arms are outstretched towards you, and whose voice sounds throughout this world inviting, in terms of tenderest mercy, the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him and find the rest they need, and which He alone can give ?

But there is another thing that is inevitable still, and faith writes it upon the tombstones of the inevitable deathyard. It is stated thus in Scripture—

“ This corruptible MUST put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality ” (1 Cor. xv. 53).

Ah, yes ! Christ has died and risen again. Risen triumphant ! Risen leading him captive who had always led man captive, having annulled through death his power. And because of this victory obtained in the very last stronghold of the enemy, death is not only deprived of its sting for the believer, but must yield its prey also, even if the body of the believer shall be laid in the grave, as so many thousands have been. But this is not even inevitable to the believer now, for it is written also—

" We shall not all sleep,"

or die.

To faith, then, the cemetery is not only a reminder that death is here as the inevitable result of man's sin, but that resurrection is just as inevitable as the result of Christ's work. Yea, that it is already begun, for "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20). Oh, how different the thoughts that are suggested to the believer's heart from those which, by the same thing, are suggested to the heart of the natural man ! Nature sees death and the tomb ; faith pierces them both, and enters into the glorious harvest which shall inevitably result from Christ's death and resurrection, anticipating the moment when all the justified, who are in their graves, shall hear His voice and come forth to the resurrection of life, thus to swell His triumph over all that man, deceived by Satan, has brought in.

May we not ask, What thought does the cemetery suggest to you, dear reader? Do not, we pray you, allow yourself to sink into indifference as to it, which your very familiarity with it naturally induces. How many hard and callous hearts pass through the closest intercourse with the dying and the dead, even to the handling their bodies, in some stage of this most humiliating passage of man's history, with the most terrible indifference, and pass on into death themselves, without ever giving a thought as to the reason of it, or its consequences?

Blinded dupes of Satan's malice, they go to spend an eternity in hell with himself, and to awaken when too late to all the awful reality of the "inevitable," because of man's sin.

May the reader's heart be softened and touched by the solemnity of it all, ere it be too late! May he see and own what he has wrought and deserved, and avail himself now by faith of the present results of Christ's work! He may then await the inevitable consequences of that work in the full display of Christ's victory over death in the resurrection of life. Thus only can he escape the resurrection to judgment, with its great white throne, and its lake of fire for ever! G. J. S.

"THE fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Why hath he said so? Because he is a fool! Why hath he said it in his heart? Lest every one should know him to be a fool!"

ARE THE BRAKES ON?



LIFE is full of uncertainties, as all will admit. But there are two great certainties, which stand facing every one. They face YOU, dear reader. First: *You are here*, either for God or the devil. Second: *You are going hence*, either to heaven or hell.

To be sure these words may seem commonplace. You have heard them often before. You realise fact No. 1 full well, that you are here, and you probably wish you could stay here for ever. But stop! Think! What about fact No. 2?

YOU ARE GOING HENCE.

Unconsciously it may be, but certainly none the less, you are fast approaching the end of this life.

"Thou art drifting down life's river,
Drifting towards the sea,
From whose shores no soul returneth :
'Tis Eternity."

The sand in life's hour-glass is fast running out. It is more than half gone. Nay, there are but a few grains left; and *then you are going hence*. What will wealth, or former health, or intellect, or culture avail when death comes to claim his victim? They will be powerless to hold him at bay one moment.

You will be like a man in the Rocky Mountains of whom the writer heard. He had been a stage-driver, and often when going down steep hills, he had had to use the brakes. The hour came for this man to die. He had lived a godless life. Shortly before he passed away, the friends who were watching by his bedside, noticed him moving his foot vigorously. Asking him what was the matter, he replied, "I am fast going down hill, and

I CAN'T FIND THE BRAKES!"

Poor fellow! He had made provision on his stage against the dangerous hills in the Rockies, but now he was *slipping, slipping* into eternity, wholly unprepared, with no brakes to secure his poor soul.

My friend, see that you don't make that fatal mistake! In a little while you too will be standing on the brink of that awful chasm; on the top of that steep incline. Have you got the brakes on yet?

Is your soul resting upon the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you trusting His precious blood?

If not, my prayer is, unknown reader, that before you put this paper aside you will make preparations against the time when *you must go hence*.

"Eternity is coming like a mighty wave;
Jesus is the Refuge, trust Him; He will save."

WILL YOU GO ?

GENESIS xxiv.



HIS scripture brings before us in a pictorial but very beautiful manner the purpose of God in the proclamation of the gospel now. God's purpose is to bring whoever will accept His message, into association with Christ by faith now, and actually and really by-and-by, in the realms of glory in which He is.

Nothing can be more simple than the figure itself. The father sends his servant into a far-off land, to seek a bride for his son, with this caution, You must not bring my son into the far-off land, but bring the bride *to my son* !

The Son of God has been in this scene, and men declared they could stand His presence no longer, and they cast Him out and murdered Him. God did not at once avenge the murder of His Son, He said to Him, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool," and before the day, in which His foes are made His footstool, God sends down the Holy Ghost to proclaim salvation to all those who believe in that Son, who is at His right hand.

In our chapter the nameless servant tells how rich his master was ; there was no end to his wealth, and he says, He has given all that he has to his son, and I want a bride for that son.

And God has given all into the hands of Christ. All power is given unto Him. He is not careful for the present moment to assert His rights, nay is willing to forego them that He may win your heart and mine, and have us associated with Himself in heavenly glory. But everything belongs to Jesus. He has bought the whole world. He bought the field for the sake of the treasure hid in it, and what is the treasure? His own people.

So also He, the heavenly Merchantman, gives up all for the sake of the pearl, His Church, His Bride.

Perhaps you say, "Oh, I thought that parable meant the sinner giving up all for the sake of Christ." I ask you, What has a sinner to give up? He has nothing belonging to him but his sins. He may have God's possessions in his hands, but they are only put into his hands for him to use as a steward (and a dishonest steward man is too, appropriating to himself what belongs to his Master), and soon to be turned out of his stewardship for wasting his Master's goods, for it all belongs to Christ.

The servant comes down with the wonderful message that all that the rich man has he has given to his son, and now, he says, I have come down in quest of a bride for that son.

And so the Holy Ghost has been working for eighteen hundred years to gather out a bride for Christ. And now the Spirit of God is wanting *your* heart, my reader, for Christ. He would have *you* among that happy company who chant the

Redeemer's praises by-and-by. Have *you* any wish to be there?

What is so wonderful in the picture is, that Rebecca turns away from scenes well known, turns her back on all her relations even, turns right round to take a long and wearisome journey, to be the bride of one she has never seen. And that is what you must do. The day will soon come when you must leave this scene, go from time into eternity, and where will *you* spend eternity? You say, "In heaven, I hope." Who does not hope so? But answer me this one question. If you would like to spend eternity in heaven, would you like to go there to-day? "Oh, no," you say. Why not? "Because I am not ready." Ah, it is quite clear you have no object in heaven. Heaven is where Christ is. It is the Person who is there who makes my heaven. If you cared for Him you would say, "Yes, I should like to go, and be where Jesus is."

When Abraham's servant came and gave the message, no doubt the thought entered Rebecca's mind, Can it be true? But as soon as he had gained her attention he brings out something very tangible. "An ear-ring of half a shekel's weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten shekel weight of gold." And so when the Holy Ghost begins to work in the heart He gives unmistakable pledges of the truth of His message.

Rebecca might have said, "I am unfit." But he gives her what meets her need, and makes her fit—gives her raiment.

The point is, Are you willing to go? All the need is met. I know well you are unfit for God. You need what you have not got in you, but God gives it to you. You have no righteousness, but Christ "is made unto us righteousness." You have all your sins upon you, but "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The moment you are willing to go God provides you with everything. The grand object of God is to bring sinners to Christ. If you believe on Jesus—rest your guilty soul on the work and blood of Jesus—God will give you the sense that you are clad, and fit for His presence. You will get the raiment and the jewels, you will be clothed with Christ, the best robe, and His acceptance with God will be the measure of your acceptance. The only question is, Are you willing to accept what God presents? There is no hindrance on God's side.

Many people, in this day, in a way accept the gospel as truth, and think it should be acted on some day, but not *to-day*.

Look at verse 55 of our chapter: "And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten, after that she shall go." Mark this, my reader, how many a soul brought under the gospel sound, convinced that the gospel is true, anxious in a way to have Christ, the devil ensnares by this, "There is plenty of time, there is no hurry."

"A few days, at the least ten." How many put

it off. And *you* have done so, have you not, my reader? Yet you *mean* to come to Christ, do you not? "Yes," I think I hear you answer. When? "Some day," you reply. You mean to be a Christian, to give your heart to the Lord, to turn your back on the world and your face to the Lord. But when? I ask.

Do you say, "Give me a little delay—a few days, at least ten." Well, you may spend the next ten days in hell. If you died to-day you would, and the next ten, and the next ten, and ten thousand times ten, and then your eternity of hell would have only just begun.

The devil's gospel is always salvation *to-morrow*, or salvation *next week*; God's gospel always is salvation *now*.

Why delay? Would you keep Christ waiting any longer? Ten days! Why, the Lord may be here ere ten days, and each saint hopes He may. Nay more, He may be here to-day. You have no warrant that you will have another gospel message than the one you are reading now.

