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The Gospel Messenger.

“I MIND THE NICHT.”

“**I** MIND the nicht—I mind the nicht weel, when I was brought to know Jesus. I can never forget that nicht; it was then I learned that He washed my sins away when He died for me on the cross, blessed be His name. I mind the nicht. I mind the nicht.”

The old and dying man, whose lips feebly, yet fervently uttered these words, was the occupant of one of seven beds in a ward in the Leith Poorhouse Hospital. A few days previously (November 1907) the chaplain of the hospital had called on me to say that John L——, manifestly getting very near his end, had a great desire to see me, and he had come to ask me to pay the old pauper a visit. The mention of his name, which I had not heard for nearly thirty years, awakened memories of a remarkable work of God's grace in Leith in 1869, and I promised to see him as soon as I could.

Accompanied by a friend I called and found John asleep in his bed, and evidently nearing the grave. Aroused from his slumber, at first he did not recognise

me, but after speaking a few words memory came to his help, and then he said: "I ken ye; I ken who ye are. Ye are Dr W——; I mind your preaching lang syne. It was then I got the blessing. I mind the nicht—I mind the nicht."

"And what was I preaching on that night, John?"

"Ye were preaching on those words: 'And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation' (Heb. ix. 27, 28). They were the blessed words that let the light into my poor dark soul, and I saw that Jesus had loved me, and died bearing my sins, and that He had blotted them all out, and that I should never come into judgment, because what was due to me was all paid to Him when He died. Blessed be His name! I mind the nicht—I mind the nicht."

"And are you happy now, John?"

"Ay, I am happy the noo. I am no' for lang doon here; I am going, Doctor. I'll no' see ye again doon here, I'm thinking, but I'll soon see Jesus, my blessed Saviour. Ye ken, I have wandered a bit since that nicht. Ye see, the wife died, and the house got broken up, and then after a while I came into the Poorhouse. I've no' walked sometimes as I should, as a Christian, but He's forgien it all, and it is all right noo, and I'll soon see His face who died for me. But eh, I canna forget that nicht. I mind the nicht—I mind the nicht."

Dear fellow, his peace, rest, and joy in the Lord were very real, and as we spoke to him about the love of Christ, and his going to be with Christ, his face glowed with joy, while his six fellow-occupants of the ward earnestly listened to thè tale of the Lord's love related in his ear.

“I hae one request to axe ye before ye go, Doctor.”

“What is that, John?”

“That ye'll just come to my grave and say a word about Jesus ower my grave. I would like if you would just help to bury my body, will ye?”

Of course I promised that I would, and about a week after a few of us laid the redeemed remains of the old believer in the common ground of the cemetery, there to await the summons of the Lord on the resurrection morning.

The night to which John referred was one equally stamped on my memory. In the spring of 1869 the Lord laid it very much on my mind to go and preach the gospel in Leith. Securing a hall in a very dirty slum, which was the floored-in gallery of an old kirk, the lower part of it being a vegetable and fruit store, I was the witness of a work of God's grace, the like of which I have never seen since. I put out a few hand-bills announcing four addresses on the Lord's Second Coming to be given on Tuesdays and Fridays. On the third night some two hundred people had assembled; and I preached on Hebrews ix. 24-28, pressing particularly that *as* it was appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment, *i.e.*, that death and damnation

were the inevitable consequences of sin, so, on the other hand, in blessed love and grace upon the cross, Christ had sacrificed Himself, bearing the sins of many, and as the result, all who believed in Him were delivered from the consequences of their sins, and were happily free to look for His return. Instead of looking for death they were to look for Christ to return, and instead of expecting to go on trial, and be judged for their sins, they were to expect Him who had already borne those sins, and the judgment thereof, and thus eternally delivered all who trust in Him.

The gospel in its fulness was preached, and that night the Holy Spirit was working mightily, and eight souls confessed the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, among whom was John L——, at that time about thirty years of age. This blessed work of God's Spirit continued for many months; the hall was packed twice weekly, and Sunday evenings found the large Assembly Rooms crammed with eager listeners, anxious inquirers, and happy young converts, whose names and addresses I possessed to the number of more than two hundred.

What interested me then immensely was the discovery that this precious work of saving grace was due really to three old widows. When the work was well established I learned that for more than twelve months these three earnest saints had met daily in one of their houses and pled with God to revive His work in Leith, refresh His people, and convert sinners. The Lord in His grace made choice

of me, and unaware how these pleaders had been knocking at heaven's gate, for the blessing of others, for over a year, I commenced the meetings. These widows lived in a particular district, and were very deeply exercised about the blessing of their immediate neighbours. The street in which they lived contained about forty tenements, and at the close of the mission I discovered that God had, in His blessed saving grace, entered every tenement, most of which contained eight families. In some cases God visited every family in the stair with the blessing of His salvation, and the knowledge of His Son, and in some cases whole families, parents and children, were swept into the kingdom.

Such is grace, and such God's faithfulness in answer to the prayers of His people. What a rich reward, in the coming day of the Lord, will be the portion of those three dear old widows. The preacher had his joy and share in the work, but depend upon it the credit will mostly go to the old widows.

Some incredulous reader will very likely say, But did these converts turn out genuine? I could not answer for every one, but it was a great cheer to me after close on forty years to find one of the earliest of those blessed coming to the front, in the person of dear old John.

Again, about two years ago, I was asked to visit, professionally, in Leith, an elderly widow. Having attended to her physical ailment, I was led to speak to her about her soul, when she at once said, "Oh, Doctor, I was converted through your preaching in

St Andrew's Hall, nearly forty years ago. Do you not remember that time?"

At no very distant date, attending another case in the same district, I found a nurse attending a patient who had been converted in Edinburgh, and on inquiry as to the nurse's state, she said, "I was brought to the Lord when quite a child through some meetings which you held in St Andrew's Hall in 1869."

Scores of other instances could I cite of souls having been brought to the Lord then, and who have been witnesses for Christ in various parts of the world ever since.

Now, reader, are you saved? Have you found the Lord yet? If not, just read these pages over again, and pull up at the text that old John remembered so well thirty-eight years after it was used to his conversion. If you will be as simple as he was, you will learn the present grace of God, and another day be able to say like him, "I mind the night when I was brought to know Jesus."

W. T. P. W.

FOUNDED UPON A ROCK.

IS your house founded upon a rock for eternity? You may not quite seize the import of the question. Turn to Luke vi. 46-49, and see what the Lord has to say about it. In the hearing of a great multitude (ver. 17) He said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things

which I say?" Here was One who read the hearts of all, and knew the ways of all. His hearers all more or less professed to serve the Lord. They were both jealous and zealous for the externals of their religion. The temple of the Lord was in their midst. The priesthood and the ritual and sacrifices, &c., were all professedly according to His law. But, alas, their doctrines were the commandments of men, and their hearts far from Him. Moreover, Jesus, who was in their midst, was their unknown Jehovah. Astonished at His doctrine and power to heal, &c., they called Him "Lord, Lord," but the mass were doing their own will instead of the things which He said.

Now the Lord puts all to the test. First, He asks them why they called Him Lord, but yet were insubject to His Lordship, adding, "Whosoever cometh unto me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, *I will show you to whom he is like.*"

Let us weigh these momentous words for a moment before we seek to understand the comparison used by the Lord, which follows. "Whosoever cometh unto me." This is the key to all. It is easy to repeat "Lord, Lord," with the lips, but *have you come to Him?* All are welcome. "Whosoever" is a world-wide word. We gladly repeat what has so often been said of it, "it includes *all* and excludes *none.*" Hence you are *one*, whoever and wherever you may be. And it is quite certain that whatever you may profess, you will never hearken to His sayings, and do them, till you first *come to Him.*

It is the one who is attracted in heart to Him, and finds himself in the secret joy of His blessed company, whose ear is open to listen to the precious teaching which issued from His blessed lips, and who, in response to His love, seeks to do what He says. The Lord's order is first to come, secondly to hearken, thirdly to do. Harkening and doing are evidences of having come to Him; they are proofs that the cry of "Lord, Lord," is more than a lip profession. But, alas, thousands are content with much doing, without hearkening, and they hearken not, because they are content with the lip profession of "Lord," while their heart is far from Him, and engrossed with their own advantages, pleasures, and joys.

Now the Lord graciously went on to show to whom the man is like who comes to Him, and He showed also the folly of him who does not. Surely if He so graciously takes the trouble to show us, it is the height of folly on our part to turn a deaf ear or to be careless about it. Our eternal welfare depends upon whether we pay heed thereto or not. Who will listen to the gracious but faithful words of the divine Teacher? God is speaking to us in Him.

Whom then is that one like who comes to Him, hears His voice, and does His will? "I will show you," said the Lord. "He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock." What a striking figure! No one needs to be an experienced

architect or a trained builder to understand that. Surely the simplest could comprehend what the Lord meant. We all know what a man builds a house for. It is to dwell in. It is a needful place of shelter from storms, &c. 'All nations have learnt the necessity of the house in some form. And ordinary common-sense has taught, that if you want your house to stand firm and steady, whatever the vagaries of the climate may be, one thing is an absolute necessity, and that is, to have *a good solid foundation*. And what could be more solid than a rock deep in the soil! The man that builds thus has no fear of the rising flood. The stream may beat vehemently upon his house, but not only does it fail to overthrow it, but it *cannot even shake it*. It is *founded upon a rock*.

Now the man that comes to Christ, and listens to what He says, and obeys, is like the man who builds thus. The man who comes to Him in true exercise of soul builds a secure house. He digs deep into the precious soil of the glad tidings of God's boundless grace and eternal truth (if we may so speak), and the sure foundation is the Rock of Ages, the Son of God Himself. Hence his heart is assured, that when the flood of God's holy judgment arises, and the streams of His wrath beat vehemently, not only will his house not fall, but not even shake. He has found a sure dwelling-place, both now and to all eternity, in the dead and risen Christ. This is the place of secure refuge and dwelling that the gracious Lord, dear reader, would show to *you*.

And now, mark well the solemn contrast portrayed in the following verse, "But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great." He that heareth and doeth not. That which necessarily precedes hearing and doing is lacking. The ear, maybe, hearkens, but the sayings find no avenue to the heart and conscience. And why? Because he has not first come to Christ. He is building a house upon the earth instead of upon the rock. It is *without a foundation*. What is the result? When the stream beats vehemently against it, *immediately* it falls. There is nothing solid to hold it. It cannot stand for a moment. Down it comes with a terrible crash. *The ruin of that house was great.*

Thus will it surely turn out in the day of God's sure and rapidly approaching judgment (2 Thess. i. 7-9). Thousands, alas, are only listening with the outward ear, and giving no heed in their hearts to the word of the Lord. They hear and do not. They have not received with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls. Hence they are not doers of the word, but hearers only, deceiving their own selves (James i. 21, 22). *They have never come to Christ.* They vainly hope their house will stand. But how is it possible if built upon the shifting soil of this sin-stricken and cursed earth? It is impossible. Only that which is built on Christ Himself will stand in the day of

testing, absolutely nothing else. When God's judgment, which is His strange work, does at last go forth, its mighty stream will sweep away every refuge of lies. Every house built otherwise than on Christ will topple to the earth in a moment, and its foolish builder shall not escape. The ruin of that house will indeed be great. The already fallen sinner will be buried in his unbelief in that dreadful fall; and his portion, in separation from God, in unutterable misery, will be fixed, irrevocable, and eternal (Luke xvi. 26).

Listen then now, we beseech you, ere it be too late. Listen to the gracious voice of Him who says that whosoever cometh to Him, and heareth His sayings, and doeth them, is like the man whose house shall never even shake, much less fall, for it is *founded upon a rock*. Come now to Christ, who bids you while you may, dig deep, build upon the Rock of Ages; and when the world of the ungodly and all who build upon this sin-stricken earth without a foundation, are swept into eternal woe by the just judgment of God, *you shall surely be found with Christ Himself in God's everlasting glory*.

“ On Christ salvation rests secure ;
 The Rock of Ages must endure ;
 Nor can that faith be overthrown
 Which rests upon the ‘ Living Stone.’

No other hope shall intervene ;
 To Him we look, on Him we lean,
 Other foundations we disown,
 And build on Christ the ‘ Living Stone.’”

“ONE MEDIATOR.”

LET us enter a low public-house in one of the most degraded districts of London. Leaving behind the sights and scenes belonging to bar and parlour, we will ascend the staircase, and gaze upon the proprietor of the house. There he is, tossing restlessly on the bed, the victim of vice and debauchery. His evil course of reckless godlessness is fast drawing to a close. With a high hand he has sinned against God and His Christ. He has lived for half a life-time amid corruption of the foulest kind; now he lies dying, at what men term the prime of life, his frame shattered and ruined by disease.

“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment” seems terribly true of him. There is no question as to his being a sinner, and a black one too. He has served his master, Satan, well, and the hard-earned wages of his sin and folly are before him, in all their naked reality—death, and after death the judgment.

Friends inquire anxiously, “Is there no hope of his recovery, doctor?”

“None whatever here; I can only hold out a faint hope, upon condition that he is removed to a hospital, as this noise and atmosphere are most prejudicial to his recovery.”

Acting upon this advice, in the course of a few

days the removal is made, and the publican becomes the inmate of the Westminster Hospital, and there we will leave him for a little.

Meanwhile let us gaze upon another scene.

Look right up through 'the opened heavens, and seated on a throne of grace at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honour, behold *a Man*—the risen Man—*Christ Jesus*, the Lord of life and glory. He is seated, having finished the work which His Father gave Him to do. Once He hung between earth and heaven, the lifted up Son of man, a spectacle to men and angels. Calvary's cross displayed the sinless One made sin; on that tree He drank to the dregs the cup of God's wrath against sin. There He bore death's penalty and endured the righteous judgment of God. *He was there as the propitiation for sin, not as the doer of the sins for which He suffered*, so that now a message of pardon, peace, and forgiveness, can be sent from that bright glory in which Jesus is seated, to this lost, ruined world. God can make known the riches of His grace even to a poor sinner like the wretched beer-shop-keeper.

Let us now return to him in the long ward in the Westminster Hospital. He is not alone. By his bedside sits a grey-headed soldier, once a life guardsman, but now, having on the helmet of salvation, armed with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, his delight is to tell others of the Saviour who has saved him. To the poor, sinful publican he is telling of pardon, of blood so precious that it avails even for him;

telling how God has come down as a giver, not a claimer; as a Saviour - God to deliver, not to condemn.

Will the poor man, just upon the brink of eternal death, refuse such an offer, so suited to him as a lost sinner? Alas! the words of love do not charm him; with evident distaste he turns away his head. Thus repulsed, the old soldier leaves the bedside.