Now is your time. *Now* is the time of God's salvation. Ten days may seem a short time, but it may be too late for *you*. How long will you trifle with God, sport with eternity, risk your soul? Ten days? I would not run the risk for ten minutes longer, if I were you. I would say this moment to Him, "Lord, I am Thine, I trust Thee, I must have Thee *now*."

"Wilt thou go?" This is the question for you.

Wilt thou commit thyself now to the leading of God's blessed Spirit? He wants thee for Jesus now, and for eternity. Wilt thou go? Art thou willing? Thou hast been long enough in the world surely, long enough served Satan, surely. Dost thou not see enough attraction in Christ? Is there nought in the tale of His cross, in the value of His blood? Is there nought to win thy heart in all that He has done to have thee with Him in glory? Rebecca comprehends the situation she is in, and she sees the future before her, sees the things of this world ready to draw her back; sees the earnest servant pleading for his master, and feels it must be now or never. She says, "I will go." Hers is the decision of faith. I have never seen him, she says in her heart, but I have heard about him. He must be worth deciding for; I will go. True, I have never seen him, but I shall see him. As Peter says, "Whom not having seen we love."

Can you, my reader, say like Rebecca, "I will go"? God has called me to share the glories of His Son, and now He would meet my heart by the revelation of the Person of His Son, and if you ask me, Will you go? my emphatic reply is, "*I will go.*"

If your heart thus decides, you will soon see Him. You may have a little trouble by the way. Rebecca mounted her camel and crossed the desert. She had the desert to cross, but she was in safe keeping, and so are you. You start with the knowledge that you are saved, sealed by the Holy Ghost.

Rebecca may have had a rough journey, but do you not think the servant beguiled the way with stories of Isaac. As the Lord said, "When the Spirit of truth is come, . . . he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Do you think it is a dull thing to be a Christian? It is the happiest, the brightest, the sweetest thing; sweeter each year. There may come storms, or rough places on the road, but the end is home, with Jesus. I do not think, could we follow Rebecca across the desert, that we should find she wanted to stay on the road. No, with purpose of heart she wanted to go on, and that is what I would beseech you, that "with purpose of heart you would cleave to the Lord."

Isaac loved Rebecca *after* she went to him, but Jesus loved us *before* we came to Him. He loved us, and died for us, and made us fit for His Father's presence; and the day is soon coming when we shall be like Him, and be with Him for ever; and there is one thing that completely satisfies my heart, He loves me!

I could talk to you of coming glory, of the rest that remains, but it is enough for me that He loves me. Oh, my reader, would you not like to be with Jesus in the coming day of His glory? Then turn to Him now, and in a little while you shall be with Him and like Him for ever! If you have never been decided for Christ before, the Lord give you, as you lay down this paper, to decide for Him at once and for evermore, saying truly in your heart, "I will go."

W. T. P. W.

“A CONTRAST.”



SAVED person is one who has judgment behind him; hell shut under his feet; heaven open over his head; everlasting glory full in front of him; there is only a spider's web between him and the glory; by faith he can see Jesus in glory; and he only waits for Jesus to rise up, put His feet upon the spider's web, and then he and Jesus will be wrapped in each other's embrace for ever.

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

But a sinner is one who loves his pleasures in preference to the Saviour and pardon; he is unforgiven, unpardoned, and unsaved; he is a refuser of the love of God, a rejecter of the Christ of God, a resister of the Spirit of God, and a deliberate destroyer of his own precious and immortal soul.

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

Which are you—saved, or in your sins?

"GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD."



WE have a striking type of Christ in the history of Joseph. His rejection by his brethren, who put him in a pit and sold him, and his exaltation to the right hand of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, &c., shadow forth in a most forcible manner the rejection, death, and exaltation of Christ.

Now it came to pass "when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him" (Gen. l. 15). They had a bad conscience, and feared the vengeance of Joseph, but had no conception of the love and grace which filled his heart. So is it with the human heart in relation to Christ. From the Fall onwards man has had a bad conscience, and if he thinks of the Lord he is afraid of Him. He fears judgment at His hand. He has not the slightest real sense of the love and grace in the heart of the precious Saviour, the Lord in glory, crowned and seated at God's right hand.

"And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee, now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin, for they did unto thee evil; and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the

God of thy father" (verses 16, 17). In their fear, Joseph's brothers charge another to go to him on their behalf. In the sense of their own unfitness, they hope for pardon through their chosen messenger. And to-day, even in the midst of the boasted enlightenment of Christendom, with hearts full of mistrust of God and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, men seek forgiveness on all hands through the intervention and intercession of their own chosen priests. There is a great moral distance between man and God through sin. The gulf is immense; man himself caused the breach, and when anxious for forgiveness, feels it. He has no sense of divine love. He has no understanding how God has bridged the gulf in the death of Christ. He still thinks God must be propitiated, and that he needs some human mediator besides Christ if he is to obtain pardon for his sin and trespasses.

"And Joseph wept when they spake unto him" (ver. 17). The mistrust of his brethren grieved him to the heart. And what must Jesus, the Lord, the true Joseph, think of you, poor sinner, when in the mistrust of your sinful heart, you stand afar off and present the confession of your sins in one of the adorned temples of Christendom, through a man who is a sinner like yourself!

Then we read, "And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants" (ver. 18). Here again we get a striking presentation of that which characterises

thousands. Perceiving that they could approach Joseph without a messenger, they went and fell down before his face, and expressed their readiness to be *his servants*. What are *you* doing, dear reader? Maybe you too have perceived that you need no mediator with God but Christ Himself; but what is the language of your heart and lips? Are you seeking a standing before the Lord with legal service? Tens of thousands of lips are saying weekly, "Lord, incline our hearts to keep this law." But this prayer never has been and never will be answered, for the day of law is past. Do not you perceive that it is God's day of grace? Why then do you take a servant's place? Why do you say in your heart, like the prodigal, "I will say unto him . . . make me as one of thy hired servants?" Have you not read that he was welcomed as a son. Did not Paul say to the Romans, "You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear" (Rom. viii. 15). Are you a professing Christian, like so many, with a bad conscience, longing for forgiveness and peace, and seeing through the vanity of a mere human priesthood, vainly seeking to stand before a Saviour-God on the ground of your doings, your wretched works and law-keeping, the very best of which are marred through sin? Have you never read that "in all your doings your sins do appear?" (Ezek. xxi. 24). Has no thought of God's abounding grace entered your poor dark heart? Does grace make servants or sons?

"And Joseph said unto them, Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but *God meant it unto good*, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (vers. 19, 20). Fear not. Fear not. Precious words! The believer receives not the spirit of bondage again to fear. And perfect love casts it out (1 John iv. 18). Fear not. Joseph says to his brethren, "Am I in the place of God?" But Jesus is God. He is the Son, and the Son is God. And He is a Saviour-God. *He* tells you not to fear. "As for you," said Joseph, "ye thought evil against me, but *God meant it unto good*." So is it in the inscrutable ways of the blessed God in the gospel. "Who being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken by wicked hands, and crucified, and slain." Men thought evil against Christ. The world cast Him out and crucified Him. Wicked hands slew Him. We all belonged to this world, and were all involved in its guilt. God said to the world, What think ye of Christ? And the world replied, He is an impostor and a blasphemer, and we will spit on Him and crucify Him. And they did so. And the holy judgment of God has rested upon this wicked world ever since. It rests on you. All the world is subject unto the judgment of God (Rom. iii. 19). Wrath of God is revealed (Rom. i. 18). He that believeth not is condemned already (John iii. 18).

"*But God meant it unto good*." There are two

sides to the cross, God's side as well as man's. Man filled his cup of wickedness there, and God poured out His heart in love. On His side the gift of Christ was the fruit of love, and His death brought glory to Him; thereby in righteousness He could pardon and save all who believe. On the ground of His finished work He offers a cup of unmingled and infinite blessing to those whose cup of wickedness was full. What magnificent grace! God meant the rejection, &c., of Joseph *unto good*, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. And God meant the delivering up of Christ for good, to bring to pass His wondrous purposes of love and grace, as it is this day, to save much people alive for evermore. What precious words! *God meant it unto good*. And from that day to this, He has saved much people. Are you saved? "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved*" (Rom. x. 9). God means to have much people alive in this scene of death, and much people alive in yonder scene of glory. "Whosoever believeth in him (Christ) shall receive the remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). "Whosoever believeth in him (the Son) should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). And this is *eternal good*.

It is a great thing to get hold of what God means. Men mean to go on *without Him*, and to *enjoy themselves*; that is, if they can, and as long

as they can. How often we hear on all sides, How did you *enjoy yourself*? Did you never pause for a moment and think that God meant us to *enjoy Himself*? God means, to have sinners saved by grace for glory to His own joy, and to enjoy Himself for ever. He is bringing many sons to glory. He shows them His goodness, justifies them, gives them His Spirit, saves them now. And "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

Moreover, Joseph added, "Now therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you, and your little ones. And He comforted them and spake kindly unto them" (v. 21). He repeats the words, Fear ye not. There was to be no fear in their relations with him. And there is to be no fear (but godly fear) in our relations to our Saviour-God, the God of all grace, when we are reconciled unto him. "I will nourish you and your little ones." And God ministers every blessing of the gospel that our souls need, and connects the family with the head of the house. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house*." Never divorce *you, and your little ones*. He gives you the little ones in grace, so to speak. The principle runs all through Scripture. Faith lays hold of it, and holds it fast. Our God is a Saviour-God, and has a large heart, and His grace abounds. It is our poor hearts, which in their deceit make limits, but not the heart of God. "And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them"

(margin, to their hearts). And, dear reader, if you bow to Him, and believe the gospel, He will do the same for you. Yea, He will give you the Holy Ghost Himself to dwell in you as Comforter, and He will speak kindly to your heart, and show kindness to you. And there is no loving-kindness like His.