He has grown grey in serving his Lord, and has often suffered even to personal injuries, whilst proclaiming the gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ. He leaves the ward, with its long row of narrow pallets, to wrestle in prayer for the poor man's soul. That God can reach him is his comfort. Often and often during the last days of the sick man's fast-ebbing life did the Lord Jesus send His messages of love and grace to him by the soldier's lips, but apparently in vain. Again and again the word was committed to the Lord of the harvest, with earnest pleadings for the dying man's soul.

One day there was another occupant of the chair by the bedside. He was clad in approved clerical garb, with a demeanour of great sanctity, though youthful in appearance. He thus addressed the dying man: "You are soon about to leave this world, my poor man. You have been a very bad man. Now, I am a priest. If you are contrite, and confess your sins to me, I will pray to God and read the absolution."

With an almost superhuman effort, and horror depicted on his face, the poor sufferer raised himself up and said, "*Go away from me! There is only one*

Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, and I don't want you."

He sank back exhausted. Not long after the old soldier was at his bedside, listening with breathless interest as the marvels of the riches of God's grace to one so utterly lost were recounted. He heard to his joy that as the dying man lay there, the Word had, in the power of the Holy Ghost, sunk down into conscience and heart, telling of his guilt, but making efficacious the blood that cleansed away that guilt. He had with his heart believed unto righteousness, *now* he confessed with his lips unto salvation, owning that there was *only one Priest* who could say, "*I absolve thee.*"

"By Him my soul is purified,
Once leprous and defiled ;
Cleansed by the water from His side,
God sees me as a child.
No priest can heal or cleanse but He,
No other say, ' Absolvo te.'"

During the remaining hours of the sick man's life it was his delight to tell of the love and grace that had sought and found one so utterly lost as himself.

What gladness, too, filled the breast of his visitor—a faint reflex of that joy with which heaven rejoiced over the returned prodigal.

We will again visit the beerhouse. It is growing late, but the bar-parlour is filled with its usual complement of slaves of intemperance. Its wonted hubbub, coarse jests, and ribald songs are silent ; instead, the deep tones of the old soldier's voice tell

of the departure of their once boon companion. He has just left the bedside of the dead man, and, with the events of his closing days and hours freshly before him, he narrates the marvellous riches of God's grace to the poor drunkard. Instead of the jaws of the pit receiving him, he was in the presence of his Saviour - God. He goes on to proclaim the same precious blood, the same living Lord in glory waiting to make known His heart of love *even to them*. Pipes were quietly put out, half-emptied glasses are pushed away, and astonished ears listen to the tale of God's saving power and grace extended to such as they. The devil's territory was invaded with the glad tidings of salvation. The day of Christ, when both sower and reaper will rejoice together, will declare the result of the message to those poor drunkards.

Not many months rolled away before a number of Christians were gathered together round an open grave in Abney Park Cemetery. Pointing to the coffin, in which lay the remains of the old soldier, G. V. W., an aged servant of Christ, said: "It was customary with the ancients to recount the virtues, the valour, and the victories of the departed; I am about to say of the man who lies there, that from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he was a mass of moral corruption, wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores. If he could speak he would be the first to own how true that was of himself, as a poor sinner, but, at the same time, he would tell you that the precious blood of Christ had cleansed him fully, and perfectly fitted him to stand in the presence of

a holy God, nay, more, it had been his joy to proclaim with his lips that blessed One whom I seek to present to you, *a living Saviour in the glory of God.*”

We then laid his body in the grave, to await the victory of the resurrection morn, when that blessed Saviour, who loved and gave Himself for the beer-shop proprietor and the life-guardsmen, will claim them for His own. At the Redeemer's voice the grave will yield up the bodies of all believers, the living will be changed and all caught up together to be for ever with the Lord.

“A little while, and He shall come
 Forth from the inner shrine,
 To call His ransomed people home :
 O bliss supreme, divine !
 When every blood-bought child shall see
 The Priest who said, ‘Absolve te.’”

Will you, my reader, on that resurrection morn be among those whom Christ will claim as His own? You certainly will if your trust is in the “*one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.*”

H. N.

UGHT I to mind being left down here in the wilderness, in the midst of all that tries me in every way, when I can taste His love here equally in it all? It would certainly be a much happier thing to be present with Him and absent from this poor body; but if it is the will of Him who loves me with a love that wills I should stay down here, the sweetness of doing His will is enough.

G. V. W.

A STUPENDOUS FACT.

IT is a fact that forty millions fall a prey to death every year," were the opening words of a conversation with an elderly lady, who was travelling with the writer a short while ago.

"Is it possible, and the death-rate lower than ever, and sanitary improvements so great and many?" was the answer.

"Yes, but in spite of all that, death never fails to pay a visit at last."

"No, it comes to all of us," and then she went on to relate how that an old man ninety-nine years of age, in the town of M., which we had just left, had eagerly looked forward to the day when the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria would be celebrated, but he died the night before the event. "Yes, death comes and interrupts everything for us. But after death, what then?" Alas! the question apparently gave not the remotest concern. Coldly and calmly, indifferent as to what would take place when death would usher her out of this poor world into eternity, she began to ask my opinion as to cremation. Ah, it matters little how the poor body fares, the great thing is—what about the soul?

Reader, does the stupendous fact that death lies right ahead of you, nay, may lay you stiff and cold before to-morrow dawn, cause you no anxious thought? None at all? Then yours is truly a desperate case. You are indeed one of those who

are well looked after by the god of this world, *i.e.*, the devil, who is desirous of keeping you blind as to that which sooner or later you will have to face. When the King of terrors and the terror of kings calls, you will have to yield:

Possibly, men in all positions may be bribed, but death—never. No; if death says I want you, neither gold, honour, youth, or ought else will stave it off. What then? Let Scripture speak, “It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment” (Heb. ix. 27). Time was when death and judgment were not before man—what has wrought the change? One word accounts for it—sin. Our first parents did their own will instead of their Creator’s, which is sin, lawlessness. “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).

Death now is the common lot of man, though, thank God, numbers can say that death, as the judgment of God, is passed for them. These are described by the Lord Jesus in John v. 24—“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment), but is passed from death unto life.” The One who speaks these words went into death, and bore sin’s judgment, so that the believer in Him can say with dear Paul Gerhardt of the sixteenth century—

“There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me;
The torment and the fire, mine eye shall never see.”

Reader, if you die an unbeliever, the lake of fire, which is the "second death," must be your eternal portion. Risk not such an awful eternity, but turn at once to Christ, the sinner's Saviour. His blood has cleansing power—He can save the vilest who trusts in Him.

"Why unbelieving? thou canst be blessed,
 Jesus will pardon, He'll give thee rest.
 Why wilt thou longer wait?
 Haste to the open gate.
 Come ere it be too late;
 To Jesus come."

P. H. S.

EVERLASTING JUDGMENT NOT EVERLASTING EXTINCTION.

JUDGMENT to come is a solemn reality: it is awful to contemplate in the light of the love of God at Calvary, where Jesus died for sins. No wonder one of old said, "And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2).

The cross of Christ reveals the terrible fact that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." While it manifests the love of His heart for sinners, it also reveals His holy hatred of sin, and the just deserts of sin at His righteous hand.

The effects of Paul's reasoning with Felix, the Roman judge, on this subject, was to make him

tremble. The force of the Greek is that it terrified him. His trembling arose from the terror struck into him because of his sinful life. The spiritual darts thrust into his conscience and heart evidently were not without effect. He would carry the memory of it to the other world with him. It would help to augment his misery there. It would justify God, who gave him a chance to be saved.

Some we have known have been affected in a similar way, and, like Felix, have put it away from them until a more convenient season, which may never come.

It never came to Felix that we read of. Seldom does it come to any man after a blank refusal has been given to the grace of God, which was brought within the reach of Felix through such a notable vessel as the great apostle.

"Time enough yet" is the devil's gospel. No other matter is treated by men with such apparent carelessness and slackness. No other matter requires such promptitude and diligent concern. It is for eternity—for the ages of ages. Our divine Lord, who knew the future and compassionated the souls of men as none ever did, said, "What is a man advantaged if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

There was something at the bottom of the heart of Felix which overcame the efforts of Paul's fiery, persuasive, spiritual eloquence and masterly reasoning—the love of money. "He hoped that money would be given unto him." Corrupt man to occupy

the judgment seat. He would sacrifice justice to money, as his fellow-judge, Pilate, had sacrificed justice to popularity in the case of our Lord. What a terrible hell theirs will be.

Paul's theme was "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Righteousness is the doing of what is right, both to God and our fellows. All that is not right or just to God and our fellows is wrongdoing, and constitutes us unjust or unrighteous persons in the sight of God and our fellows.

"All unrighteousness is sin," so by our injustice we are sinners against God. "Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." That was a true confession from a penitent broken-hearted man, who had acted with the grossest injustice both to God and his fellows. "The Lord also hath put away thy sin" was the answer to the honest confession.

Temperance is the controlling of our passions in the sight of God and our fellows, so that we do not act unjustly either toward God or man. Paul not only preached it, but he practised it when he said, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest I myself having preached to others should become a castaway"—or be treated as reprobate silver.

As Paul, through the power of the Spirit, brought the light of future judgment upon Felix's unjust, intemperate, self-indulgent life—a life evidently controlled by the love of gain, which is the root of all evil—he shook from the scalp to the heel. If death would have ended all, does any one in his senses

believe that Felix would have been so terrified? In all likelihood many a man Felix himself had sentenced to death, and the man so sentenced trembled not. Some men are so miserable that, were there no hereafter, death would be relief instead of punishment.

Death does not end all. Extinction of the spirit is a dream, an imagination of man's corrupt brain and heart, invented by the devil to deceive souls. The spirit of man is the God-like part of man, in contrast to beasts who have not intelligent spirits. "God is a spirit." Angels are spirits. The devil is a spirit, and he shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages. Torment for the ages of ages is not the extinction of Satan. Everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels will be the portion of the lost—the finally lost.

There are the spirits of just men made perfect. There are the spirits of Noah's day in prison. The corn of wheat does not become extinct though it dies, If it did not die, life would not spring up from the grain sown in the ground. If it became extinct that would be the end of it.

Death in Scripture is never regarded as extinction. It is a state of separation from God. Destruction in Scripture is never regarded as extinction of being, but refers to man losing the place of moral supremacy in which God set him.

Take one passage out of many, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." Does that mean that Israel ceases to exist? They

have been ruined or destroyed nationally, and hence have lost their place of supremacy and distinction amongst the nations, through their sins and wilful disobedience; but they are by no means extinct. They shall live again in resurrection power, and in millennial days, shall have a greater place on the earth than in the palmy days of King Solomon.

When they in repentance turn to the God they have sinned against, whose laws they have broken, whose prophets they have stoned, whose religious institutions they have corrupted, whose mercy they have slighted, whose grace they have abused, whose Son they have murdered, whose Spirit they have resisted, whose apostles and saints they have imprisoned and stoned, He will receive them graciously, and pardon all their guilty past, and write His laws on their hearts and minds, so that they might know Him in truth and reality, from the least of them to the greatest.

IN ME IS THINE HELP.

Reader, though thou, like them, hast ruined thyself, there is forgiveness and healing for thee. All thy sins shall be forgiven, and all thy sores and wounds healed by the loving hand of a Saviour-God. Do not let thy dark, black past hinder thee from proving the love of His heart. It is thy very past that has been thè occasion for God to show His love to thee, by sending His Son to redeem thee from its terrible power.

If justice must punish sin, mercy can now forgive

us all our sins, because love divine has met and satisfied justice to the fullest extent, by bearing our injustice in the deepest suffering on the accursed tree. “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

What a Saviour God is! Such a scheme of salvation is worthy of Him, and it is worthy of the acceptance of all. “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Noble words, how pregnant with meaning from the lips of the mighty converted Paul.

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.

“The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.” Lost is usually the same word in the Greek as destroy or perish. If lost, or perishing, or destroyed, meant extinction of being, the mission of Christ had been in vain. But He came to save those who were not extinct and never will be extinct, though they refuse to be saved by Him, obey not the gospel, and are finally destroyed “with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

They are lost to God, and hence to the enjoyment of God, as His creatures that He made for His satisfaction and pleasure. Christ came to suffer and die to save them out of this lost or perishing condition, and bring them back to God, as the verse in Peter already quoted says, “that he might bring us

to God." It implies that we were lost to God, and hence away from Him, in our perishing condition. "All we like sheep have gone astray."

"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." When a man receives Christ as His Saviour and Lord, and as God's great love-gift to Him, he gets eternal life, and will never perish. It is a life in Christ risen from the dead, which death can never touch, nor Satan with all his craft and subtilty ever destroy. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28).

Think of how the true deity of Christ shines out in these 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." No one but God could speak of Himself as the giver of life, and hence its source. This proves beyond controversy that though He is truly man, yet was He ever none less than "God over all, blessed for ever."

Reader, think on the wondrous love of God coming out to all mankind thus. You and I were by nature lost and perishing, and by practice sinners: yet He gave His Son that we might be redeemed from our sins, and have eternal life in Him, the risen One, and never taste the bitterness of death. If the body of the believer falls into the grave to await the resurrection power of Christ's almighty voice, his

spirit departs to be "with Christ, which is far better."
"Absent from the body, present (or at home) with the Lord."

Does not such love excite astonishment in you, as you look at the dark back-ground of your wilful history and sins against God? Does it not lead you to appreciate it, and then to appropriate it to yourself? Does it not fill your heart with the deepest gratitude, and your lips with the sweetest praise? Does it not lead you, as it has thousands, to tell it out in all its vast and boundless character and extent, both by life and lip? Does it not so touch you and thrill your heart, that you are led to put your hand into your pocket that it might be proclaimed amongst the teeming millions of seething humanity, living in the darkness of heathendom? Does it not lead you even to deny yourself some earthly luxuries that you might be able to give to Him who made His love known by sacrificing His life to save and enlighten you? Does it not lead you to scatter the printed page of the gospel in such magazines as the *Gospel Messenger*, which, to my knowledge, God has blessed to hundreds (if not to thousands we have never heard of), if thereby some dark heart might be brought into the light and joy which, you profess to believe, has done more for you than all besides? Does it not lead you to your knees in much prayer?

You say you have not the gift nor yet the courage to preach. That may be. All are not called to that blessed work. But can you not yield your time, your money, or even all you possess for Him who left the

highest glory, and was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, had nowhere to lay His head in life, and hung between two felons at His death, to save you from eternal dungeons and bring you to eternal rest and joy?

If not, may God give you to stand and gaze on Jesus in all His sacrificial love, expressive of all God's great love for a lost and ruined world, and yourself amongst that number, until you get so fired by His love, that you must go forth and do what you can to make it known, if, by any means, you might save some from the impending crash of this world's awful doom.

“Souls are perishing before thee,
 Save, save one.
 It may be thy crown of glory,
 Save, save one.
 From the waves that would devour,
 From destruction's fiery shower,
 From the raging lion's power,
 Save, save one.”

Why not many?

P. W.

MANY a saint of God feels, I am fit for heaven, but not fit for earth, because I am not sufficiently with the Lord to be equal to the occasions that arise as I pass through this scene. We feel our impotence and folly, feel how we have broken down as witnesses for Christ. It is only as Christ becomes better known that there is a fitness to pass through this scene.

W. T. P. W.

THE GENERAL AND THE WIDOW.

THERE was a new Preacher in the synagogue. For 1,600 years the preacher to whom they had listened had thundered the Law's demands, *Do or Die*. The new Preacher announced the reign of grace, *Believe and Live*. The old preacher had directed their attention to a ladder of ten steps as the way to blessing. The new one brought blessing to their very doors. The door of the dungeon was thrown open, and the captives were invited to step into liberty. Passing by the self-righteous and self-occupied Pharisee, proud of his knowledge of the law, and jealous of his reputation among men, He proclaimed a full, free, present salvation to the poor and the broken-hearted.

That new Preacher is still alive, though no longer on earth. There was no "*thou shalt*" and "*thou shalt not*" in His sermon. It was addressed to people beyond doing.

A man is in prison. He resolves he will never break the law again. Will the turnkey let him out of his cell on that plea? His own efforts cannot break through the bolts and bars. One word from the king, exercising his prerogative of mercy, and the prison doors are thrown open, the man is free. This is what God is now doing. He is blessing on righteous grounds and in pure sovereign grace. He

blesses because of what He has found in Jesus, not what He finds in you.

To illustrate the gracious thought of God to sinners, the blessed Lord, in His first recorded sermon, directs our eye to two people. One moved on the highest round of the social ladder, the other on the lowest. One had honours and distinctions, the other had want and sorrow. Both were alike in one particular—*both had death staring them in the face, and no way of deliverance.* They were very unlike as to their outward circumstances. One was a poor widow, the other the wealthy captain of a mighty host. Desolation and destitution mark the widow, disease and defilement the military man. God visits both in blessing. One through a little maid—a very unlooked - for instrument. God's ways with this man illustrate His ways with many others. A girl directed Naaman to a man of God. The man of God directed him to a sure way of blessing, but that way put him into a rage by its very simplicity. His servants entreat him, saying, "Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some *great thing*, wouldest thou not have done it?" He yielded, and got the blessing at once.

This gospel magazine you are reading is just like those servants. Some one has given it you to read—your little girl perhaps. That is the first step to your blessing. We bring before you the words spoken by the Lord as He preached that great salvation in the synagogue at Nazareth. "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me*

to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lutke iv. 18, 19).

This is the sermon preached by Jesus the prophet. Are you going to turn away in a rage, and say, "There is not a word about my goodness, my religion, or my achievements. I, too, like Naaman, am distinguished among my fellow-men; such a message is too humbling for me. It may be all very well for the poor, the captive, the blind."

Now, my friend, we just want to act the part of Naaman's servants. We want to ask you to stop doing some great thing. We would fain persuade you to step down from your pedestal of self-satisfaction, and get into your true place in the dungeon. Why the dungeon? Because you belong to it. If death were to lay his cold icy finger upon you, can you free yourself from its relentless grasp? You are a captive to the devil, who has the power of death. Let your heart cease its beating, and blackness of darkness for ever will be your portion. Get right down before God as a lost, hell-deserving sinner, powerless to deliver yourself.

God does not visit everybody in the same way. He met the poor widow, the Lord spoke of, in a different way from Naaman. You may read of her in 1 Kings xvii. Four things marked that woman—those four things are true of you.

She was at a *distance* from God. She was

outside the people He owned as His. She was afar off.

She was *desolate*. The one she loved had died. Her widowed heart was full of misery.

She was *destitute*. All her resources were exhausted. She had just one meal left.

Death stared her in the face.

What a picture of you, my unsaved friend! You are at a *distance from God*. The sins you have committed have raised an awful barrier. All your efforts can never remove it. You are *destitute* of everything to fit you for heaven. You may not own it, but you are in as great spiritual poverty as the worst murderer that ever lived. There is not a thing in you to commend you to God. You ask, "Are my good works valueless?" God has labelled them "*filthy rags*." Will you insult Him by speaking of them as a passport to heaven, life, and happiness?

Then *death* is before you. How *desolate* you will be then! No Saviour for the dark valley, no friend beyond the grave, no heart in whose love you can rest, no deliverer who is stronger than death.

It was to such an one that God sent His servant. He only proposed one condition to her. He only proposes one to you. She had one meal—and *death*. "Give that up to me and you shall have life," is the prophet's message. It was a tremendous moment in her history. Such a moment comes in all our histories. It determines our entire future. The prophet meant, "*Can you give up your last earthly hope, and rest upon God's word alone?*" Thank God,

she trusted His word. Will you? Will you get down before God and say? "Strip me of everything and help me to trust *Thee wholly*, trust *Thee only*, and trust *Thee now*. Help me to take my place with the poor broken-hearted sinner, own my distance, my destitution, my desolation, and my death."

Listen to another message from that new Preacher's gracious lips—"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment." Trust God's word! Life and liberty are yours, and yours for ever! You shall never see death. After trusting the prophet with her last earthly resource, the widow found in him one who cared for her until the need was over. Spring with its fresh promise, summer with its light and warmth, autumn with its fruitful days, winter with its cold biting blasts—a full year they abode together. Whatever the changes, there was no change in the one who had given his word. He cheered her home by his presence, he succoured her daily. That is just what my Saviour will do for you. You may change—He changes not. You may grow cold—His love is ever warm. He not only saves from the jaws of eternal death, but "he saves to the uttermost (to the very end), all who come to God by him."

"Abundant grace will He afford,
Till we are present with the Lord."

He is worth trusting! Trust Him *now*, and you will find that grace, abounding grace, will not only save you but *care for you*, and *keep you*, through every

changing scene and circumstance, until it sets you in glory with the blessed One from whose lips those gracious words fell—"I am come to preach the gospel to the poor."

Now is the acceptable *year* of the Lord. The *day* of vengeance will follow. The Preacher closed the book when He had read its words of grace. He will open it again at the day of vengeance. Too late for grace then. The sands of time are running out. The year of grace is fast drawing to a close. That blessed Saviour sends you a closing message. You have heard His first, now listen to His last—"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

The very last verse in the Bible has *grace* in it. The grace He preached, the grace He brought, the grace of His blessed heart, the grace with which He has lingered over you—that is the grace we wish, with all our heart, may be your enjoyed portion now, and to the very end of your earthly journey. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

H. N.

THREE TESTIMONIES.

MANY were the cities in the midst of which the apostle Paul faithfully delivered his heaven-sent messages, but from three in particular very noticeable testimonies went forth, viz., Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens (Acts xvii.).

Persecutions could not daunt, nor ill-treatment silence him, for his heart was sustained and his mouth filled with divine grace and power; so when he reached Thessalonica — regardless of his much scourged body and his bleeding back at Philippi — he tells forth the sufferings and the glories of the Christ of God, with all the earnestness of a man who was suffering for His sake. Turned out of that city, he expounds the Word of God with unabated energy in Berea; and, when again expelled, he reaches Athens, his stirred spirit warns its inhabitants of the coming judgment of God.

Long centuries have passed away since the Roman sword with one fell stroke silenced the burning lips of the apostle Paul, but as clearly to-day as in that far-off yesterday, preserved to us by the power and grace of God, sounds his faithful proclamation to the Thessalonians how that “Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you, is the Christ.” On the Bereans he pressed the value of the absolute, unalterable Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever, testifying of the things concerning Him. To the Athenians he witnessed of the sure and swiftly approaching judgment of God, which, if His Christ is rejected and His Word despised, will most assuredly fall in withering desolation upon every unbelieving soul, and sweep it into that dark and endless perdition it has earned by its sins, where there is no mercy, no forgiveness, no hope.

The first testimony tells of *mercy*. “All we like

sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way : but *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (Isa. liii. 6). Every child of Adam's race is born and lives under the shadow of death, the just penalty of sin ; but there was One, and that One the holy blessed Son of God, who, in His matchless love and compassion, came down from heaven to restore to God that which He took not away, and to deliver man from the degradation and misery he had brought upon himself. Who could bear the blame of having "gone astray," and "turned every one to his own way"—the grave and for-éver separating sin of forgetting God and doing one's own will, from which all other offences spring, which lay a stain and a shame on man, and in which all have their part? "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). *Jesus bore it.* He who was the absolutely perfect One gave Himself for our sins, and all the terrible wrath of God came down on Him because of them.

"*It behoved Christ to suffer,*" so holy was He, so spotless, so completely all that God delighted in, that He was the fit One to meet Him about the question of sin. The claims of God have been more than met. He has been greatly glorified by the life and death of Jesus. Now the obedience of Christ is in the place of the disobedience of Adam, and His love and trust have filled the heart of God. Surely it behoved Him to rise again from the dead, for it was not possible that the grave could hold Him. He has gone up in triumph through the heavens, and,

as man, has received glory and honour, God thus showing out His good pleasure in Him. Hence mercy is offered to every one, whether the tale of their years and their sins be long or short, whether they be rich or poor, learned or ignorant. In the rich grace of God He has provided a righteous ground of blessing—*Christ Jesus*: every obstacle has been swept away, and all are invited and welcomed to come to Him without fear.

The second testimony tells of forgiveness. The Lord Jesus, in the very moment when he arrested and converted the apostle Paul, sent him to the Gentiles “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. 18). Hence the believer is “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. iii. 24). The blessed God Himself is delighted. “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). “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth” (Rom. viii. 33). And if God be for you, who can be against you? Not one jot or tittle of His unchangeable Word can pass away: it will stand for ever, and they who trust it will stand also. They are made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21). “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe” (Rom. iii. 22).

The third testimony tells of judgment. A command to repent has come down from God, with the warning that He has "appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31). If the heart is not touched and attracted by God's love and grace as displayed in Jesus, it must be brought down to its right place by His wrath. Bow to Him in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ every one must, for He has said so (Rom. xiv. 11; Phil. ii. 10, 11). It should be now in repentance and contrition, while mercy and forgiveness are to be found. If not, it must be then, in an eternity of terror and anguish, out of reach of hope, for those who will stand before the searching light and supreme majesty of His judgment throne are there only to be convicted and condemned. Truth, righteousness, and holiness will be paramount and most gloriously shown forth when the Lord Jesus Christ, by the word of God, judges all the untruthfulness, violence, unrighteousness, and wickedness that have filled the weary centuries of the inhabited earth. What an unveiling of "all the secrets of men." Be warned, reader, lest yours be among those disclosures revealed, as they will be, in the ears of a listening universe.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15), into the eternal abode of darkness and sorrow, where everything must be consigned that is offensive to God. Consider, you that fly from all that is serious and seek only after all that is gay,

what must it be to be shut up to endless sorrow? Shut in with torment in yourself and all around; shut down in everlasting night; and with the maddening remembrances of past opportunities, of the glorious face of the One who would have been your Saviour and Friend, and of the ineffable joy of the Christians you once scorned and mocked. Oh, be warned! It is only a little life that you have here, and unsatisfactory at best, but there is a long life beyond, and much in it. Receive the Christ of God, believe the Word of God, and escape the judgment of God, we entreat you.

L. J. M.

“WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?”

THIS question has been in the mouths of multitudes of people of every age and all classes on both sides of the Atlantic. It may be, dear reader, that you have been arrested by it, and have resolved to make it a rule of life; thereby very considerably—in your opinion—increasing your chance of getting to heaven. We venture, however, to suggest a question which is less popular, but which we are bold to say is of much greater importance. Have you ever inquired

WHAT HAS JESUS DONE?

We find the answer to this in Hebrews x. 7 (where we learn that the words of Psalm xl. 7, 8, refer to our

Lord Jesus Christ), "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God." All that that means it were impossible for us to state here. It meant His giving effect to all that was in the heart of God, and carrying out that which He purposed "before the world was." It involved His removing from this scene every trace of sin and having everything here divinely suited to God Himself. But what concerns us most intimately is what is stated in 1 Timothy ii. 3, 4, where we read, "God our Saviour . . . will have all men to be saved."

This clearly implies that you are lost; but God's desire for you is your salvation, and that is your crying need. Your social status, your amiable disposition, your pious sentiments, your religious connection are all entirely outside the question, God will have *all* men to be *saved*, and that means *you*. "But," says some one, "something must be done before I can be saved." Yes, a great deal must be done. All the claims of God's throne must be met; could *you* do that? Every demand of divine justice must be satisfied; could *you* do that? An atonement must be effected that shall at once glorify God and give you a standing in His presence; could *you* do that? We beseech you to ponder this, that you may see how gigantic is the question, and how hopeless is your case if you rest on anything other than the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But what has Jesus done? He has left you bright glory and come into this scene as a man. There never was a man like Him, and there never was a

life like His. At every step, from the manger to the cross, He glorified God. Such joy did He give to the heart of God, that once and again He opened the heavens and declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5). His life here was all for God; but, be it observed, had He passed from this scene back to heaven without dying, which He might have done because of who He was, we must have perished and that for ever. The devil cares not how much you are entranced with that wonderful life and how much you determine to follow Christ's example, if thereby he can divert your attention from His death, which was an *absolute necessity* if you are to be saved.

The popular religion of to-day denies this, man by nature resents it, and Satan seeks to blind you to it; yet the fact remains, stated on the imperishable page of God's holy Word, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "Vulgar," cry the refined but devil-deluded occupants of pulpit and pew. "Precious" (1 Pet. i. 19), says God, who can alone value the work of His own beloved Son. Reader, we beg of you to consider what has Jesus done? On the cross He took up the whole question of sin, and He settled it. He knew perfectly what were God's claims, He gauged thoroughly what was our need, and He met them both. By going into the place of distance He bridged it, by entering the darkness He dispelled it, by undergoing the judgment He exhausted it. What

it cost Him we never shall know, but that He did it we rejoice to know. With the victorious cry, "It is finished," He passed into death. God's purposes were effected, His name glorified, and our eternal blessing secured.

"Hallelujah, what a Saviour!"

Now He is risen. Exalted and glory-crowned, He adorns the throne of God. The Holy Ghost has come down, and to-day through these simple pages He bids *you not* concern yourself about "What would Jesus do," but rest your soul in faith upon what Jesus has done, and your salvation is assured. God has found everything in that work, and He has promised everything to the soul who believes in the One who did it. It is on account of that that He will have all men to be saved, and if you, unsaved reader, run athwart the will of God and be lost for ever, it will be because you treat lightly that which is everything to Him.