Now, what think ye? God meant it all for good, for your good. How are you going to treat it? Put this paper down once more, and neglect the great salvation of God to your eternal peril! Or bow whole-heartedly to His blessed teaching concerning His Son, Jesus, and His finished work, the true Joseph, crowned at His own right hand? *"Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed."*

E. H. C.

WHAT IS GOOD NEWS?



IT IS NOT "GOOD NEWS" to inspire a guilty man with hope that if he only does his best, God will be merciful to him in the day of judgment. I hear that there is a prisoner awaiting his trial for murder.

The proofs of his guilt are overwhelmingly clear. But I go to his cell, and say to him: "I suppose there is no doubt as to your guilt, but let me advise you to behave as well as possible while you are in prison, and then, perhaps, the judge may be lenient with you at the trial."

What would that be but buoying the man up with a *false hope*?

My reader, God can never be deaf to the claims of justice. Any hope which is based upon His supposed mercy at the expense of righteousness is a hope that will surely prove to be *delusive*.

It is NOT "GOOD NEWS" to tell a sinner that "Christ has done His part, and now you have to do yours." A man has fallen down a deep pit, and broken his legs; fetch a rope, and let it down within a few feet of the place where he lies, helpless and shattered. Cry out to him: "I have done my part, in letting the rope down so far; now you must do your part, and climb up till you can reach it." It is needless to remark that *that* would be mockery, *not good news*. It is equally foolish to tell a sinner, helpless and lost as he is, to do his part. *He can do nothing* toward his salvation.

But perhaps my reader feels inclined to ask, "*What is good news, if none of the things you have mentioned can be called by that name?*"

Let us turn to Scripture to see. Bear in mind that the very meaning of the word "gospel" is "good news." *It is God's good news to perishing sinners, of a Saviour who has died, and now lives again, able and willing to save.*

The gospel of God is "concerning his Son" (Rom. i. 3). Those who preach it are but finger-posts, pointing the sinner to *Him*. "*To him give all the prophets witness*" (and here the good news comes in) "*that through his name, whosoever*

believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Say, my reader, does not your heart bound with joy at the sound of *such* good news?

Notice, you are not asked to contribute a single prayer, or a bit of law-keeping, or efforts of any kind? A *living Saviour* is presented to you. The Scriptures show that He has been upon the cross, there to endure the full flood-tide of divine wrath against sin. Having completely met by His death every responsibility which man had incurred, God raised Him up, and enthroned Him in glory's highest pinnacle, the Man of His eternal delight.

The "good news" that is brought to *you*, my reader, is *good news concerning Him*. Listen once again: "*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).

Can any one deny that *this* is good news? My reader, your wisest course would be to believe it; to own that it is the *very best of news*; and to *trust* without another moment's delay, the One of whom it speaks. Otherwise these lines describe your case:—

"NEAR to the door and the door stood wide,
Close to the port but not inside;
Almost persuaded to give up sin,
Almost persuaded to enter in;
Almost persuaded to count the cost,
Almost a Christian, and yet LOST."

THE SEED AND ITS HARVEST.



HE godly old Puritan Sibbs wrote the book called

1. "*The Bruised Reed.*"

Richard Baxter read it and was converted; he again wrote

2. "*The Call to the Unconverted.*"

Philip Doddridge, alarmed, read that book, was blessed, and wrote

3. "*The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.*"

William Wilberforce, in craving after rest, read it, and he wrote

4. "*Practical Christianity.*"

That book was blessed to Legh Richmond, who wrote

5. "*The Annals of the Poor,*"

which God has blessed to thousands, and also to Dr Thomas Chalmers who found in it *the simplicity of the gospel*, and, fired by gospel fervour, filled Scotland with the glad news, when dead Moderatism overspread the land.

J. M'C.

"THERE NEVER WAS SUCH A
SINNER."



HE snow fell heavily, as I walked home beside a young woman called Annie S——, and sought to persuade her to put her trust in Him who changeth not, whose love never grows less, and who, when He takes up a poor, lost soul, gives it a title to everlasting glory.

Do you know Him, reader? He left heaven and came into this world to save sinners, and what does He give? that which He Himself has, a home *for ever* in the glory of God! Fancy, poor sinful dying creatures like you and me having a title to the glory of God!—a title no one can dispute, and no devil dare deny. And yet all who simply trust in the Lord Jesus Christ are entitled to the same place that He has. Why is He called the Lord of Glory, but because He came from glory, to win to that glory all those who come to Him? Reader, have you come to Him? "He tasted death" that He might bring "many sons to glory."

I had met Annie S—— in the following way. Calling one day upon a Christian, living in a large institution, I was speaking of Christ and of His never-ceasing love and care over His people, when my attention was attracted by two young women in a corner of the room, who, whilst washing some clothes, talked and laughed together in an undertone.

"Do you care about these things?" I asked one of them; "do you love the Saviour?" She hung her head and did not reply, while my friend at the fireside answered, "She knows the Bible well, and has been taught it from a child, but she puts it all away, and says she does not believe it is God's Word, but I think it is only pretence."

Here Annie S—— broke in, "I don't know if all you say is true—you have only the Bible to prove it, and I don't believe it."

"Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" I rejoined.

"Oh," she answered, "I suppose so, but no one can know; you have only got the Bible to go by, you have never seen Him."

"No," I replied, "I have never seen Him, but I know He loved me, and gave Himself for me. I know I am saved from an endless hell by His death, and I know that He is my never-dying friend. You may think it fancy, but it is a real, true thing to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a friend and comforter for life, and in death. I have lost many a thing I used to have, and many a friend is dead and gone, but Christ makes and keeps me perfectly happy. I see those who have much to make them happy, dissatisfied and discontented, while every day He fills my heart with joy. If only you knew Him. Are you happy?" I asked, stopping, for Christ seemed so precious that words failed me.

"Happy!" she said; "oh, I am happy enough,

but I don't believe in hell. A short life and a merry one for me. Besides, I tell you, I don't believe all that," and she turned away with a short laugh.

"You don't believe in hell," I said, "'where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.' Come now, I put it to you, as a reasonable woman, which is best, to live as you are doing, a short life though a merry one, and then a leap into the dark, a going out into eternity, not knowing whither; or to give yourself now to Christ, and be His now, and His in death, leaving this world only to enter upon an eternity of bliss? Besides," I added, "think of your soul; it lives for ever, and *where*, is the question."

"Oh," she answered, beginning to scrub again at her clothes, "I don't believe I have a soul." I rose to go, for I saw this was not the time to press the truth, and that her last speech was mere bravado before her companion. I said a word to her in passing, and, as Annie came with me to the door, I said to her, "I saw you did not want to speak before others, may I come and see you when you are alone? And tell me really, would you not like to know Christ, and to have Him as your real friend? I am sure you need a friend."

She twisted her apron in her fingers, as she answered in a softened voice, "I should, but I am too bad, you don't know me." She named a day in the end of the week, and I left, thankful that she seemed to have some little sense of sin.

Friday came, and remembering her words at

leaving, I resolved not to heed any apparent indifference on Annie's part, but looked to God to bless His Word and enable me to speak boldly. To my dismay, I found two other women with her; moreover, it was dark, and they did not light the lamp, so with my closed Bible in my hand, I sat, looking up to God to help me. We spoke of one or two things, but I lacked courage to propose reading when there was no lamp, and the firelight gleamed fitfully on the wall.

Suddenly, close beside my chair, I saw one of those rolls of texts, in large type—one for each day of the month—which one often sees in station waiting-rooms, hospitals, and other places. The good print was plain enough, and by the firelight I read, "*Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*" The words came to me with power, as only God's Word can, so I read them aloud, "*Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*"

A little way down the roll came these words, which I also read out, "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*" The Lord helped me to point out how important it was to decide for Christ *now*, and that in the Scriptures salvation is always offered *now*, offered free, without money and without price, because of the death of Christ. On the cross He said, "It is finished;" the work of redemption is complete, and it is *now*, in virtue of His blood-shedding, that salvation, a full complete salvation, is offered to sinners.

"But oh," I said, "it is *now*, it is never to-morrow, *now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation. By-and-by another day will dawn, the day of judgment; *now* it is the day of grace, *then* the day of eternal judgment on all who do not belong to Christ. Whose are you going to be? Are you going to belong for eternity to Christ or to Satan. Satan would have you put off; with him it is always to-morrow, but Christ offers you salvation *now*; oh, come to Him *now*. When He comes in that day, that other day of judgment, you will never be able to say He did not press you to come to Him in this day of grace, for His own Word meets your eye all day long. '*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.'"

More I said, and pleaded long with them all, and Annie especially, to decide for Christ that night, otherwise what hope of escape could she have, for "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" She came to let me out. "I know it," she said, "I have been well taught in the Bible, and I know that if the Lord were to come I should be left behind, but you don't know me. I have been such a wicked sinner; I am one of the worst in the place, and my heart is hardened; I can't give up sin."

"Then, Annie," I said, "are you going to be lost? Are you going to let Satan drag you to hell, when Jesus died for *sinners*?" She did not answer, but was anxious, very anxious, I could see, and I walked away with a light heart, looking to God, that she

might be blessed at the preaching of the gospel on the following Sunday, which she had promised to attend.