Then cast aside your doings, your righteousness, and all in which you boast. As a lost sinner, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). When you are saved—and it must be now or never—you will delight to gaze upon Him where He now is (Heb. ii. 9, xii. 2.) You will look forward to the moment when you will be with Him there, and while waiting for that moment, you will love to retrace His pathway here, and will seek to be like Him, who has left us "an example that we should follow

IN HIS STEPS."

WISDOM'S CALL.

(Read Proverbs viii., ix.)

PROVERBS viii. presents Wisdom to us, *i.e.*, Christ—God's blessed Son, the eternal Son of His bosom and the lover of our souls. We know this from a New Testament scripture, "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24). Chapter ix. shows us the house that Wisdom built, what is in it, the way to it, and what is the result of getting into it. It shows us also what is the sad result of not listening to the voice of Wisdom.

The result of not listening to Wisdom's voice is detailed in the end of chapter ix. Another call fell upon the ear with great power; that call has been heeded, and the result is given us. "He that wanteth understanding" listens to the voice of the foolish woman—the world that is all round about you, every voice but that of Christ. "Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou *canst not know* them" (Prov. v. 6). The point is this, there are the wise—those who, having heard Wisdom's voice, *know* and those who do not know, the worldling's end. "He knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell" (ix. 18).

There will be a mighty movement in your soul, my unsaved reader, when you wake up to find you

are in the depths of hell. You say, I do not believe in hell. The devil is quite clever enough not to let you believe in hell, because he wants to get you there, but if once you got convinced there was a hell, and depths in it that no language could describe, you would cross the line, leave the company of the foolish, and get among the wise, the living. Where are they? In Wisdom's house. Let me ask you, Would you rather live and die a fool, or a wise man?

But let us hear these rival voices. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man" (viii. 4). This is the call of Wisdom, and there is no doubt as to its object. "I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment. That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures" (viii. 20, 21). Is not that beautiful? Fancy being an eternal pauper; that is what an unsaved sinner is. But what does Wisdom propose to you and me? "That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." Lend your ear to the voice of the blessed Lord. He wants to reach your heart that He may "fill your treasure." Whatever you may have in this world you must leave all behind. I want something for eternity and have it, thank God.

In verses 22-31 you get a wonderful description of who Wisdom is. Before creation He was. In the fulness of time He stepped into this world, and His name is Jesus. In bye-gone ages He says, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I

was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him" (ver. 30).

Wisdom is the eternal Son of the Father, the beloved Son. Go back into eternity, and what was the joy of God? Jesus, His blessed Son, and what was He thinking about? He says He was "rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men" (ver. 31). Before earth was created, He had His eye upon the men who should yet dwell there.

Perhaps you say, I am afraid of Him, I am such a sinner. Yes, but He is such a Saviour. Listen to His voice, "Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways" (ver. 32). He wants to get your confidence. Listen to Jesus, "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not" (ver. 33). You say, I could not say I have refused it. Have you accepted it? Are you forgiven?

Listen again, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (vers. 34, 35). How does a man get life? By Him. Have you found Jesus yet? Take care lest you slight Him, for "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (ver. 36). How can you sin against Christ? It may not be some gross open sin that conscience will condemn. The crowning sin by and by will be this, that Christ has been presented to you, but you have not received Him.

Be wise as God gives you another opportunity of bowing to this blessed One. "All that hate me love death." Are you not conscious of deep opposition to the Lord? Have you begun to repent?

You have found your life and your thoughts of God wrong. It is God's grace leading you to the spot where salvation is found. But there is no salvation outside Christ. Wisdom's house is not the church. Those who form it are the guests. The house is one thing, the guests another. In Luke xiv. you have the thought of the house, and the one who spreads the supper says, "That my house may be filled." God is looking for guests. Wisdom's house is a figure of a spot where there is a home. A solitary life is not home. When I come to the house there is the thought of companionship and security.

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Prov. ix. 1). What could give the idea of security, solidity, immovability like this? You come to the place God has prepared. Wisdom has built it; you have not to build it but to get into it, and you are told how. Her house has seven pillars. Seven, in Scripture, is the number of spiritual completeness. The seven pillars carry the thought of the absolute security of that house. Everything else will fail, heaven and earth will pass away, but will Wisdom's house? Never.

Wisdom has built her house, and into it she calls the miserable, the hungry, the empty, the desolate. I believe the seven pillars furnish the idea of what

God is in the blessedness of His own being. If I go round about Wisdom's house and mark the pillars, I read "LOVE" on one of them. That is the mighty motive force that led God to act as He has done. He has acted love; He has given His Son, and His love has been demonstrated in that gift. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10). That is atonement, the atoning death of Christ.

See another pillar of Wisdom's house, labelled "RIGHTEOUSNESS." God is love, and He is light, but He is also righteous—He must maintain His own character. While He judged sin to the uttermost at the cross, He demonstrated His love to the sinner at the same moment. The cross is the meeting place of God and man; it is where heaven, earth, and hell meet, and I see in Jesus' death the demonstration of the righteousness of God. He must judge sin, because of the perfect holiness of His nature. Give me a house with the seven pillars of LOVE, RIGHTEOUSNESS, HOLINESS, TRUTH, MERCY, GOODNESS, and FAITHFULNESS, and without contradiction I have a perfect dwelling-place. The spot where my soul rests and revels before God in the enjoyment of His love, and the enjoyment of Christ, is a home that is based on the displayed nature and character of God, since all His attributes have been absolutely

glorified in the death and resurrection of His blessed Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is very important to see that. Scripture is very emphatic as to the fact that holiness is maintained but sin is judged. While the sin is hated and absolutely dealt with, the one who has committed the sin is loved, and an effort to reach and bless him is made by God in the most wonderful way. Christianity is different from every other religion under the sun. In other religions God is either hard and vengeful, to be dreaded and avoided, that is the God of the heathen, a God a long way off—or, on the other hand, He is careless as to evil.

Some men say God would never judge man for his sin; that is making light of evil. The beauty of the cross of Jesus is that what God is, is there made perfectly manifest, while what man is is also made perfectly manifest. God is righteous, and man utterly unrighteous, so man could not get to God. But God can get to man, and He does so in the person of His dear Son, and you find in the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ that God's holiness is absolutely maintained, since man's sin is judged in the person of a holy sinless substitute.

How came Jesus to go to the cross? It was the activity of divine love. Love comes out, righteousness is maintained, while sin is dealt with, God's nature and the claims of His throne are met and glorified by Christ's death, and the result is that God is able to come out in the blessedness of His grace, proclaiming pardon and peace to the vilest; and

then under the figure of a house, where He dwells, and where He wants companions, He sends out His messengers to fetch in those that will be His guests. There is a feast provided, and the deep need of man's heart is all divinely met in the gospel.

Further, we read of Wisdom that "she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table" (ver. 2). Are you still in the outside place like the prodigal, feeding on the husks? His was not a "furnished table," it was famine. What, unsaved one, is the state of your soul? Are you satisfied, happy and contented? No. You may have the "laughter of fools," which is like "the crackling of thorns, under a pot," but you have nothing solid. What you have is evanescent, is passing away. You are not at rest as you think of God and eternity; there is a want, and what is it? The knowledge of Christ.

The Lord said to a Samaritan sinner, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall *thirst* again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 13, 14). What God wants is to fill your heart with deep and divine contentment in the knowledge of the Son of His love. The wine is mingled—a figure of joy; the table is furnished, there is no lack. Do you want forgiveness? You will get it whenever you cross the threshold. Are you seeking the knowledge of acceptance with God? Come to Jesus, and you will find yourself accepted in the Beloved.

Do you feel that you are guilty and have no righteousness? Then find Christ Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). There is not one single thing that your soul can possibly need that you do not find in Him. Is there a want in your soul, a craving? He says, "I am the bread of life." If you are guilty He will justify you, His blood will cleanse you, and He will give you life. All that God could give is wrapped up in the person of Jesus, and the moment you touch that Blessed One who is Wisdom here, all is yours, for everything is yours the moment you have Christ.

Notice Wisdom's earnestness. "She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city" (ver. 3). It is not merely that the house is built and the feast spread: there is the divine activity that sends out the maidens, and they go and cry in the high places of the city. Could a sister do this? I pity the one who does not, who does not carry to others that which fills her own heart. What does Wisdom do? She sends out her messengers. They pass out and scour the whole city to get hold of some poor, needy, empty, hungry soul, and bring it to a scene of light, joy, and blessing. How blessed to be told, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might *bring us to God*, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 18). You are brought to God if you believe the gospel.

Now see who share Wisdom's feast as she says,

“Whoso is simple let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled” (vers. 4, 5). The more simple you are the better; that is why so many young people get converted. About fifty-five Christians of every hundred are converted before the age of twenty. Your knowledge and wisdom, my grown-up friend, may yet sink you into hell. You have never yet been saved! No. Why? I have difficulties about Scripture. Children have no difficulties, they are so simple. Yes, that is what God would have you be. “Whoso is simple” is called, and plainly told, “Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xviii. 3).

I have to give up my own thoughts and ideas to learn of God, and listen to what He says. Is there a simple soul reading this? “Let him turn in.” You are going on the wrong road, turn now. If any one has woke up to see his state, and is saying, I am not right, I do not understand, listen to Wisdom: “Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled” (ver. 5). You cannot buy it, for God does not sell it, nevertheless “come, eat.” How simple. It is not, Buy, pray, work; no, “Come, eat of my bread.” It is the soul availing itself of the atoning death of Jesus, the blessed Son of God, who came down from heaven. He says, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven.”

‡ Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ came right down from glory, and became a man in this

world, and died that He might give His flesh for the life of the world? Do you believe it? We live in a day when, alas, it is much doubted. Praise God for the old, blessed, glorious, simple gospel, that the Son of God left the heights of glory, became incarnate, and lived a man among men. He went in the blessed grace of His heart to the cross, and gave His life for ours; love, mighty, eternal, wondrous love was the love of Jesus, which demonstrated itself at the cross; which "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

Are you willing to taste of Wisdom's supper, to turn in and eat? You say, I have no right. What was the title of any one to eat of this feast? They were invited. Have you never woke up to find God wanted you? "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 7).

You had better heed Wisdom's advice, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding" (ver. 6). What is that? You make a break. You come to a downright definite determination in your soul—I will have Christ. That is forsaking the foolish. Decide for Christ, make up your mind for Him: come to Jesus.

Perhaps you say, I am not quite persuaded. Read on—"He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot" (ver. 7). Who is the scorner? The man that is not a believer. People are often angry with the man that points out their scorn. "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man,

and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (vers. 8, 9). Who are the wise people? All who have come to Jesus. Who are the scorers? Those who have not. God calls things by their right names, and it is a great thing that people should see where they are. You are either a wise person who has heeded Wisdom's voice, or a scorer; a call may have come to you through a strange messenger, but you must not be angry with a speaker who tells you the truth. There is nothing will condemn men like religion without Christ. They have got a little religion—enough for the devil to hoodwink them with—but not salvation in Christ.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (ver. 10). Where does Wisdom begin? You may get into her secret. Fear the Lord. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" is the testimony of the Psalmist as to an unregenerate man.

Some people have the idea that they will get to heaven because they belong to a Christian family: there is some hope for them on that ground they think. No. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it" (ver. 12). Scorer, young man, child of Christian parents, you who have heard the gospel again and again, and have put it from you, and are thinking some day you will receive and believe, listen, "If thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it."

Solitary existence in the depths of hell for all eternity, repenting the folly that missed God's salvation on earth, will be an awful existence. Never let it be your experience.

Now notice the other voice: "A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing" (ver. 13). Here is the world, "knoweth nothing." "For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city. To call passengers who go right on their ways" (vers. 14, 15). This is imitation of Wisdom's call. The devil has done nothing but imitate from the beginning. Wisdom has her messengers, and the devil has his. You have come to the parting of the ways here, and you are either going to decide for Christ or the world. Duties, and responsibilities, and engagements come to mind, and Satan says, What about this, that, and the other? This foolish woman is going to call you, and try to turn you aside.

"Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (vers. 16, 17). What an imitation! You might almost think it was the voice of Wisdom. No, it is the voice of evil. That which you have not a right to, it is suggested you would greatly enjoy. It is the way the devil allures souls until too late they find out their folly. "But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell" (ver. 18). Wisdom's house is where life is and love reigns, but here it is the dead. Are you

going to be the guest of Wisdom, or of the foolish woman; the guest of Christ, or spend eternity with the dead? The moment is coming when the Lord will come and see the guests. He says, I will have My house filled. That is why the gospel goes out. The grace of God goes on; He invites men, He is lingering, but the Lord is coming, and the door soon will be closed.

It will be an awful thing to find you have just missed God's salvation by one night. You meant to receive it, but you were too late by one night. You have procrastinated and delayed. Believe now, turn now to the Lord and be His guest. I pity the man that finds himself for eternity among the dead, and the guests of folly. Make up your mind for the Lord, and He will save you on the spot. W. T. P. W.

CHRIST'S SYMPATHY.

IT is well to bear in mind that this is not the day of Christ's *power*, but it is the day of His *sympathy*. When passing through the deep waters of affliction, the heart may at times feel disposed to ask, "Why does not the Lord display His power, and deliver me?" The answer is, that it is not the day of His power. He could prevent that catastrophe—He could avert that sickness—He could remove that difficulty—He could take off that

pressure—He could preserve that beloved and fondly cherished object from the cold grasp of death. But, instead of putting forth His power to deliver, He allows things to run their course, and pours His own sweet sympathy into the oppressed and riven heart in such a way as to elicit the acknowledgment that we would not for worlds have missed the trial, because of the abundance of the consolation.

By and by He will display His power; He will come forth as the Rider on the white horse; He will unsheathe His sword; He will make bare His arm: He will avenge His people, and right their wrongs for ever. But now His sword is sheathed, His arm covered. This is the time for making known the deep love of His heart, not the power of His arm, nor the sharpness of His sword. Are you satisfied to have it so? Is Christ's sympathy enough for your heart, even amid the keenest sorrow and the most intense affliction? The restless heart, the impatient spirit, the unmortified will, would lead one to long for escape from the trial, the difficulty, or the pressure; but this would never do. It would involve incalculable loss. We must pass from form to form in the school; but the Master accompanies us, and the light of His countenance, and the tender sympathy of His heart, sustain us under the most severe exercises—

“ We have found a friend in Jesus,
 Who has' bought us with His blood ;
 Jesus loved us, hallelujah !
 Jesus loves us, He's our Friend.
 Let us sing aloud His praises,
 He will love us to the end.”