Sunday evening came, a cold, snowy night; it had been a clear, frosty winter's day, but towards night heavy showers of snow fell, and I much feared Annie would not be at the meeting. I went early and asked God continuously that she might be blessed if there. After the meeting I saw her waiting for me near the door; I went to her, and found her husband and a girl friend were with her. The snow fell so heavily that I saw we could not stand in the street, and proposed walking home with her. "Don't wait for me, William," she called out to her husband, "I'll be home soon," and there under the umbrella I pleaded with her again about her soul. Had she got any blessing at the preaching? She did not know. She would like to be a Christian, but how she could, she did not know. She was so very bad, had been such a very great sinner, she could not trust the Lord in the face of such wickedness.

"Sinners," I said; "it was sinners Jesus came to save." Could she not say that hymn—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

"Oh, Annie," I said, "do come; come to Christ to-night. I don't believe you'll ever come if you don't come now. You know that '*now* is the accepted time.'"

"I know," she said; "that night you came and spoke in the dark, I lay awake all night, I was afraid of waking in hell if I fell asleep, and I asked God to save me, but I'm too great a sinner; and another thing, if I did believe in Christ, I could not keep it up, I should go back into the world again, they would all laugh at me."

"Annie," I said, "you were bold enough for Satan the first day I saw you; could you not make a bold stand for Christ? He died that you might be saved; has ever any one loved you like that?" "No," she replied.

"Then," I went on, "Jesus says, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God' (Luke xii. 8). Think, if you confess Christ here, at the last day He will confess you before His Father, and all the angels. He will call you by name, and say you stood up for Him here. Make up your mind, and start from to-night boldly for Christ."

Here we paused, for we had nearly reached her house, and yet I felt it impossible to let her go undecided for Christ. "Annie," I said, "I can't leave you till you make up your mind. I feel that if you do not make up your mind to-night, you may never be a Christian." Annie paused irresolute as I said again, "If you do not choose Christ to-night, God alone knows whether you will ever have either opportunity or inclination to do so again. Give yourself once and for ever to Christ; believe on Him, and salvation is yours."

"And must I do nothing?" she asked. We were standing under a lamp post and I opened my Bible and read her the words, "By grace are ye saved *through* faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. *Not* of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

"But how should I know that my sins were forgiven?" she asked.

"Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.' Jesus died for sinners, and the soul that comes to Him and trusts in His precious blood has life *through* His death. Trust in *Him*, Annie," I said, "and that minute you pass from death unto life, for 'he that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.'"

She was silent, and we walked on together. "Well," she said at last, "I will trust Him; there never was such a sinner, but He died for sinners, and His blood will cleanse from *all* sin." "From *all* sin," I replied. "God says it." She decided for Christ, and found Him there and then.

Dear reader, if you are a Christian yourself, have you ever tried to win a soul from Satan's grasp for Christ? Remember He died *for all*, and it may be your privilege to share in the joy which is "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," and to be the instrument in God's hand of Christ being glorified in the eternal salvation of a soul. What a glorious privilege!

THE GREATEST THING OF ALL.



HE s.s. "Oceanic" is the largest steamer afloat. Ever since the day when she was advertised to cross the Atlantic, there has been a constant rush of would-be passengers to secure berths on board the mammoth vessel.

Men are always attracted by anything specially big. Some years ago, when the Eiffel Tower was built, thousands thronged to Paris in order to view it, simply because it surpassed in size anything of the sort that had ever been known before.

If a great battle has been fought, what a run there is on the newspapers. If a great man has made a speech, how eager people are to read the report.

While the great things of this kind attract such widespread attention, is it not surprising, to say the least, that the

GREATEST THING OF ALL

should be treated with such marked indifference?

I refer to the "great salvation" which God has provided, at infinite cost to Himself, and which He freely offers to all who will accept it. I hardly think that any reader of these lines will dispute the fact that the marvellous boon of a free and full salvation is worthy to rank as "the greatest

thing of all." It is great, because *great* love has provided it, because a *great* price has been paid for it, and because *great* sinners are the subjects of it.

Reader, how do *you* stand with regard to the greatest of all things? Are you a salvation-accepter, or a salvation-neglector?

Yonder in that loathsome opium den lie scores of emaciated and stupefied Chinamen, smoking the deadly drug which robs them of almost every trace of manhood. Their sunken eyes, their wasted limbs, the haggard, despondent look upon their faces, all witness to the fatal effect with which the poison has claimed them as its victims.

They are indifferent to all that makes life worth living. The influence of the narcotic has reduced their lives to a meaningless existence.

Fools! you exclaim. But stay:

WHY BLAME THE CHINAMEN

when you yourself are voluntarily blind to all that is real and eternal? The seductive sweetness of the devil's opiates lulls many a soul to sleep, and makes it glide from time into eternity without ever caring to possess God's great salvation. Is it thus with *your* soul?

Thank God if you can reply with an honest "No." You are not saved, perhaps, but you desire to be. The state of indifference is one from which you have been awakened.

Let me point out to you, then, if you really desire to be a possessor of salvation, that the first essential is that you should apply for it *in your true character*. No applicant who comes as a needy, helpless, confessed sinner is ever refused the gift of God. It is those who believe that they compare favourably with others in God's sight, and are not utterly lost and hell-deserving, that remain strangers to the great salvation.

An illustration will help to make this clear. A manufacturer hears that one of his workmen has been taken to the hospital, seriously ill. Kindly interest prompts him to go and visit him and inquire as to his condition. On arriving at the hospital, he asks to see the patient.

"Very sorry, sir," replies the porter, "but this is not visiting day; and the doctors are now engaged in going round the wards. It is impossible for me to admit you."

The gentleman, disappointed, turns away. As he is wending his way homewards through the crowded streets, he is knocked down by a passing van, and severely injured. A crowd quickly gathers, the police send to the nearest ambulance station for a stretcher, and the injured man is borne to the very hospital to which only a short time before, he was denied admission.

How different the way in which he is now received. No question is raised as to his admittance, a bed in the accident ward is at once prepared for him, while a surgeon attends to his injuries.

In like manner, a man's admission within the portals of salvation depends on the character in which he comes. If he come as a respectable, religiously-inclined person, priding himself upon his decent, moral life, and imagining that he possesses a sufficient passport to God's favour, he must expect to go empty-handed away. "I came not to call the righteous, but *sinner*s to repentance," are the words of the only One who can dispense the blessing of salvation. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save *that which was lost*," is what He says of Himself.

Never yet has a sinner, owning himself to be such, and coming in his true character, as a lost and worthless offender, been turned from mercy's gate.

Pride and prejudice are the chains that hinder many a soul from receiving salvation. It is a solemn reflection, that while a man's *bad* deeds need never prevent his coming to Christ and obtaining blessing, his *good* deeds assuredly will, if he make anything of them.

We are sometimes told that to speak like this is to set a premium on sin, and to place holiness and truth at a discount. In reality, however, it is far otherwise. It is *the truth* that we would urge the sinner to confess, as to his lost and helpless condition. We beseech him to take his *true* place before God in repentance and self-judgment.

Nor is it making little of divine holiness, and the claims of justice, to assure the guilty but re-

pentant sinner of the freeness of God's salvation. It is true, that in order to enjoy solid, settled peace, the sinner needs to know that the blessing he receives comes to him *righteously*. For an honest man to find himself in possession of anything that he suspects he has no righteous title to, is to find himself in a state of unrest and disquietude.

For instance, a belated traveller arrives at a country railway station, only to find himself too late for the last train. Forced to remain all night in the place, he asks a man whom he meets outside the station if he can direct him to some respectable place where he can obtain a bed.

"Well, sir," he replies, "it is a good two miles to the village inn, and even if you were to go there, it is by no means certain that they could take you in."

Seeing the disappointed look upon the traveller's face, he continues: "My cottage, sir, is close at hand, and though it is only a small place, you would be welcome to stay till the morning. We are poor folks, but my wife and I would do our best to make you comfortable."

Surprised at the generous offer of his unknown friend, the traveller at length accepts the invitation.

The two pass down the road together, and presently turn aside through a small gate, and enter the humble abode.

Supper is being prepared, and soon the stranger finds himself seated, with his host and family, at

the table. On the cover being lifted, to his great astonishment he beholds a pair of fine roast pheasants.

"A most unexpected dish in a house of this sort!" he says to himself; while at the same moment he espies a couple of large hares hanging up against the wall. Immediately he jumps to the conclusion that the man at whose table he is sitting is a poacher, and his reflection makes him extremely uncomfortable. Has he any right to partake of that savoury dish while he suspects that the birds have been unlawfully obtained? Is not his action, in accepting a poacher's hospitality, equivalent to being a receiver of stolen goods?

Perplexed by thoughts of this kind, and hardly knowing what he should do, he is considerably relieved when his host turns to him and says—

"I daresay you wonder how poor folks like ourselves came by these pheasants and the hares that you see yonder. It is to the kindness of Lord —— (on whose estate I am employed) that we are indebted for them. Last week his lordship had a large shooting-party, and, as is his custom, he sent a present of game to all the men on the estate. That is how we come to be having pheasants to-night."

The result of the cottager's remarks is that his visitor's mind is set completely at rest, since he is assured that *what he is partaking of has been righteously obtained, and is righteously offered to him.*

In like manner, when God offers His great salvation to guilty sinners, He does so with full regard to the claims of righteousness. The cross of Christ has fully met all those claims, and provides a righteous basis upon which God can bless the sinner. The work of atonement, which Jesus accomplished, for ever refutes the suggestion that the free offer of salvation is made at the expense of righteousness.

The problem of how grace and truth can combine to secure the sinner's blessing was solved at Calvary. The claims of justice being satisfied, love was set free to act. Righteousness and mercy now march hand in hand, bringing the gift of God's great salvation to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is both "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

May I ask you, reader, whether *you* are among "them that believe, to the saving of the soul"? (Heb. x. 39).

"Believing" is not a mere assent of the mind to the doctrines of the Bible. Nor is it a mere belief *about* Jesus. In that sense "the devils also believe," but their belief brings them no blessing.

What "believing in Jesus" really means is *trusting in Him, or accepting Him as your own personal Saviour, staking your eternal welfare upon the merits of His atoning blood.*

Is there any reason why you should not trust in Him JUST NOW? If you think you have a

valid reason, will you, before finally adopting it, first exhaustively solve the problem presented in Hebrews ii. 34—

“HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?”

H. P. B.

TWO SLEEPLESS NIGHTS.



“H, sir!” said a young man as he made his way into the room where a minister of the gospel sat,—“oh, sir! I passed a sleepless night last night.”

His face and appearance bore testimony to the fact that it was not joy that had disturbed his rest; but he to whom he addressed himself, looking up, said, “Indeed, and what was the cause of your sleepless night?”

“Oh, sir!” said he, “I was trembling over the brink of hell all night, and couldn’t sleep.”

“Now,” said the one to whom he spoke, “I think that’s a very good reason why a man shouldn’t sleep all night, if he finds himself trembling over the brink of hell all night.” And turning to the Word of God, he showed that a sinner has no right to rest, having broken through all his responsibilities and openly defied God. That Christ had come to take upon Himself all the penalties attaching to those broken responsibilities, and

had satisfied the claims of 'God's throne against the sinner; as He had also satisfied the desires of His heart, and thus rendered Him free to act according to His nature, and to bestow His blessing upon the sinner who recognises his condition, and accepts the work of Christ as the alone basis of hope.

He showed, too, that Christ, who was the brightness of the glory of God, and the express image of His Person, when He had by Himself purged our sins, had taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high; full proof of the glory of His Person, and the accomplishment and efficacy of His work. He has made purgation for sins. Faith in Him and His work leads the soul to say, "For *my* sins." And turning to the young man, he appealed to him as to his *faith* in this glorious Person and work.

The young man listened, and went away without much alteration in his condition, although comforted in measure by what he heard.

On the morning of the next day he made his way again into the room, exclaiming as he entered, "Oh, sir! I have passed a sleepless night again last night."

"And what was the cause of your sleepless night last night?"

But the appearance of the young man so betokened the cause that an answer was scarcely necessary; it came, however, with a burst of joy that spoke of its reality.

"Oh sir, how could I sleep when, instead of finding myself in hell as I deserved, I found myself embraced in the arms of a God of love?"

"Ah," said the other, "I think that's another very good reason for a man's not sleeping all night; if instead of finding himself in hell as he deserves, he finds himself embraced in the arms of a God of love!"

And now, my reader, have *you* ever passed *two* sleepless nights? The experiences described by them are an absolute certainty in a greater or less degree in every soul that passes from death unto life; and the more vivid and real they are, the better the stamp of Christ is fixed upon the souls, and the more real the man is as a Christian.

But if these two sleepless nights are not known *here*, the reality of the experience of the first one *must* be known, and an eternity of sleepless nights, or rather, one ETERNAL *night* (for there is no day out of God's presence) of sleeplessness, in restless, ceaseless woe will be the sure portion of the soul.

Let my reader beware; let him heed the warnings of the book of eternal truth! Let him be wise *now*; be instructed *now*! Oh, kiss the Son, be at peace with Him, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little!

Satan's lie is abroad, with a denial of every truth of revelation, and the human heart is only too ready to believe what it wishes to believe is true. We are bound then to raise our voices and warn our fellows.

In order that you, my reader, may not pass an eternal night of sleeplessness, you will understand our wishing that you, as we ourselves have done, may know *two sleepless nights*. And if the agony of the first be healthfully remembered by all who have passed through it, all the days of their pilgrimage, who could forget the bliss of that second sleepless night passed in the arms of Him who endured all the reality of the horrors of the first?

May God give you, my readers, each one of you, *two sleepless nights*.
G. J. S.

A CLEAR TITLE.



DYING believer in the town of S—— was once asked about his prospects for eternity. Taking a bit of ice from his mouth, and holding it up to the light, he calmly and joyfully replied, "My title is as clear as that!" And no wonder, with such evidence as this, "*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*" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Friend, is this blessed assurance yours? Is the knowledge of forgiveness your present portion, and the bright glory, your prospect? If you are a believer, why not? These words are for you. Rest your soul upon them in simple faith, and peace is yours.
G. C.

HANNAH'S PRAYER.

"And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee, neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry ceased, so that the barren hath born seven, and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, he bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and he shall give strength unto his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."—1 SAM. ii. 1-11.



HANNAH was a saint without doubt, and the language of her lips is truly saintly! Let me stop and ask, Are *you* a saint, my reader? I think I hear you say: "A saint? No! I could not take that ground!" What ground will you take, then? You must either be in the condition of which Hannah speaks here in verse 9, "He will keep the feet of his *saints*," or in the condition of which she speaks in verse 10, "The *adversaries* of the Lord shall be broken to pieces."

What are you? Are you a saint? If not, you are an *adversary*. Hannah knew but two classes, and Hannah was right. And mark the difference! You are sure to be preserved if you are a saint of God. "He will *keep* the feet of his saints," and you are sure to be broken in pieces sooner or later, if you are an adversary. I pray you face the truth of Scripture.

People often do not like to take the ground of being a saint, because if a man says he is a saint, people expect him to walk like a saint, and he does not like to face that.

What is a saint? It is the word most often employed in Scripture in speaking of God's people. You say, "A saint is a very holy person." That is what a saint ought to be. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." A saint in Scripture, is one who is separated to God. And that is the great truth of Christianity, that by the work of Christ for you, and the work of the Holy Ghost in you, you, if a believer, are set apart to God, you are a *saint*. You were once a sinner in your sins, but you have been broken down, and have learnt to know God, and to find your all in Him.

You will soon find out if you are a saint or not. Hannah says, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord." Do you rejoice in the Lord? Does your heart go out to Him? If not, you are not a saint! It is not rejoicing merely in what you have got from the Lord, but in the Lord Himself.

Do you know any experience like this of

Hannah's, my reader? I am persuaded if you know anything of the Lord you do.

"I have everything in the Lord," Hannah says. She knows what every child of God knows, *God's salvation*. Hannah begins with the Lord, and goes on with His salvation, and I find the Holy Ghost saying elsewhere, "Him that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

Do you ask, "How do I get salvation?" God offers it! You have only to take it! It is free. The reason people do not get salvation is because they do not believe they need it! They do not believe they are lost!

Have you ever taken the ground of a lost sinner? Do you say, "I hope one day to be saved." My friend, do not trifle with God. These things are realities, *eternal realities*. And God is holy, as Hannah says, "There is none holy as the Lord:" holiness is that which marks God. He is love, too, but He is holy, and He is not going to make light of your sin and your carelessness and your indifference to His salvation.

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "But," says some troubled soul, "I have been finding out lately my own unholiness." Ah, my friend, it is a blessed moment in your history when you learn that. But now go farther, look outside yourself, look at the One who is perfectly holy, who was perfectly holy as He walked this earth, whom even the devils had to own as the Holy One, though they would not own Him as Lord then.

In the coming day Satan and his myrmidons will all *have* to own Him as Lord, but even down here they were obliged to own Him as holy. He went back to God by the pathway of the cross, that He might save you and me. The Holy One of God suffered that terrible death on Calvary's tree, because the Holy God could not pass over sin. The very Holy One if He become the sin-bearer must suffer.

I see the holiness of God at that cross, but I see the love of God, too, for He gave His only begotten Son to suffer there, the just in the room of us, the unjust, to bring us to God.

God, in this chapter, by the lips of Hannah, addresses every heart: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth." Whenever the sinner talks about himself, he is talking arrogance, and we know how this talking of self sticks to us. The last thing a person owns is, that there is no good thing in self. "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." You may be on very good terms with yourself, but the Lord knows better, He knows your heart; He reads you through and through. He weighs not your words merely, but your *actions*. Do not forget that the Lord is a God of knowledge. I know people like to forget it.

Do not be like the ostrich, hide your head and fancy yourself secure because you do not *see* the danger.

A sinner does not like to have the eye of God on

him, and Satan does his best to lull your conscience and keep it quiet, for conscience is the eye of God on us.

Do not think that your life is unmarked by God. You do not weigh your actions very likely, but do not think that God does not, that He is as indifferent as you are, that He thinks nothing of your slighting His gospel and His Son.

"By him actions are weighed." And what will you say to God when you stand before the great white throne, and every action of your life is made known, and the correct balance taken?

"The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength." Do you say, "I am a poor feeble sinner with nothing to commend myself to God." Then you are just fit for God, He will gird you with strength. Why is it you have never yet tasted the blessing of the Lord? Because you have been too full, full of your own doings, full of the world, full of yourself: He must empty you out.