“YOU’LL GO, WON’T YOU?”

THE difficulties which present themselves to even really earnest seekers after salvation are many. Perhaps one of the most common is the question of a certain fitness or preparation, which entitles the soul to draw near to Christ. There is in many a heart a desire to be His, but a shrinking from unreservedly coming to Him because of a conscious lack. That this lack is a profoundly mistaken idea makes the difficulty none the less: nor is it always easy to convince such souls that Christ’s invitation is their warrant, and their need, and nothing but their need, is their justification in approaching the Lord. While vainly waiting and hoping to find in themselves something which they think would suit the Lord, they are simply robbing themselves of the present enjoyment of blessing which might be theirs.

This condition was very markedly evident in a young lady who once put to me the question which heads this paper, and though many years have rolled by since she uttered it, I have never forgotten the incident that led to it. It was on this wise. I learned that a number of God’s children were about to gather in York, for a few days’ study of Scripture and ministry of the Word of the Lord, for mutual edification. Though uninvited, I felt assured my brethren would welcome me in their midst, and I accordingly wrote to a Christian man, whose name

and address I possessed, asking him to secure for me a lodging, which I should be glad to pay for, and saying that I would call at his house and learn the address thereof.

When I arrived in the Cathedral Town I made at once for his house. The door was opened by a pleasant-looking young lady, about twenty years of age, who, when I mentioned my name and the object of my call, at once replied, "Oh, father is out; but please come in, there is a letter here for you!"

"A letter for me," I rejoined, "I thought no one knew I was coming here."

"But you are Dr Wolston of Edinburgh, are you not?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then it must be for you, for that is the address upon it;" and so saying, she handed me the letter, which she told me then was from their family medical attendant, who had heard through her father that I was coming to York. I had never seen him, but I had already the pleasure of knowing his dear Christian wife, whom many years previously I met in Cornwall.

First reading and then putting the letter in my pocket, I turned to my young acquaintance and asked if she were a Christian. She flushed at my question, but at once answered that she was not a Christian.

"Have you no desire to be?" I inquired.

"Yes, I have often wished I were one, but somehow I am not one yet."

"And what is your hindrance? Is not the Lord Jesus willing to save you?"

“Yes, I believe He is.”

“And are you desirous of being saved?”

“Yes.”

“Why, then, have you not come to the Lord and let Him save you?”

“Ah, there is my difficulty,” she replied. “I do not think I am fit to come to Him.”

“What other fitness than your need as a sinner do you require?” I asked.

“Why, certainly my life ought to be changed, and I ought to be better than I am, and quite different from what I am if I am to come to Him and be a Christian,” was her answer.

A good long conversation ensued on this, but her difficulty was in no way met, so putting my hand in my pocket I drew forth the letter she had given me, and read it to her. It ran thus:—

MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I have heard from my patient, Mr —, that you are coming to York for a few days, and my wife and I trust you will give us the pleasure of showing you hospitality. We hope you will take up your abode under our roof, where we shall do all we can to make your stay pleasant, and if you do not come I shall not be able to any more sign myself—Yours fraternally, ———.

When finished, I said to her, “What do you think I should do?”

“You’ll go, won’t you?” she at once replied very earnestly.

“Do you think the invitation is genuine?” said I.

“Genuine,” she answered, “of course it is. Why, the writer is our doctor, a very nice gentleman, and I

am sure he means what he says, and will be very glad to receive you."

"Well," I said, "it certainly is a very hearty invitation to send to a total stranger as I am, and you think, therefore, that I should accept it?"

"Most certainly, if you care to go," she added emphatically.

"Stop," I rejoined, "I should like to go, but just look at my coat. I have had it for a considerable time, and it is getting a little bit threadbare."

"But there is nothing about your coat in that letter, sir; it is *you* he wants."

"But look at my travelling bag. I have possessed it many years, the shine has gone off it, and it is certainly the worse for wear."

"But there is nothing about your bag in that letter," she rather testily replied.

"Well, look at my umbrella," said I, "it is getting old and rather dilapidated."

"But, dear me, there is nothing about your umbrella in that letter. It is *you* he invites, and *you* he wants. He is not caring about the things you speak of."

"Oh, I see! He wants me, irrespective of my gear and get-up."

"Exactly," she replied, and again exclaimed, "You'll go, won't you?"

"One question more," I said: "do you think I need nothing but the invitation to warrant my going?"

"Certainly. He wishes for your company, and he

has invited you in a very warm way; what more can you want, sir?”

“Nothing,” I answered. “I can clearly see my title to go is the fact that he has invited me. Now let me ask you another question, What is your title to go to Jesus?”

Her answer was simple, “That He has invited me to come to Him.”

“Then why don’t you, my dear girl?” I inquired. “He says, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ (Matt. xi. 28), and further asseverates, ‘He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst, . . . and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out’ (John vi. 35-37).”

Light seemed to break in on her soul, and I trust she came to the Lord.

Reader, have you come to the Lord yet? If not, why not? If your difficulty has been some desire to find something in yourself different from what you have hitherto found there—some feeling, some experience, some change, some emotion, be persuaded that all such difficulties are but Satan’s devices to keep you out of present blessing, and the enjoyment of the blessed Saviour’s love. Oh, drop all these foolish reasonings and workings of your own mind, and as a poor sinner just cast yourself on Him. Come to Him, trust Him, and you will find the truth of His Word, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Surely, “You’ll go, won’t you?”

But I must finish my story. Our conversation ended,

I at once repaired to the doctor's house. He had been called out to see a patient, but his wife welcomed me most warmly as an old friend, and we sat down to tea, and talked of the things of the Lord, till the door opened and the doctor entered. Seeing me he came forward with both hands outstretched, and said, "So you have come; I am delighted. I hoped you would. The fact is, if you had not come I never should have forgiven you." My welcome, in fact, was charmingly complete, and my little tale I think illustrates not alone the ground on which a sinner comes to the Lord, but the kind of welcome which the coming one receives from the One who invites. The welcome given me by the doctor was after the sort which the prodigal got from his father when he came back (see Luke xv.). He was received with open arms, while the kiss of pardon and reconciliation was pressed upon his cheek, and the whole house was filled with joy on account of his reception.

Such indeed is God's wonderful way of receiving a vile, good-for-nothing sinner like writer or reader. To the latter I again say, "You'll go, won't you?"

W. T. P. W.

"GOD HAS SPOKEN."

"**S**AVED! I should not like to say that. How can any one know it with certainty?"

"If God Himself told you, would you believe Him?"

"Yes, certainly, if *God told me* I should believe Him."

"God has spoken, you may know with certainty you are saved!"

The lady to whom I was speaking looked at me as though expecting some supernatural voice or vision. I showed her the book by which God speaks to us.

"That is only a Bible!" she exclaimed.

Because God did not speak to her openly and audibly, she questioned if any could know the certainty of salvation. Perhaps you are like her. If so, listen, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my word* shall not pass away."

That word declares that salvation is found alone in Jesus. It announces the forgiveness of sins through Him alone. It assures the believer that God not only gives eternal life to those who hear the voice of the Son of God, but would have them to know it on the authority of the Bible, the book in which God has spoken to man.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *heareth my word*, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Take your stand on the rock of God's Word. It will survive the wreck of this world's grandeur and greatness. It is a secure foundation. You may rest with absolute certainty on its assurances. It will make you wise unto salvation. Nothing outside the Bible can do so. It is greatly to be noted that our

blessed Lord exalted the written Word, *and set it on a par with His own spoken word.* Get your Bible. Open at John v. 46, 47: "Had ye *believed Moses*, ye would have *believed me*: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not *his writings*, how shall ye believe *my words*?" Then see Luke xvi. 31, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Is that true of you, my reader?

H. N.

CONVICTION, CONFESSION, AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

SIN'S REALITY.

SIN is an awful reality. It is one of the most stupendous facts in the universe. We feel and witness its dreadful power every day.

Unless we are wilfully or stupidly blind this must be so. Its devastating effects are appalling, and are quite beyond the wisdom or power of man to grapple with. There are few families in this country, with all its enlightenment, but have some skeleton in the cupboard as the result of sin. There are few that have not tasted its terrible bitterness, with heart-break and disappointment. It has put the whole world out of joint, and turned it into a moral chaos, a vast cemetery.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

Let any one try to stay the foul plague he finds in his own heart, and he will soon be convinced of sin's reality. Your own utter helplessness to do so will soon convict you of it. Your experience will be that of a man as great in moral force, if not greater, than most men. He tried hard to stay the plague in his own heart, but without any fruitful effect, except to prove to himself its incurable nature, and his utter inability to cope with it. His graphic language, after a long experiment, is, "When I would do good evil is present with me, and how to perform that which is good I find not." As a result he fell back into himself in the helplessness of despair and cried, "O wretched man that I am: who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24).

The disordered state of the world does not flow from nothing; there must be a reason for it. Every sane man must feel this. What can be the cause but sin, which is the result of the alienation of man's affections from God, their proper object and glorious centre? The corruption and violence within and around us all flow from this fruitful root.

Man's chief end is "to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever." But man has not fulfilled the end or object of his creation. He has wilfully departed from God, without a just cause, and put himself under the power of another master, to whom he is bound and enslaved by his lusts.

Sad fact: who dare deny it?

CONFESSION OF SIN

is the result of deep conviction of sin. In whatever way that conviction may be brought about, it must be the result of experience, and not of pure theory. Theory is good in any department of life, but experience is better.

When David said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. li. 4), and also, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5), it was the result of deep experimental, penitential abasement before the One he had sinned against. No proud man like Paul would have said he was the chief of sinners if he did not feel it. Nor would a strictly self-righteous man like Job have said, "Behold, I am vile" (Job xl. 4), as he abased himself in dust and ashes, without a cause.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

No one ever sought forgiveness until the conviction of sin was truly wrought in him. None ever confess sin until convicted of sin's awful reality in themselves, through seeing their own corruption, like Job, or as the result of a fall, like David.

The deeper and greater the pressure of sin's guilt or corruption is felt, the more pressing will the desire be to get clear of the guilt, and free from the power of the awful festering sore.

"There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared," said the truly penitent psalmist. We do

not receive forgiveness, and then go back to grovel in sin's corruption, as some often say and vainly suppose. If God forgives us, it is that His fear may be implanted in our hearts. *That* will effectually deliver us from sin's corruption, and thus from its enslaving power. I do not say that a believer may not be overtaken and ensnared by the flesh; but when the fear of God is in his heart he will be humbled about it, and will confess it, whereupon he is frankly forgiven. "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).

In the fierce light of Calvary's dark and dreadful transaction, we can understand the necessity of repentance on the part of man toward God. Repentance is the result of deep conviction of sin, of which true confession to God is the direct and positive evidence.

"When they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both." Repentance is the evidence of a man's consciousness that he has nothing to pay, that he is hopelessly bankrupt. Had he anything wherewith to meet his liabilities he would not repent. Realising that he is penniless and bankrupt, he comes to a forgiving God and seeks for mercy. When he does so he is freely forgiven, on the ground of God's grace in Christ toward him.

Forgiveness is offered to all without condition, but all do not feel their need enough to embrace it. Those who realise their need are glad to accept God's offer.

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts xiii. 38).

DELIVERANCE FROM SIN'S POWER

is the result of being brought under the power of another object. From sin's awful presence we shall have deliverance when the Lord comes to change our bodies, or death conducts our spirits to be “with Christ, which is far better.”

It is of the utmost importance for those who know forgiveness to distinguish between the *presence* and *power* of sin, and also the difference between sin in the flesh and sins on the conscience.

In Hebrews x. the believer is said to have “no more conscience of sins,” because all sin has been once and for ever purged away by the blood of Christ. The believer's conscience is perfected for ever by the one perfect sacrifice of Christ, offered for all his sins once for all time. The daily offerings under the law could not do this, therefore the priest's work was never done. Christ's one offering having done it, His work is now complete, the evidence of which is that He sits at God's right hand in heaven, in the value or completeness of His own finished work.

That does not mean that the believer is not conscious or sensible that sin is still dwelling within him as a foe and dreadful traitor against which he must ever watch and pray, that it might not reign

within, and thus control him. Walking in the Spirit, and in the enjoyment and power of grace, we disown its unlawful claims upon us.

If God will never call to mind or think upon my sins any more, because of the work of Christ, which met the claims of His justice, it is most foolish for me to do so. All my sins of thought, word, and deed were borne and purged away when Christ died, and therefore God says: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins" (Isa. xlv. 22). If they are blotted out His eye never sees them, hence He says: "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17).

But while this gives settled peace to the awakened conscience, it does not deliver from the consciousness or sense of indwelling sin. In fact, it is when we learn that all our sins are purged away, and we are thereby brought into peace with God, that we begin to be most conscious of the evil in us.

This need not disturb our peace. God who loves us perfectly knows all about it. It never surprises Him that we should find sin working in us, nor does it alter His great love to us. The knowledge of this should save us from being downcast or disappointed about it.

But though we should not be perplexed or disappointed, or lose our peace, the unchanging basis of which is the finished work of Christ, yet we ought to be much exercised before God in prayer that it might not reign in us and rule over us. We have received the Spirit to enable us to be occupied with

an object greater than ourselves, and therefore greater than the power of sin.

DELIVERANCE THROUGH A PERSON.

The love of a person will control the heart and mind. What the mind and heart are under the power of will give character to the whole life. This was often proved with Napoleon's soldiers, especially with one of his officers who was fatally wounded on the battlefield. As he lay dying, he called Napoleon to him, and whispered into his ear these words, "If I had ten thousand lives I would lay them down for your Majesty."

The glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God ought in like manner (to say the least) to control us. He controlled Paul much more. No soldier ever suffered for a master what Paul endured. Read the list of his experiences as recorded in 2 Corinthians xi. until you stand aghast, and wonder and weep with shame at yourself. The moving, controlling force of that man's whole life is summed up in two verses—"He loved me and gave himself for me." "The love of Christ constraineth us."

This is the true secret of power—of victory over every form of evil and every opposing foe. The nearer we get to Him the more we shall come under His powerful influence. The more we are influenced by Him the less the things that once controlled us will affect us, and we shall count everything but rubbish that we may win Christ.

Dr Chalmers said that "Christianity worked by

the expulsive power of a new principle." It has been said by another, "rather by the power of a new affection." It presents Christ and the whole circle of His interests, so that the mind and affections should have the fullest occupation.

If the Spirit is in us to empower us to break with every idol, and make a bold stand for Christ, He does it by presenting Christ in all His moral beauty and attractiveness to us. Thus we are made to desire Him, and seek His blessed companionship, by which we get imbued with His Spirit and become like Him.