Hannah says, "They that are *full* have hired themselves for bread," i.e., the Lord brings them down till they feel need. "And those that were hungry ceased." Why? Because God fills and satisfies them. This is very different from the world. The world thinks of the full, the rich, the great; God thinks of the poor, the feeble, the broken-hearted.

"The Lord killeth and maketh alive." I must bring you down to own you are nothing, God says,

to own you are hungry, to own your need. How often God brings souls down to the gates of the grave, to give them blessing, to awaken them to their real state, and the realities of the world to come.

"The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich, he bringeth low and lifteth up;" *i.e.*, the Lord brings down a person, and then He exalts him. Before Joseph got exaltation he was brought down to the pit and dungeon. The blessed Lord Himself went down to the grave, and God exalted Him. The only way to exaltation is by abasement, and if you will not humble yourself the day will come when the Lord will have to humble you.

The soul must come down to the spot where it owns itself a sinner, and then God says I will bless you, I will meet you. God will take up the beggar, the man that has got nothing, and who lives on the dunghill. This is what God sees the sinner's state is to be. He has nothing, and his position is one of absolute repulsion. But God's love takes him out of it. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to make them inherit the throne of glory." Are you in the dust yet, my reader? Do you say "No." Then God cannot raise you. Do you say, "Yes, I am a beggar, I have nothing to bring to God." Then God brings to you by the gospel, everything you need, not only the tidings of His love, but He lifts you up and seats you in Christ at His own right hand in glory.

Christ went down into the dust of death for me; God raised Him up out of it; the believer is in Christ. Therefore, when God raised up *Christ* He raised every believer, and gave them Christ's place in glory.

At God's right hand now is the One who humbled Himself on man's account, and God says, I propose to give to every believer, who takes his place in the dust, a part with My Son in the glory.

God lifts up the man who has no righteousness, no good works of his own, and sets him with Christ.

Look at the thief on the cross. He was in the dust of death; cast out of the world as too bad to live in it any longer, and gibbeted on a cross, but he turns to Christ and says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," for he knew the Lord would so come, and what is the answer of the Lord? "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" and the Prince of Life goes into paradise, and who goes as His companion? That poor thief taken from the jaws of death and hell, and put among princes; yea, with the very Prince and Lord of Life and Glory that day. This is grace! Had he any right? None! It was free grace through righteousness, and this is how you and I must get there.

Do you say, "I take my true place in the dust, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." Then you are a saint. Have you believed the truth? Then you are a saint, and the Holy Ghost says, "He will

keep the feet of his saints." "The wicked shall be silent in darkness." What is the believer's portion? Everlasting glory, where everything is suited to God. What is the portion of the unsaved? To be silent in darkness. Oh, unsaved man or woman, what an awful future for you.

If it were possible that some of the songs of heaven could be wafted down to the pit where your terrible portion is, think what it would be to hear those notes of heavenly melody, and you could not sing them. You would have sealed your own doom by your careless indifference to the gospel. You have lived an adversary, and died an adversary, and you are among the adversaries, "silent in darkness." Oh, believe on the Lord *now*. Own Him now; no longer be among the adversaries, but among the saints, the believers. Be on Christ's side, own what you are, own what Christ is, hear His own *word*, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

"Life at best is very brief,
Like the falling of a leaf,
Like the binding of a sheaf,
Be in time.

Fleeting days are telling fast
That the die will soon be cast,
And the fatal line be passed,
Be in time.

Be in time . . . be in time . . .
While the voice of Jesus calls you,
Be in time . . .

If in sin you longer wait,
You will find no open gate,
And your cry be—'Just too late!'
Be in time."

W. T. P. W.

“WHY DIDN'T YOU HURRY?”



MISSIONARY being asked what it was that directed his thoughts toward the foreign field, answered:—

“In coming home one night, driving across the vast prairie, I saw my little boy John hurrying to meet me. The grass was high on the prairie, and suddenly he dropped out of sight. I thought he was playing, and simply hiding from me, but he didn't appear as I expected he would. Then the thought flashed across my mind, ‘There's an old well there, and he has fallen in.’

“I hurried up to him, reached down into the well, and lifted him out; and as he looked up into my face, what do you think he said?

“‘Oh, papa, why didn't you hurry?’

“These words never left me. They kept ringing into my ears until God put a new and deeper meaning into them, and bade me think of others who are lost, of souls without God and without hope in this world; and the message came to me as a message from the Heavenly Father, ‘Go and work in my name;’ and then from that vast throng a pitiful pleading cry rolled into my soul as I accepted God's call.”

ANON.

"TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE BLOOD."



HE was about twenty-five years of age, a remarkably fine upstanding young man, with a very good presence and bearing, very intelligent, and actively engaged in commercial pursuits, but—ah, that fatal “but”—the iron grip of that fell disease consumption had taken a firm hold of him, and in his face were beginning to be seen the traces of its deadly work within. This was his condition when I first went to see him in his illness.

I had known him before, and then in the full vigour of youth; but now he was very weak, unable to go to business, and withal had a very distressing cough.

I had known something of his bringing up, and this made me very cautious in introducing the subject that lay upon my heart in connection with his eternal welfare.

I knew his father had somewhat strong infidel notions, and that this young man had received his education at a Unitarian school.

I soon found that he had imbibed some of their erroneous, poisonous, soul-destroying doctrines, mixed too with a considerable amount of infidelity.

As we went on with our conversation, I endeavoured gradually to open out to him the nature

of the present condition of things in the world, showing him that there was something very wrong at the root of matters.

To my surprise, I found him a very ready listener, as I sought to show him ALL had sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that in spite of that God has provided a WAY whereby man could be brought even to rejoice in *hope* of that self-same "glory of God."

I pointed out that God had found a propitiation (mercy-seat) in the blood of Christ, and that God could be at the same time just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

All this seemed rather strange to him, but by answering his various questions cautiously, his heart and mind appeared to me to be gradually opening.

This I found at each repeated visit, but each time I saw him he was very much weaker in body, for his disease was of a rapid character.

I fully believed the Lord was working in his soul, and I shall never forget the last time I saw him; he had taken to his bed, and upon my entering his room he started up to an almost erect position and exclaimed, "Tell me more about the blood." You may be sure I did, and before I left he was *rejoicing* in the knowledge of what that BLOOD has secured for God and man.

I did not see him again, as I had to go on a journey, but I heard from his friends that he died a few days after, leaving a bright testimony that

he was *saved*, and going into the presence of his Saviour and Lord.

Dear reader, I ask you, do you know anything about the value of the Blood for your own soul's salvation? If you do not, I plead with you to inquire about it in the third chapter of Romans; and if you want to know *more* about it still, I refer you to the whole of the Scriptures; it is brought out in *type* in the Old Testament, and actually shed by the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament; that blood that maketh an atonement for the soul—that blood that cleanseth from all sin.

Reader, let me tell you, you need redemption, and there is nothing in this world can obtain it for you, neither silver nor gold, nor the doctrines and traditions of men—nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING can redeem you but the precious blood of Christ, AND THAT ALONE. May you be able to join company with the apostle Paul, who states in the Epistle of Ephesians, of all believers, "WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE." May this indeed be your happy portion for Christ's sake.

"When first, o'erwhelmed with sin and shame,
To Jesus' cross I trembling came,
Burdened with guilt and full of fear,
Yet drawn by love, I ventured near,
And pardon found, and peace with God,
In Jesus' rich, *atoning* blood."

THE MURDERER'S WILL.



OME few years ago, in one of the Australian colonies, a man named C—— was outlawed for some crime he had committed against the State. As a consequence of this, the troopers were sent out on his track, as he had taken

to the bush.

Not many days after they had started in pursuit, one of the troopers who had become separated from his comrades, not suspecting he was anywhere near the man he was in pursuit of, had dismounted, and stooping down at a water-hole, was refreshing himself. At that moment, the outlaw, who was watching him from behind a tree where he was hiding, fired at and wounded him. Then, with the butt-end of his rifle, he dashed out his brains.

Such a brutal murder, added to his other crimes, redoubled the vigilance of the police, and a liberty so diabolically purchased was but of a momentary duration. The miscreant was taken, tried, and condemned to be hanged.

Just before the sentence was executed, the murderer made a will, leaving all the property he possessed to the widow of the murdered man; supposing, perhaps, to make a kind of reparation for the dreadful deed he had committed. A notice of this duly appeared in the morning papers.

The next morning another announcement appeared with expressions of astonishment, in which

the readers pretty generally shared, when it became known that the widow refused to receive either stick or straw from the hands of the man who had murdered her husband!

A woman of a noble mind, indeed!

How could she, who was inconsolable at the loss of one who was nearer and dearer to her than any other on earth, be a debtor to the bounty of him whose hands were wet with her husband's blood? Every loving heart and every upright mind would be inexpressibly shocked at the bare mention of such a thing.

Let our beloved fellow-believers, and especially the young readers of the *Gospel Messenger*, reflect that this incident exactly sets forth the relationship that exists between the world and themselves as part of the bride of Christ, together with the conduct suitable to this blessed relationship.

The world has murdered Him, around whom all the renewed affections play. It has cast Him out, and stands condemned of this act by the Holy Spirit, whose very presence here demonstrates the guilt of the world in respect of its unbelief in rejecting the Son of Man. As it is written, He shall convict the world "of sin, because they believe not on me" (John xvi. 9).

One of the functions of the Holy Spirit here is thus to testify against the world, and, in fact, His very presence, as stated above, is a witness to its guilt, for He would not be here if Christ had not been murdered by the world.