The more we desire Christ the more we shall seek Him: the more we seek Him the more interest we shall take in the things that belong to Him. As He becomes everything to us His interests become paramount with us and absorb us. When this is really so, we cannot help making Him known to others by life and lip.

P. W.

A VOICE TO-DAY.

ROWLAND HILL once said that people called him a fanatic when he lifted up his voice to warn perishing sinners. He once saw a gravel pit fall in on some men, burying them alive. He shouted for help till he was heard more than a mile away. No one called him a fanatic then.

Listen to a voice to you to-day, whoever you are,

in your sins, unconverted; in relation to the destiny of your soul, where are you, and whither are you bound—for glory or despair? “Ah,” you say, “I do not know; I am not sure.” What would you think of the mariner who did not know these two essentials, though cruel rocks are in his vessel’s course, dangerous derelicts on her path, a yawning grave beneath her keel, and ravening winds around her hull? He shuts his eyes to the broad daylight, and heeds not the treacherous shoals and shifting sands.

My friend, your danger is eminently greater. There is before you certain death, a fearful judgment, a burning hell, never-ending torment, and endless despair. God’s Word declares it, and “God is not a man that he should lie.” No refinement or culture, no church-going or Sacrament-taking, nothing, in short, will save you from that dread inevitable, nothing but a personal acquaintance with the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the application of His precious blood to your guilty soul. I beseech you to search God’s Word. It plainly declares that “all have sinned” (Rom. iii. 23), “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. vi. 23), “after this the judgment” (Heb. ix. 27), all culminating in the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 15). My friend, this matter intimately, intensely concerns you. It is one thing to talk of the last great public calamity so far from your home and hearth, but it is another thing to fall a victim to that stroke of judgment.

Thank God, there is a door of mercy. God did

not warn a poor sinner like me of the wrath to come without showing me a door of escape. It is open for you, sinner. God invites you to enter; the Saviour's outstretched arms welcome you; the Spirit and the bride say "Come"; heaven's festal board is spread for you; your title to the blessing, purchased at the cost of the life-blood of the Lamb of God, is that you are a sinner, ungodly. I once heard that Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6), and I said, "Thank God, I am ungodly, therefore He died for me." The word "whosoever" includes you, and excludes no one from the water of life. On the one hand there is the devil, burning wrath, and dire judgment; on the other hand there is Christ, a strong tower of safety, eternal satisfaction, joy, and glory: choose ye this day.

Let us follow for one moment the fortunes of a sea captain. He is homeward-bound. The night is dark, and the chart has been neglected. Crash! his vessel strikes a rock. She is foundering, but timely aid is at hand, and that reckless man has the wisdom to avail himself of the boat lowered from that passing ship. You are, as it were, on a doomed and foundering ship. Will your folly exceed that of the captain? Will you reject God's proffered mercy? If you do, you must perish. Once more I advise you to come to Christ. Time is short and uncertain: eternity is long and sure. The Lord is coming (2 Thess. iv. 15-17). He may be here to-night while you sleep. Will you be found knocking at the outside of mercy's door to-morrow?

“I DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT.”

I HAD been reading a portion of God's Word, and trying to make plain God's way of salvation to my dear brother, the night before he died, when, with a look of distress on his face he exclaimed, “I do not understand it: oh, I do not understand it!”

“God says in His Word,” I continued, “that ‘all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’ (Rom. iii. 23). You are a lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner, do you understand that?”

“Yes, I understand that,” he replied.

I continued, “God loves you (John iii. 16). He gave His blessed Son to die for you (Rom. v. 8): He laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. liii. 6). Jesus bore all the wrath and judgment due to sin, in that dark hour, when on the cross He cried, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ (Matt. xxvii. 46). Do you understand that?”

He replied, “Yes, I understand that.”

I then added, “God is infinitely satisfied with the work of His Son. The proof of that is, that He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His own right hand in heavenly glory. Do you understand that?”

“Yes, I understand that,” he replied.

Then I added, “Jesus the blessed Son of God says, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath ever-

lasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life' (John v. 24)."

As God's Word entered, and gave light and understanding to my dear brother, he exclaimed, "Oh, I understand it all now, I understand it all now! Sing me a hymn." So I sang—

"Lord Jesus, my Saviour, how vast Thy love to me,
I will bathe in its full ocean to all eternity,
And wending on to glory this all my song shall be,
I am a feeble sinner, but Jesus died for me.

O Calvary, O Calvary, the thorn-crown and the spear,
'Tis here Thy love, Lord Jesus, in flowing wounds appear.
O depths of grace and mercy, to those dear wounds I flee,
I am a feeble sinner, but Jesus died for me."

He then remarked, "He died for me, yes, He died for me, but oh, I am just like a thief stealing into heaven at the last minute."

I answered, "Never mind, Archie, the labourers who went into the vineyard at the eleventh hour got the same as those that bore the burden and heat of the day."

This seemed to comfort him, and he said, "Sing me another hymn." I then sang, with the tears blinding me, and my dear brother joining with me—

"Jesus my Saviour to Bethlehem came,
Born in a manger to sorrow and shame,
Oh, it was wonderful, blest be His name,
Seeking for me, for me.

Jesus my Saviour, on Calvary's tree,
Paid the great debt, and my soul He set free,
Oh, it was wonderful, how could it be?
Dying for me, for me."

He then called his wife to his bedside, pleaded with her to trust Jesus, and bring the little ones to Jesus. His cousin John came to bid him good-night. He shook hands with him and said, "Good-night, John, trust Jesus, and do not put it off, like me, to a death-bed."

About midnight I said, "Good-night, Archie, if we do not meet again on earth, shall we meet in heaven?" He nodded his head. "Have you no doubt about it?" He shook his head. We then clasped hands for the last time on earth, for the following afternoon he departed to be "with Christ which is far better"; some of his last words being—"God justifieth: God justifieth."

"Pardon for all thy sins is offered thee

Since Jesus, God's beloved Son, died on the tree."

"Clearance from every charge of guilt is free; God justifies
All that believe on Him who died, and then did rise."

"Peace for poor troubled souls there is for evermore.

He says, 'Behold my hands and feet.' The storm is o'er

If on the wounds of Jesus you learn to spell

Your P-E-A-C-E, all shall be well."

Dear unsaved reader, we pass on our brother's message to you—"Trust Jesus, do not put it off, like me, to a death-bed." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. ii. 12).

W. N.

THE ETERNAL GOD THY REFUGE.

“**T**HE days of our years are threescore years and ten,” and few they are at that! Beyond it we live on what is called borrowed time.

“All the days of Methuselah” (and he was the longest liver on record) “were nine hundred, sixty and nine years, and he died.” That was very long for a man to live—and yet, perhaps, at its close his life appeared short to him.

When we think of eternity, time is very short.

Yes, but we can only think of eternity; we can never understand it! How can a finite mind—and the mind of man is finite—conceive the meaning of “*for ever*”? It baffles the conception of the greatest intellect, and must do so. We may conceive a life of seventy years, or one of nine hundred, sixty and nine years, but not one of eternity! That is beyond all our powers.

And yet we read: “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.” That is God! It is well often to turn our thoughts to God.

He is gracious. He is full of compassion. He is holy and true. He is infinitely great. His life is eternal. He is called “the eternal God.”

As the high and lofty One He inhabits eternity—a wonderful statement truly!

Would you believe it, the word “eternity” occurs nowhere else in the text of our dear old English

Bible? It is found in the marginal reading here and there, but in the text in this place only (Isa. lvii. 15). There is, in very many places, that which signifies the same thing, but the actual word is here alone.

God inhabits eternity. As long as eternity, so long is the life of God. It is therefore without beginning, and without end—to man absolutely incomprehensible! “From everlasting to everlasting thou art God!”

What a God He must be!

When Moses was charged to carry the divine message of deliverance to the children of Israel in Egypt, he asked God by what name he should make Him known to that people. God said to him: “I am that I am;” and again: “I am hath sent me unto you.”

“I AM!” “This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations!” (Ex. iii. 14, 15).

Mark that name. It is not “I was,” nor “I will be,” but “I AM.”

Can you conceive such a name? Impossible! Nay, but you can allow its infinitude to leave an impression on your finite mind. We are elevated mentally as well as morally by that which is above and beyond us. We are saved and sanctified by a true knowledge of God.

But these are all scriptures in the Old Testament. Are there none in the new which speak of His eternity?

Yes, notice, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John viii. 58).

The "I am" of the Exodus is the "I am" of the Gospel of John.

In the former case He appeared in a flame of fire as He spake to Moses; in the latter He appeared in the lowly garb of sinless humanity, and spoke to guilty men of a liberty, the best and truest, which they have who are made free by the Son!

He was the Son of God incarnate, sent of the Father to be the Saviour of the world, and here the light of the world, so that His followers should not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

He is the Word who was in the beginning, and who was, therefore, before it, before Abraham, before time, and the "I am" of eternity!

And because of His incarnation, His death, and His resurrection, He can take up the case of sinful men, and give them life and forgiveness.

Wonderful to think of Him who inhabits eternity, being found in fashion as man, lying in a manger, nailed to a cross, buried in a tomb, but now risen and ascended, and, thank God, a Saviour!

The eternal God is a Saviour God, because salvation is the combined and glorious work of Father, Son, and Spirit—the Godhead—and is therefore a perfect salvation, the neglect of which is the greatest crime that mortal man can commit.

How lovely the word: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. xxxiii. 27). What magnitudes—a refuge, how secure, and arms, how strong! So that God, in His eternity, was, and is, and ever will be, the

refuge and strength of His distressed and afflicted people.

Turn to this shelter and lay thee down, dear trembling heart, on these everlasting arms, on the mighty compassion of Him who makes the prodigal welcome, and who comforts the poor, broken heart, and the humble and contrite spirit. J. W. S.

A SOLDIER'S HEROISM.

IT was a time of war, and England had sent her armies over sea to try to check the power of France. Many acts of heroism were performed, and we would tell again the story of one noble deed.

An English officer, accompanied by a soldier, was reconnoitring one day, when by mistake he rode up to a small body of French cavalry. The Frenchmen were dismounted, but, on recognising the officer's rank, they quickly mounted and started in pursuit. The two English soldiers might yet have escaped had not some more of the enemy's soldiers cut off their retreat.

"Your only chance, colonel," said the orderly, "is to make for that ravine."

But the ravine was narrow, and there was room for only one horse to enter. The colonel gained the opening in safety, but turning round beheld a terrible sight. The devoted soldier, in order to gain time for the officer to escape, had placed himself across the

entrance of the ravine, and thus nobly he fell under the enemy's sword.

We applaud such a deed, and yet it but faintly reminds us of a much greater act of love, an act far above the deed we have recorded, even as the heavens are far above the earth.

The soldier's life was sacrificed to save a life of greater value, but what shall we say of the love that led the Son of God to lay down His life? He stooped to become man, and died, that He might save those that were not only infinitely His inferiors, but that were also His deadly enemies. Such love as this passes all understanding.

The Lord Jesus left His home of love to become a man and tread this cold and dreary world. He who had ever been used to command "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." The object of His Father's love, He became the object of man's scorn and hatred. He was the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Through such a pathway he went on to Gethsemane and to Calvary. At the cross He suffered not only at the hand of man, but also at the hand of God. His soul was made an offering for sin. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Thus He suffered that He might save man from the consequences of sin.

"Sin's bitter judgment He bore on the tree,
Dying to save, dying to save ;
So that the sinner might justly go free,
His precious blood Jesus gave."

Now God has highly exalted the Lord Jesus, and from heaven He sends to man the message of His love.

Dear reader, have you ever thanked the Lord Jesus for the work He did upon the cross? Can you say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for *me*"? If you cannot say this, we beseech you not to spurn His love any longer. He desires to bless you, to make known His love to you. Oh, let the story of His love draw you to His feet! Then will you hear Him say, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

M. L. B.

THE HAIRDRESSER'S CONVERSION.

NINE years ago I was working at my trade (a hairdresser) in Glasgow, living at home with my parents, who, though church-goers, were not born again. As a young man I felt that things were too straight for me, and I wanted to get away from all parental restraint. I thought the best way to manage this was to get a situation away from home, and this I very soon succeeded in doing. I set out one Monday morning for my new situation, thinking, Now I will see life. I did not know that the Scripture had said, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

I sought life in the wrong place, going into the pleasures of sin as far as my means would allow,

and often beyond them. It so happened that the people I went to work with were Christians. After the first week there, they, having found out that I had not been to the church on the Sunday, invited me to a Gospel Meeting, which was held in the Good Templars' Hall every Sunday evening. I went for several weeks, and God spoke to me at those meetings.

How well I remember the long, dreary nights when under conviction of sin. A young man shared the bedroom with me, who worked on the railway. Every alternate week he worked all night. How I dreaded that week he worked late, for I knew there was no sleep for me. Things went on thus until Saturday night, 21st October 1899. I intended to come up to Glasgow to spend the week-end, and got away a little earlier from business to catch the last train. I hurried up as quickly as possible, but just got into the station as the train was moving away from the far end of the platform.

On the way back I called at the shop, and the lady at the counter expressed her sorrow at my losing the train; but, putting her hand on my shoulder, said, "Never mind, James; perhaps you will get saved to-morrow night." That was the last thought in my mind at the time. Next evening found me and my companion sitting in our usual place, the back seat. It was a testimony meeting. Five young men were telling from full hearts what the Lord had done for them. While the first one was speaking, the confession was wrung from my heart, doubtless by God, You have no testimony of God's

saving grace to tell like that. As one after another spoke, the anxiety created within my soul increased, and long before the meeting was over, how I wished that their Saviour was my Saviour too.

The meeting being over, and the usual invitation given to those who were anxious to remain, I turned to my companion and said, "Ned, are you going to wait to-night?" "No," he said, as he rose and made for the door. I sat still. One of the young men who had been speaking came down and sat beside me with open Bible. After a few words of conversation he turned to John iii. 18. Whether he read the whole verse or not I do not remember. The words "he that believeth not is condemned already" fastened themselves to me. He then showed me that Christ came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, and that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

As a guilty sinner I there and then accepted the sinner's Saviour, and passed from death unto life. "Hallelujah, what a Saviour!" I missed the train for Glasgow, but found the express for Eternal Glory, and trust this testimony may be blessed to some precious soul.

J. C.

IF you do not act upon the light when you get it, you will assuredly be involved in thick darkness. Hence, therefore, as another has said, "Never go before your faith, nor lag behind your conscience."

C. H. M.

THE UNUSED BALL DRESS.

MANY years ago I was attending a Christian lady whose malady demanded rather frequent visits. She was an earnest Christian, and very warm in her desire that the gospel of the grace of God, which she herself enjoyed, should reach others also. She one day informed me that she was expecting her cousin, a remarkably pretty and attractive girl of nineteen, who resided in a large town in the north of England, to spend a while with her, and she fervently hoped that she was coming to Edinburgh to receive spiritual blessing.

She told me that she was an out-and-out worldling, her one idea being to cull what joy she could from life in the shape of balls, parties, theatres, novels, &c., while any acknowledgment of God was not only distasteful to her, but was even forbidden by her mother in the home in which she had been reared.

Within a few days I formed the young lady's acquaintance, but she took very good care not to give me an opportunity of intruding what she regarded as her cousin's and my "peculiar notions" upon her. The moment I arrived in the house she vanished; or if she happened to be at my patient's bedside when I entered, she quitted the room immediately.

Many weeks rolled by, and her cousin recovered

her health so far as to be able to attend the Sunday evening gospel meetings, which I was holding in a large hall near to the apartments in which they were dwelling.

Invited, and earnestly entreated to come and hear the gospel, C—— for many weeks persistently declined, but one evening, to my surprise and delight, I noticed her sitting in the last row of seats at the bottom of the hall. The subject before us that night was the Three Appearings of Christ, as presented in the end of Hebrews ix.

1. HIS PAST APPEARING.

“Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many” (vers. 26-28).

2. HIS PRESENT APPEARING.

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (ver. 24). And

3. HIS FUTURE APPEARING.

“And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (ver. 28).

His first appearing was dwelt upon at considerable length—when it took place, viz., in the end of the world, or more truly, the consummation of the ages.

That is to say, after man had been tested and tried in every possible way, and found to be only a total ruin, Christ appeared.

The ages of testing were several. (1) Man placed in the Garden of Eden in innocence was tempted, fell, became a sinner, afraid of God, and was driven out of Paradise. (2) Man outside of Paradise left to his own conscience, became so corrupt and godless that God must needs bring in "the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. ii. 5). Without law he was utterly godless. (3) In Moses' day a select people, Israel, were placed under law, and, alas, broke it before they had fully received its terms. (4) Last of all, man was tested by the presence of the Son of God—incarnate Love and Light. His only response was, "Away with him! Crucify him!"

All this but shows the state of man's heart—that he was hopelessly alienated from God, and but the slave of lust and passion, governed by Satan at the back of all. Then it was that Christ appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." On the cross of Calvary He took up before God the whole question of sin, as God knows it. "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). "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). Sin was unsparingly judged in the person of the holy Son of God, when, as a substitute, He sacri-

ficed Himself in absolute and blessed love to put away sin.

But more than that, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." This is the great and blessed truth of substitution. As a substitute He bore the sins, died the death, and sustained the judgment which attached to sinners as such. He effected propitiation by sacrificing Himself for sin. He shone as the blessed substitute when He bore the sins of many. The one who believes in Him is entitled, therefore, to know that God has been perfectly glorified about his sin, and that Christ has borne and blotted out for ever all his sins, which have lain as a heavy burden on the conscience.

Calling to see my patient on Monday morning, my young friend C—— greeted me quite warmly, and began to speak of last night's meeting and her interest in what she had heard; and from that day for a considerable number of weeks she attended every meeting she could where the Word of the Lord was being spoken. She seemed to be thoroughly arrested by the Spirit of God, her mind was full of inquiry as to divine things, and all who knew her were hopeful that she was about to decide for Christ. No one pressed confession on her, and it could not be said that she actually confessed Christ.

The time came for her to return home. I happened to be at the railway station at the hour of her departure, and seized the opportunity of a final con-

versation. I pressed upon her the importance of thorough decision for Christ and bold confession of His name, showing the blessedness of such action, and quoted to her the Spirit's words—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

She assented, was deeply interested, and said, "I am going home, doctor, and I hope you will hear good news of me. I know what you want, and I hope you will hear it about me." She stepped into the train, and I saw her no more.

Several months rolled by, and I often inquired of my patient, "What about C——?" and only got the reply, "I know nothing; I am afraid she has not confessed Christ at home." At length came news, startling news, sad news. The great ball of the season was coming on. C—— was a beautiful dancer, and of course had received an invitation, which, with pain, we also heard she had accepted. Then came other news—that she had been attacked by typhoid fever, and was dangerously ill.

My patient, in great distress of mind, repaired to the city in which her cousin lay so ill. To her intense sorrow and disappointment she was not permitted to see her. Her mother, whose enmity against Christ seems to have been deep beyond expression, declared that she would not have her daughter's mind troubled by religious folly. She had trained her for the world: in the world she was to have shone. To the coming ball she was to have gone.

A beautiful ball dress had been provided, and was now hanging in her wardrobe ready for use on the eventful evening, which arrived in due course.

The ball was a magnificent scene, everything that could contribute to the pleasure of the gay crowd gathered there was provided, but my fair young friend C—— was not present. The ball dress was never worn. The day she should have been arrayed in it her remains were laid in the old churchyard.

And how did she die? say you. This only do I know, that, alas, she had never confessed Christ. When death stared her in the face, and the realities of eternity appeared before her affrighted gaze, she said to her mother, "Send for E——, let me see E——"—the Christian cousin with whom she had stayed in Edinburgh. This comfort the Christless mother denied her dying daughter, and then the fever-stricken girl cursed her mother, charged her with being the cause of her eternal damnation, and so died.

All the actors in this sad scene have long since passed into eternity, but methinks the judgment-seat of Christ will be an awful reality to that poor mother, however the daughter may stand there. Oh, ye world-loving mothers, who think only of this life for your daughters, let this true tale warn, arouse, and alarm you, lest in your indifference to Christ, you should be the means of their eternal damnation.

And you, my dear young friend, who may be reading this, harden not your heart, nor shut your ears to

the moral of this sad history. Procrastination, I fear, coupled with timidity—cowardice, if you like the word better—led poor dear C—— to hesitate fully to confess the Lord, to whom she was certainly for a little while attracted. Apparently afraid of the consequences of an out-and-out confession of His blessed name, she shrank from owning Him at home; the warnings and wooings of the Spirit of God were, I fear, slighted.

Then came death, unwanted and unlooked for, which carried her with startling swiftness into the unknown realities of eternity.

Let me beseech you, reader, at once to close in with God's offer of mercy, nor risk the awfulness of a lost eternity by continuing unrepentant and unbelieving. Listen once more to God's gospel, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

W. T. P. W.

MY TWO BIRTHDAYS.

MY natural birthday was in June 1826, and my spiritual birthday in October 1847. My parents were Puritans. I was therefore strictly brought up, and led by the hand to the parish church as soon as I could walk the distance; and as soon as I could read my loving father made me a present of a beautiful gilt-edged pocket Bible, with my initials on it, and no school-girl could be more delighted with her new bonnet

than I was with the outside of my new Bible, which I kept with great care, and only used it to turn up the psalm to be sung, and the chapter and text read in church on Sunday.

My early impressions of God and religion from six years of age were slavish fear, for I knew that I was a sinner, but did not know Christ as my Saviour. I was afraid of death and of meeting God. At thirteen years of age I left home, and followed the lead of those who, like myself, had no hope, and were without God in the world; but I was kept from the use of strong drink, by seeing one near and dear to me become a hopeless drunkard, and the heart-break of one of the best of mothers; never, never can I forget her unutterable anguish.

About this time a revival of religion broke out in the south of Scotland at a village called Denholm, where some working men, and among them Ebenezer Young, the stone-mason, suddenly became preachers. Their testimonies were bright; they knew they were saved, and that their sins were forgiven, and they were on the way that leads to heaven.

Alas! I loved the darkness rather than the light. I did not receive their testimony, and shunned their company, and although I was kept free from outward sins, I was a hell-deserving sinner, and a willing slave of the devil, on the way which leadeth to destruction. But the dawn of a brighter day was at hand. Unexpectedly sent off on business to Haydon Bridge, where I was an entire stranger, on the Sunday evening, while sauntering about, I heard lively singing in

a small mission room and went in. On coming out, a young man said to me, "Have you peace with God?" I confessed that I had never thought of such a thing. "But you will be a member of some church?" "Oh, certainly." A second young man took hold of me, and then a third, and I was glad to get away from them, but the question, "Have you peace with God?" remained. On inquiry I found that two of my querists were tailors and one a shoemaker.

In a few days I called at the shop of the shoemaker, who looked me in the face and said, "What is the matter with you?" "My sins to be sure." With Testament in hand he read to me, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). I read it over and over again, I do not know how often. How did I never see this before? At length I could say, "My heart is fixed," and the moment my heart was fixed on Christ and rested on His atoning blood, the Holy Spirit entered, and I had peace with God. I sprang from my seat and said, "I am saved, I am saved."

Thus the precious seed sown and watered by loved ones gone before, and long buried, suddenly began to sprout, take root, spring up, and bear fruit.

"My sun is now setting, the forecast is bright,
Jesus Himself gives me songs in the night."

F. T.

[The writer of the above narrative, and lines, fell asleep, soon after writing them, rejoicing in Christ. "He, being dead, yet speaketh."—*Ed. G.M.*]

WOUNDED AND HEALED.

IT was no convulsion of nature, no midnight earthquake, as at Philippi, that woke up Miss W—— of the town of B——. But she was ill, very ill, indeed she thought she was dying, and so did her friends, who, seeing her distress, sent for the writer to come and speak to her about her soul.

Esteeming it a privilege to tell of a known Saviour to one in need, I embraced the first opportunity to go and see her. On reaching the house, I found that though, on her mother's testimony, she "had always been a good girl," she was greatly disturbed at the thought of meeting God. The waters of Jordan (death) struck terror into her soul, and it might well be so, for she did not know One beyond that dark river who had died to put her sins away. Finding that the wounding of conscience had been already done, after kneeling down with the mother and others by the bedside in prayer to Him who alone can heal, I read to her those well-known, and I doubt not, often-used, words in Isaiah liii., "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (verse 5).

I then simply and tenderly pleaded with her to look away from self to Christ, and His peace and healing would be hers. I had to take leave of her, however, without receiving any assurance that the

desired peace had been obtained. But I found, on calling the next day, that the blessed One who had wounded had healed, having spoken the word of peace to her soul, and a heavenly calm had taken possession of her once troubled spirit. Her heart had been won by His love, and expressing her gratitude in her own simple way she said, "I feel I could take Jesus in my arms." We again knelt by the bedside, this time to unite with her in giving Him thanks.

She lingered on for several weeks, and suffered a good deal, and although I never had the opportunity of seeing her again, she gave abundant testimony before she fell asleep, to the reality of the work, the name of Jesus being frequently upon her lips. Her friends, too, spoke of the great change in her.

And now, dear reader, a word in conclusion to you. Let me plead with you to face eternal realities while in health. Death is a reality: and you must face it. God is a reality, you will have to meet Him. Your sins are a reality: if you die in them they will rise up against you at the judgment day. Eternity is a reality: you will have to spend it either in heaven or in hell. Ponder these things, dear reader, be wise in time. Look to Christ in faith now, and peace and healing will be yours, and you will spend *eternity* with Him.

"Man's life is as the grass,
Or like the morning flower ;
If one sharp blast sweep o'er the field,
It withers in an hour."

GOD'S SALVATION: IS IT YOURS?

WHAT a magnificent sight," I exclaimed, as I observed a young man sitting on a waggon in the open street of one of the largest manufacturing cities in England, reading his Bible. I was at once attracted by such a sight, and stopped to inquire what he had found in the Bible to make him pore over its pages, when others were hurrying to and fro after the busy concerns of life.

"Do you know your sins forgiven, and are you saved by the One of whom your Bible speaks?" were the pointed questions I addressed to him.

"I am," he replied, "if I continue in the faith, and hold on to the end."

"On what ground are you saved, or on what ground do you hope to be saved, might I ask? Is it on the ground of your own works, or the finished work of Christ?"

"Of course it is on the ground of the finished work of Christ," he said, "but must we not hold on to the end?"

"It is time enough for you to talk about holding on to the end, and continuing in the faith, when you know that you are in the faith, and that you are resting on the solid rock—Christ and His finished work, and when you know that the whole question of your sins has been settled with God. It would help you greatly if you saw the force of those words

in Romans v. 9, 10—'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.*' It is plain from those verses that the believer in Christ is already justified—cleared from all charge of guilt by the blood of Christ, and that he is also reconciled to God—brought into a place of nearness in which formerly he was not.

"The argument of the apostle is, If all this has taken place, that is, that we have been perfectly justified and brought near to God, is there any danger of our being lost after all? Clearly not. As to the future *we shall be saved from* wrath by the very One through whose blood we have been now justified, and through whose death we have been reconciled; and as to the present, *we are being saved by His life.* 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' And because He ever lives with God for us as our great high priest, and as our unfailing advocate with the Father, He is able to save unto the uttermost—on to the very end of our pilgrimage-pathway—all that come unto God by Him. But to be explicit with you, turn over in your Bible to Hebrews x. 9, 10, and read: 'Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will *we are sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.'

“You know the meaning of sanctified—it simply means being set apart. Well, is it not clear to you from the verses you have read, that the believer in Christ is set apart to God, by God’s will having been accomplished through the work of Christ done once for all?

“Yes, it does seem clear that we are absolutely sanctified by the work of Christ done once for all, which certainly needs none of our doings appended.

“He was a perfect Saviour. He offered Himself a perfect sacrifice according to the will of God, and God has accepted the work done. It needs no repetition, and indeed never will be repeated. Well now, read verses 14-17: ‘For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them: and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Now where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin.’

“Could anything be plainer than these verses as to the entire satisfaction or setting apart to God of all true believers in the full value of the work of Christ? And, moreover, those who are thus sanctified, are said to be *perfected for ever*, which simply means in perpetuity, like a lease which never runs out. And the Holy Ghost testifies to us (not in us yet, though He dwells in every saved person) by the written Word, that our sins and iniquities God in His

marvellous grace remembers no more. All are forgotten, thank God. How gloriously grand is such a salvation, and how worthy of the God of all grace."

Having said these few words as a passing stranger, I left my friend to ponder them, in the hope that his soul might be established in the true grace of God.

That salvation is entirely of grace, and not of works or merit on our part, Scripture over and over again asserts. Paul says, "And if it be grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then grace is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. xi. 6).

"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5). And also, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

I shall never forget once conversing with a lady upon these matters. Our conversation turned upon a deceased gentleman, whom she had rightly held in high esteem. She wound up the conversation by saying, "If there be one man in heaven that man is sure to be there, for he was such a good man." To her great surprise I said, "Well, ma'am, if that man be in heaven he could not be there but on the same ground as the dying robber—as a sinner saved by the matchless grace of God." "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9).