The world is, then, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, put into the place of the prisoner in the dock ; while the Holy Spirit is as the witness in the box, upon whose testimony the prisoner's guilt is proved.

Men and women in the world are either in collusion with the world, or they are in the current of the testimony of the Holy Spirit against it.

Which is it with us, dear reader ?

Would it not be an anomaly to see the witness in the box, leaning forward, and fraternising with the prisoner in the dock, or receiving favours from him ?

Is it not equally an anomaly to see Christians eagerly seeking the favours, the honours, the emoluments of the world, whose hands are imbrued with the blood of their Lord ?

If natural affection and uprightness of mind repudiate such a thing, as in our illustration, how much more should spiritual affection, and that loyalty of heart to Christ, which resents every insult offered to Him, lead the Christian to repudiate all the overtures of the world, which are only made with a view to draw away the affections from Christ ?

How wily an enemy is the devil, the prince of this world ! How speciously he uses the world as an instrument in his hands to tempt the believer ! Alas, how frequently is he successful !

Yet, ' All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is

not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 16, 17).

The "young men" of John, though they be strong, and the Word of God abide in them, and they have overcome the wicked one, nevertheless have need of the exhortation:

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD."

We should beware of it as a thing which always appeals to us, and from which we are never free, but as we abide in Christ.

The need of the day is loyalty of heart to Christ, and this in repudiation of the claims of the world, which, as a siren, would entice the soul, and rob it of its joy, and render at the same time all testimony against itself valueless.

The testimony of Lot seemed as an idle tale to the men of Sodom—his sons-in-law. Why? Because Lot valued and sought after the riches and honours of Sodom.

May the Lord in His mercy raise up and sustain amongst His people a band of loyal, true-hearted "young men," who shall go forward for the prize of their high calling, refusing to look back to the world or to go back in heart to it. His grace alone can accomplish this.

And surely if natural affection can sustain a true-hearted and cruelly bereaved woman in integrity of conduct towards her deceased husband, the Christian may count upon grace to be sustained by

divine affection for the One who is not only dead, as far as this world is concerned, but who laid down His life for him—sustained in quiet devotedness to Him, loyally refusing the overtures of the murderer, and testifying against him in the current of the Holy Spirit's witness in this world.

May the Lord grant it to both readers and writer!

G. J. S.

PATCHED OR MADE WHOLE?

A CERTAIN preacher was pressing home the question of Jesus, at Bethesda, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Suddenly he leaned forward, and said, "Remember, men, it's not patched, but *made whole*."

"That's it, that's just it, and all of it," responded a man, who rose and said: "I patched for years, but the patches fell off or made bigger holes. I had become a hard drinker. I lost my situation. I sobered up, got another situation, failed again and again. Still I patched, and still I fell. At last my wife and children had to go away to her father's, and decency and clothes were gone. One wet, cold November night, as I sat, half asleep, in the doorway of an empty house, a Biblewoman asked me to come to a mission. Then Jesus found me. He didn't patch; He just made me whole. And now we are all together and happy again."

Reader, what is your present condition, "patched," or "made whole"?

ANON.

"HE IS THE ONLY ADVOCATE I NEED."



DOCTOR for the body, and a priest for the soul."

The scene was in an hospital ward, where one of the patients and the attendant were in deep conversation regarding the common, but erroneous idea, that an earthly priest's services are necessary for the soul, which led to the foregoing remark by the attendant, who, poor man, was in all the darkness of Romanism.

"But," asked the patient, a young believer in the Lord Jesus, "how can a priest avail for the soul?"

"If you were dying," replied the attendant, "would you not have the priest's absolution?"

"No," was the ready reply.

"Well, but you would have a minister?"

"No; no need whatever for *that*."

"Still," continued the attendant, "you would have some one, say a friend, to direct you."

"No need for that *either*," the young patient replied; "I have *Christ*, and am resting on *His* finished work. *He only* can atone for the soul. *He* is the only advocate I need."

Could you say the same, dear reader, if on a bed of sickness, perhaps, unto *death*? You might have the cleverest doctor for your bodily needs, but *no* earthly means can *avail* for your soul.

Have you Christ for *that*? Are you resting on His finished work (John xix. 30; Heb. vii. 27)? No earthly priest will do, for "*all* have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God."

If yet unsaved, do not rest until you can say in sickness or health—"I am resting on Christ and His finished work." Then you will also be able to sing—

"Now *none* but Christ can satisfy,
No other name for me;
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in *Thee*."

E. A. M.

"LET GOD BE TRUE."



"**Y**E SHALL SURELY DIE" was what God said to Adam should be the result of disobedience. "*Ye shall not surely die*" was Satan's immediate and bold contradiction!

Whose words have proved to be correct, God's or Satan's? What has been the history of man ever since that day? Has it ended in death or in life? Such a question is superfluous. But all along, spite of every lesson to the contrary, Satan has placed a negative on all that God has said.

At the first Satan was believed. He told the woman, in substance, that the tree of knowledge

of good and evil could not possibly be a tree of death, for how could knowledge mean that which puts an end to all knowledge? Nay, they should become like God, knowing good and evil! Thus, by arguments plausible and specious, Satan disarmed the woman, and prompted her by cruel deception to disobey the plain command of God. Yet she was in the transgression. True, she had as yet no knowledge of sin; she was created in innocence, and any evil by which she could possibly be affected had to come from without. It came from the serpent.

That she should have resisted the temptation is plain. She had a direct command from God, who had placed her in circumstances of perfect creature felicity, giving but one test of obedience—the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that she was debarred, and therein consisted her measure of responsibility, and small that measure was! She had access to every tree but one. God's care over man was very large. There was no stint. Obedience to His will was all He demanded, and to refrain from the forbidden fruit was to secure a life of Edenic blessedness.

But the wily serpent prevailed, and man disobeyed and fell. Did Satan's promises hold good? First, were their eyes opened?

Yes, but opened, alas, to their guilt and nakedness.

Second, had they obtained the knowledge of good and evil?

Yes, but of a good that was out of their reach, and of evil by which their very nature was per-meated and themselves enslaved.

Third, did they not surely die?

Ah! false and fatal lure, along with the opened eye, and the coveted knowledge of good and evil, the seeds of death were, there and then, planted ineradicably in their bodies. Live on for years and centuries they might, but the death arrow was securely and inextricably buried within them. "Ye shall surely die" was their infallible doom.

"The woman being deceived was in the trans-gression" (1 Tim. ii. 14). She transgressed as did also her husband—he from love for her, and she by the direct deception of the devil.

Solemn fact! Well may we fear the awful power of Satan. "He deceiveth," we read in Rev. xii. 9, "the whole world."

He practised deception at first, and carries it on to the end. His chief object of attack is what God has said. He hates the Word of God. He hated the living Word—the Son of God; and he hates and seeks, by learning on the one hand, or ignorance on the other, to overturn and get rid of the written Word.

But thank God, whilst heaven and earth shall pass away, His Word shall never pass away. It is the one thing beneath the sun that bears on its bosom the stamp of eternity. It is imperishable and indestructible.

You may burn the Bible; you may distort and

wrest the Scriptures ; you may imprison and slay the saints ; you may scatter the Church to the four winds of heaven ; but "the Word of God cannot be bound." That Word shall survive the storms of time.

Should it announce judgment, that judgment shall fall ! Should it proclaim salvation to lost and guilty man, that salvation shall be received !

Should it predict the doom of Satan in everlasting fire, that awful doom shall come—the doom of Satan and his angels, and also, mark, the doom of the cursed too !

Should it depict the glories of heaven and the joys of the Father's House as the home of the Lord and His saints, that home shall assuredly be reached and enjoyed.


Should it make known all that God is—Father, Son, and Spirit—in light and love eternal, that blessed knowledge shall remain disclosed for ever.

Satan's lie shall perish, God's truth shall abide.
Reader, whom will you believe ?

"I thank Thee, O my gracious God,
For all Thy love to me ;
As deep, as high, as long, as broad
As Thine eternity.

All thanks and praise to Thee I give,
Who gav'st Thy Son for me ;
I'll render praises while I live,
And through eternity."

THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

O hope." What words! How appalling the thought that men and women die daily, and their friends have "*no hope*" about their eternal welfare. We read in Thessalonians iv. of "*others who have no hope.*" Fearful state to be in, "*without Christ,*" having "*no hope,*" and "*without God in the world*" (Eph. ii. 12).

It was not so with the Thessalonians, they had a "*good hope through grace*" (2 Thess. ii. 16). Their hope was in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, "*Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Thess. i. 3), so also Paul writes to Timothy, of the "*Lord Jesus Christ—our hope*" (1 Tim. i. 1).

The other day, I went into a house in Ayr where a brother had fallen asleep some six months before. I saw his well-used Bible, and turning to 1 Thessalonians i. 9, 10, found these three words underlined, "*To God—to serve—to wait.*" It was not what they turned from, so much as what they turned to—"brought to God." "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). We learn from Acts xvii. that Paul out of the Scriptures showed the Thessalonians "that Christ

must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." The *door* was open for all who had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to enter into God's presence, where there is "fulness of joy."

This was Paul's mission, "To open their eyes, to turn from darkness to light, and the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts xxvi. 18).

These Thessalonians being turned to God, were fully engaged in His service. No time, no room for anything else. "*To serve* the living and true God," and then "*to wait*," was their attitude. Not to improve the world, but to wait for the One who would set everything right. At that time the wrong man was in power on the earth. Paul told them of another *King, Jesus* (Acts xvii. 7). This troubled the people and the rulers of the city, as in Matthew ii. Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, at the birth of Jesus.

Now that Christ is dead, and risen, and gone to heaven, *believers look for Him*. "This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). It was to the kingdom and glory of God they were called (1 Thess. ii. 12), and "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. ii. 14). So, if they were converted to God, *their hope was the glory of God*. This could not be till Christ came.

He who brought the grace will bring the glory (Titus ii. 11-13).

What troubled these Thessalonians was that some among them had been taken by death, and they feared that they would miss the kingdom, but chapter iv. shows such will be the first to be raised. "The dead in Christ shall rise first," and all will be then caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

Turning over to this fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians in our brother's Bible at Ayr, I found written on the margin, "*Immediate Hope of the Church.*" He was right. Listen to Scripture.

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven;" "I will come again;" "Surely I come quickly." We do not wait for signs or events, but for the blessed "*Lord Jesus Christ our Hope.*" The poet rightly sings—

"No sign to be looked for; the star's in the sky."

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the *day star* arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. i. 19).

The book that opens with the Son of Man coming with clouds, ends with the *Bright and Morning Star* (Rev. i. 7, xxii. 16, 17). But only those who have on the "breastplate of faith and love" (1 Thess. v. 8) can say, "Come, Lord Jesus!" For them judgment is passed.

Looking further over our brother's Bible I came to 2 Thessalonians i. 7-10, and found these words written, "*After the Church has gone.*" In the First Epistle to Thessalonians their trouble was all about the sleeping saints, lest they should miss the kingdom. Now in the Second Thessalonians the Hope that had filled their hearts so brightly was lost, and they were troubled about themselves, as if the day of the Lord had come upon them. They were passing through great persecutions and tribulations. Satan, by word or letter, as if Paul wrote, was seeking to shake them, as to *their hope*. Both *Faith* and *Love* were growing, but Hope was not. These words tell us that when the day of Christ comes, it will be to take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In 1 Thessalonians v. 3 it is "*sudden destruction.*" In 2 Thessalonians i. it is "*everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*" What an awakening for the children of the night, when the fire of God's wrath bursts upon this world. There will be no escape. The rocks and the mountains will not hide you "from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. vi.)

Reader, what is your hope?

R. W.

PRAISE.

"He that offereth praise glorifieth me."—Ps. l. 23.



RAISE, oh praise our God and Father,
Sing aloud His matchless grace,
Richly hath our Father blessed us,
Given us in His Son a place :
We are linked with Jesus risen,
Risen from among the dead,
And we hail Him now in heaven
As our living, glorious Head.

Once He passed through depths of judgment,
Through unutterable woe,
To obtain for us salvation,
And to save us from the foe.
Now what rapture to behold Him,
Seated on His Father's throne,
Every knee in worship bending
To God's well-belovèd Son !

Brought to God in resurrection,
In the triumph of His Son,
For us there's no condemnation,
Sin, the sting of death, is gone :
In His Christ our Father sees us,
Holy, blameless in His sight,
We are there before Him ever,
"As He is"—in cloudless light.

Sealed, indwelt by God the Spirit,
We are now God's children dear ;
'Tis our Father's joy to have us
In His presence without fear :
Pilgrims on our way to heaven,
Loved and cared for day by day ;
Filled with praises, may we ever
Go rejoicing on our way.

M. S. S.

CHRIST'S WORK AND THE SPIRIT'S.



T is most important to see the difference between Christ's work *for us*, and the Holy Spirit's work *in us*. The first is *perfect*. The second is *not perfect yet*. Hence a soul seeking to rest on what goes on *within* can never have peace, as the work is imperfect, and will not be perfect till we are in glory like Christ. But may I not have peace? Surely! Thank God, I have it. Why? Because I rest on the *finished, perfected* work of Jesus *for me* on the cross. It is this that blots out sins, meets the claims of God, and purges the conscience. *It is perfect*, and in its perfection I stand accepted before God. The work of the Holy Ghost, on the contrary, goes on continually in the believer until the end, and is not finished till the saint is in glory,—spirit, soul, and body like Christ.

W. T. P. W.

NINETEEN HUNDRED: A CLOSING APPEAL.



THE last day of the *last* month of the
LAST year of another, and, probably,
the LAST century of "the Grace of
God that brings salvation to all men"
will soon be here. With 31st December
will close a memorable century, marked

by wonderful recovery of long-buried truth as regards the Church of God; added to this the lovely notes of the Gospel of the grace of God have fallen on countless ears, and garnered myriads of souls for glory. For this let us thank God!

But let me ask you, my reader, How will the century close on you? You did not come into the world with it, and you may not pass out of the world along with it, but when it passes away will it leave you a sinner still in your sins, or a child of God, by infinite grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? This is a serious question. You will do well to face it fairly.

Shall the nineteenth century rise in the judgment day and be a witness against you, that during many of its rolling years you frequently heard of the Saviour, but while it lasted your heart was never won to that Saviour. What privileges have been yours, what golden opportunities! The tale of the love of God, and of the atoning death of

His blessed Son has fallen upon your ear time after time. Has it ever touched your conscience, melted your heart, reached your soul, and delivered you from the power of sin, and the grip of the devil?

Tell me, my friend, How do you stand before God? He has said, that "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). And another witness records the solemn fact, "*All* we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;" and then adds the blessed truth, "and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*" (Isa. liii. 6). These scriptures make abundantly plain your case, and its gravity. The "*all*" of Romans iii. embraces you, and the first "*all*" of Isaiah liii. includes you. Whether the last "*all*" of verse 6 takes you in, you must say, I cannot. It has taken me in, thank God!

Friend, as the century fades away let me implore you to turn to the Lord, if you have not yet done so. Sinner though you be, there is salvation for you just where you are. Listen. "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it" (Acts xxviii. 28). Have you never heard it? Read it again, and believe it. What is sent? Salvation! Who sends it? God. To whom is it sent? To the Gentiles. Are you a Gentile? Yes. Then it is sent to you. You have heard it. Do you believe it? Do you receive it? Receive Christ, and you receive God's salvation. Oh, bow to His blessed name this very moment. Yield

Him your heart's confidence. Trust Him simply. It was for sinners He died. And true, blessedly true, are His words, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (2 John vi. 37).

Do not delay! Procrastinate no more! Procrastination is not only the thief of time, but the thief of souls, and well did Rowland Hill label it "The recruiting officer of hell." Count not upon a new year, or a new century, or another opportunity of receiving the Saviour. As you are, where you are, in your sin, and possibly miserable condition, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Again I say, do not delay. Well has the poet written:—

"Life at best is very brief,
Like the falling of a leaf,
Like the binding of a sheaf,
Be in time!
Fleeting days are telling fast
That the die will soon be cast,
And the fatal line be passed,
Be in time!
Be in time! . . . be in time! . . .
While the voice of Jesus calls you
Be in time!
If in sin you longer wait,
You will find no open gate,
And your cry be—'Just too late!'
Be in time!"

Thank God, you still are in time to come to Jesus. Avail yourself of God's grace. Receive the salvation that He again presses, perhaps for the last time, on you.

You have but to own your sin, acknowledge your guilt, and trust in the Lord Jesus, and all the blessings of the gospel are yours. Receive Christ into your heart, and you receive salvation, present and eternal.

The cross of Christ has met all God's claims in righteousness. On that cross Jesus took the sinner's place, bore his sins, and drank to the very dregs the cup of God's judgment in respect of them. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). His atoning blood was shed, redemption effected, God glorified, Satan defeated, death annulled, and the grave robbed of its prey—for He rose triumphant. What is the result for man? Deliverance! What next? Christ ascends to God's right hand, and sends down the Holy Ghost to announce the gospel. He has brought glorious tidings for lost sinners:—"Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," and "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall *receive remission of sins*" (Acts xiii. 38, x. 43).

With all the fervour of my soul would I urge you, my friend, as you read this to decide for Christ. To-morrow may be all too late. The Lord's coming is at hand. The midnight cry—

"BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM!"

has already gone out. Depend upon it the Lord's return is at hand. A shut door will be a terrible sight to a sinner seeking ingress too late.

Heed that midnight cry, get the oil—the Holy Ghost—and be “ready” for His coming. Despise God’s warning and you will assuredly miss His blessing, taste His judgment, and pass into eternal night. Fancy, *lost* in time, and *damned* in eternity. What an appalling picture! It is the truth as to every unsaved reader of these pages.

There will yet be heard another midnight cry. It is not the blessed announcement of the returning Bridegroom, coming for His Bride. What is it? It is the bitter wail of souls who, through procrastination, missed God’s salvation, and the knowledge of God’s Son. Have you ever trembled at its sound? If still unsaved you well may shudder lest your voice should swell its sad notes. It is this!—

“THE HARVEST IS PAST, THE SUMMER IS ENDED,
AND WE ARE NOT SAVED” (Jer. viii. 20).

Stop! You still are in time, reach Christ at once. His blood still avails to cleanse. His arms are still open to welcome you to His loving bosom. Oh, slight not such amazing love! Let the language of your heart be, “Lord, I believe.”

Then, when ages have come and gone, your portion will still be Christ. Happy is the soul that possesses Him! Do you?

Fellow-believers, let us follow the Lord fully. Fellow-labourers, let us devote ourselves more than ever to His interests, and let none of us forget that “for a Christian the secret of peace *within*, and power *without*, is to be *always*, and *only* occupied with CHRIST.”

W. T. P. W.