For nearly six thousand years the minds of men

have been filled with DOING. Cain tried it, when he brought of the fruit of the ground, that God had cursed, to atone for his guilt, and to find acceptance with God; but God rejected him and his *bloodless* offering. Abel, on the contrary, came on the ground of simple faith. Disclaiming any and all merit on his part, "he brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (type of the Lamb of God who was to come), and offered his sacrifice to God, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, and stood before God an accepted worshipper.

The great, honourable, mighty, valiant, but leprous Naaman, the proud captain of Syria's hosts, thought that he would get cured of his leprosy when he brought with him ten talents of silver, also six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment to present to the prophet of Israel. But no, the prophet quickly let him know, to the wounding of his pride, and the grief of his heart, that the cure could not be obtained for money.

"What shall we *do*, that we might work the works of God?" was the question addressed to the Lord by the motley crowd of John vi. He answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (ver. 29).

"What must I *do* to be saved?" was the all-important and most momentous inquiry made by the awakened jailor, of the servants of Christ he had so unjustly beaten. The answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." When the sense of guilt is felt, when the

sinner is aroused to a true sense of his awful condition in God's sight, then distress about the past, and solemn dread of the future bring such soul agony that the awakened man seems almost to skirt the very abyss of despair. What a critical moment this is in the soul's history, and one not by any means to be trifled with. Better to be awakened on earth where God's mercy is shown, than to wake up in hell, where one drop of water (the smallest conceivable mercy) was denied the man who fared sumptuously every day while here upon earth.

But a person may say, Are we not told in James that Abraham was justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac upon the altar? And does Paul not also say, "By which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, *unless ye have believed in vain?*"

Both statements are quite true, and though they may at first seem difficult to reconcile, do not in reality clash with what has been said in the beginning of this paper.

We must ever remember that Scripture *never* contradicts itself. There may be, and doubtless there are, difficulties, but we may rest assured the ignorance *is in us*, and the Holy Spirit, who indited the word, is the One who *alone* can make it plain, and *will* to those who in simplicity and lowliness desire to learn.

It is important to see that James takes a man on the *profession* of his faith, and asks him to show his faith by his works. He rightly says, "What doth

it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works?" He is not content with the mere saying or confession of a man's lips, he says, "Show *me* thy faith without thy works," and I "will show thee my faith by my works." As much as to say, I cannot read your heart to see whether you have faith, but I can see your conduct; and he brings Abraham forward to prove his point.

The apparent conflict between Paul and James vanishes when we see that Paul speaks of our justification before God alone, which is by faith only, while James speaks of our justification *not before God but before men*. Paul speaks of Abraham's justification before Isaac was born, when God promised him a son, from whom a seed should spring which would be more numerous than the stars of the sky and the sand by the sea shore. He believed God, and was thus accounted righteous.

When Isaac was not only born, but had grown up to manhood, God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to offer up his only son, from whom all this seed was to spring. God had no need of any proof of Abraham's faith. He knew it was there already, but men cannot see where God's eye sees, and hence they look for us to prove our faith by a consistent life of true godliness and good works. All works to be acceptable to God must have faith as their spring, else they would be what Scripture calls "dead works." For "without faith it is *impossible* to please God" (Heb. xi. 6). And though faith could not be called a work, yet "it *worketh* by love."

As to "believing *in vain*," a reference to the context will show at once what the apostle meant. Paul devotes nearly all 1 Corinthians xv., in which this statement occurs, to prove what some amongst the Corinthians were boldly denying, viz., the resurrection of the dead. He refreshes their minds with the gospel he preached when he was among them, which was that "Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures," and divinely assures them, "By which also ye are saved, unless ye have believed in vain." He then brings forth evidence to prove that Christ was raised. There were those who saw Him after His resurrection. And so strongly does he speak on the subject (thus showing its great importance) that in the 14th verse he says, "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith (or believing) is also vain." And again he asserts in the 17th verse, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." But, thank God, Christ is risen, having died for our sins and having borne the judgment of them. He settled the whole question of them with God, and eternally vindicated God's righteousness in doing so; and as the righteous answer to His finished work, God raised Him from the dead, and enthroned Him in the highest glory, where Paul saw Him, and from whence he was converted through Him. So then the believer is no longer in his sins, *nor has he believed in vain*.

What a glorious triumph was the resurrection of

Christ. It was the fullest vindication of Him and His finished work that God could possibly have shown. And He being raised as "the first-fruits," the harvest is sure to follow. All who are Christ's will be raised like Him, as Romans viii. 11 says, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

As to continuing in the faith, *we ought to do so, and will*, if we are truly saved, as Peter says, "*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*" And Paul said to the Hebrews, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak" (Heb. vi. 9).

"Far as is east from west, are sundered wide
Thou and thy sins : no whirling tide
Of righteous condemnation e'er shall roll
O'er thee, believing sinner,—Christ has died
To save thy soul.

Has died *and lives, to show the work complete :*
Kneel, kneel, adoring, at the feet
Of Him, Jehovah—Jesus, Christ, the Word
That was—is—shall be. With hosannas greet
Our coming Lord.

Coming to judge the earth and all therein
With us—the Bride He died to win,
Caught up, in mid-air, to His loving breast ;
No more vain longings—ah, and no more sin ;
"Tis peace and rest."

"LOVING SAVIOUR, I ACCEPT THEE."

IN one of the big public wards of a general hospital, among all the suffering and pain a man lay dying.

He seemed at last to realise his condition, realise how very near he was to eternal judgment, and he was almost paralysed with fear, his shrieks and groans frightening every one in the ward. In vain the nurse tried to quiet him, soothing him with physical remedies and giving drugs to deaden the pain. He would lie quiet for a little while, and then, as if his soul could not rest, he would start again crying, "Hell, hell, hell: do not let them take me, hold me fast, hold me fast: I do not want to die; they are coming—hell, hell, hell." He grew almost frantic.

The nurse went over and took his hand. "Hush," she whispered, "hush, remember Christ died to save sinners."

"Yes, but not me, not me, I am too bad."

"No, He died to save you. If your sins were scarlet as blood, yet shall they be white as snow."

"Oh," he said, "pray for me, pray for me." It was as if the truth was penetrating through the dulled fever-stricken brain, as if God in His wonderful mercy was giving this dying man a clear vision; and when the nurse slowly murmured over him, "O Christ, save this man; oh, help him, Lord Jesus," he lay still with his hands folded.

"Nurse," he cried suddenly, "are you quite sure that Christ died for me, quite sure there is hope?"

"Yes," she answered, firmly and slowly, "quite sure Christ died for you, and if you accept Him your soul shall surely live." He lay quite still for a time, and then looking up he whispered gently, "Christ, loving Saviour, I accept Thee, I accept Thee."

Then remorse seemed suddenly to fill his soul. "Oh that I could live for Him, that I could be more worthy. Is there no hope, can I not live for Him?" The nurse shook her head. "You will go to Him instead," she whispered.

Some of the other patients had come to the bedside, and seeing them he cried, "Young men, turn from your wicked ways while there is yet time, accept and live for Christ our Saviour." The strength which had been for a moment vouchsafed, began to fail him, his eyelids closed, and he lay quite still with a quiet smile on his face, and his hands clasped.

After a while the eyes again opened, and with a bright look he whispered, "Now I die happy, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; loving Saviour, I commit my soul to Thee." The weary eyelids closed again for the last time, and shortly after, very quietly, the newborn spirit left the wasted body to find its true home, and see the precious Saviour face to face.

Reader, have you accepted that loving Saviour?

"Behold the Lamb! 'tis He who bore
My sins upon the tree;
And cleared by death the dreadful score,
The guilt that lay on me."

THE TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL.

ROMANS i. 16.

IN the book which God has graciously given to us, and which addresses itself to every creature under heaven, a few plain facts are stated which will enable you, dear reader, if you so desire it, to take a true account of yourself, and see where you are, and how you stand in relation to God. Nothing, surely, can be of greater importance than this. Life is uncertain. There is nothing in this poor world upon which you can safely rely. The heart of man instinctively longs for that which is stable and abiding; and the anxious cry is going forth from many a weary soul to-day, "Who will show us any good?" (Ps. iv. 6).

In Genesis i. God is seen diligently working for the benefit and blessing of His creatures. In chapter ii. a "garden of delights" is planted, eastward in Eden, and there God placed the man whom He had formed for His own pleasure. In chapter iii. man, listening to Satan's lying insinuations, revolts from God; and, conscience-stricken, seeks a hiding-place from his Maker among the trees of the garden; he is there challenged, exposed, convicted, and subsequently driven out of Paradise. Thus, briefly, the Spirit of God sums up for us the "present situation." "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that ALL HAVE SINNED." Solemn picture this. Have you

honestly faced it, reader? There is no way of return to an earthly Eden (Gen. iii 24), and the sentence of death is upon all who are born outside of it (Rom. vi. 23; Heb. ix. 27). Gloomy enough would this outlook be were it not that God Himself has intervened on man's behalf. No sooner had sin cast its withering blight upon His fair creation, than the voice of God is heard in the garden, announcing the fact that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15), and following quickly upon this blessed intimation, Adam and Eve were clothed with coats of skin, signifying that a victim had been slain, and sinful man accepted in the life of another. In that innocent animal, put to death to cover the nakedness and guilt of ruined man, God's mighty triumph over the powers of evil is typically declared, and the all-atoning sacrifice of Christ shadowed forth. And from that moment onwards, until the Son of God was manifested, the slain victims at the altars bore continuous witness to faith's *only* ground of approach to God.

But in the death of Jesus, where man's guilt and enmity reached their culminating point, God's righteousness was established and His love fully expressed. Jesus laid down His life, to end for ever, as before God, the sad history of man "in the flesh" (Gen. vi. 13; Rom. viii. 3). His holy soul was "made an offering for sin." The waves of judgment, in all their fury, spent themselves upon Him who came to do the will of God (Isa. liii. 10; Ps. xl. 7, 8). But death could not hold Him. (Acts ii. 24). He was

“raised from the dead by the glory of the Father” (Rom. vi. 4). The everlasting gates were opened wide to welcome the mighty Conqueror into the courts of glory (Ps. xxiv. 7, 8). God has placed Him at His own right hand (Rom. viii. 34). The sacrifice of Christ has come up as a sweet savour to God; and now—

“The river of His grace,
Through righteousness supplied,
Is flowing o’er the barren place
Where Jesus died.”

Dear reader, has this blessed report reached *you*? All power in heaven and earth is committed to God’s beloved Son. All that God has, or ever will have for man in the way of blessing, is dispensed by Jesus, the true “Zaphnath Paaneah” (Gen. xli. 44-57). Have you learnt that God expects nothing from *you*; but that He comes out towards you to-day in the character of a Saviour-God, a Giver? “There is one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all” (1 Tim. ii. 3-6). The gospel addresses itself to all, without exception. Friend, whatever your condition may be, there is *only* blessing in the heart of God towards you. Take Him at His word, and claim the blessed Saviour as your own, and you will know, in the deep experience of your soul, what it is to have peace with God, the forgiveness of your sins, and an inheritance among all “the sanctified” (Acts xiii. 38; Rom. v. 1; Eph. i. 11; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4)..

But the day of God’s long-suffering is drawing to a

close. Soon the last gospel message will be told out, and the last sinner brought under the peaceful sway of Christ. The Saviour will come into the air to meet His saints. The sleeping ones will be raised, and the living changed, and all taken up to be "for ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 16-18). What a blessed consummation! What a glorious prospect to look forward to! What a stimulus for happy service in the great harvest-field of human souls! But if the coming of the Lord crowns the blessedness of the believer's portion, what of those who are so absorbed with the things of this life that they are utterly unconcerned about eternity and the interests of their souls? Like Belshazzar in Daniel v., and the wealthy farmer in Luke xii. 16, they are set upon making everything of "the present," and leaving God and the great hereafter out of their reckoning. Their language is, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke xii. 19).

Friend, if this is the road you are travelling upon, may God awaken you from your sleep of death. Remember the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, and that mighty monarch's sudden doom (Dan. v. 5, 27-30). Think of God's solemn announcement to that prosperous worldling, in the midst of his brilliant day-dreams: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Luke xii. 20). It is *the dark death-knell of a lost eternity*. Listen to the voice of wisdom: "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man. Riches and

honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold : and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment : that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance : and I will fill their treasures" (Prov. viii. 4, 18-21). The speaker in these verses is the same blessed Person who came into this world to do a Saviour's part for you, poor sinner, in spite of your folly, and waywardness, and sin. You have been "weighed" in God's balances, and are "found wanting" (Dan. v. 27). But Jesus went into the storm of judgment that you might know the rest, and peace, and enjoyment of the love of God.

Life's little day for you here will soon be ended, and a long eternity begun. The One whom man has slighted, and refused, and cast out, is coming to reign over this earth, where once He had "nowhere to lay his head." "Every eye shall see him" (Rev. i. 7). Every knee shall bow to Him. Universal homage shall be His. "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." All who have found a refuge in Christ in this day of grace, will then be associated with Him in glory.

G. F. E.

THE EMPTY TOMB.

THE guilty town of Salem slept,
 As bound by heavy spell,
 Save for the patient vigil kept
 By Roman sentinel ;

The first pale amber streak of morn
Along the purple sky
Fringed dark leaved Olivet forlorn,
O'er humble Bethany.

And all the country round lay still
Without a sound, intent,
As hushed by deep, mysterious will
Before a great event ;
One place there is in Judah's lands,
One central point of all—
The rock-hewn sepulchre that stands
Within yon garden wall.

O grave, thou depth of terrors, say,
Where is thy victory ?
The dawn breaks of the fairest day
In this world's history.
There came forth, at that silent hour,
From the domain of death,
The Son of God, declared in power,
Jesus of Nazareth !

The guards were on their faces thrown,
The rocks were torn and rent,
The dazzling angel rolled the stone,
The women came and went.
But see ! the light 'of morning streams !
Fast disappears the gloom ;
The first day's sun, with quickening beams,
Shines on an empty tomb !

THE SOLDIER'S TWO DREAMS.

IT was in the summer, of 1886, at Chirat, a small hill-station in India, that I met George C——, the subject of the following narrative.

Not long converted myself, it was my joy to seek to lead others to that blessed Saviour, whom I can always commend with the greatest confidence to the *vilest* sinner or the *weakest* saint, for

“The *chief* of sinners He receives,
His saints He loves and *never* leaves.”

As Chirat was a kind of invalid station for Peshawar, the hospital there was usually full of soldiers of various regiments, suffering from enteric fever or other serious diseases. Hence I found it a good field for sowing the precious seed of the Word of God, and so spent much of my spare time there in the evenings.

One morning, after dismounting guard, I felt distinctly impelled to go at once to the hospital. In vain did I reason within myself that it was the worst time to pay a visit there, as the doctor would be going his rounds just then, and the native dressers and orderlies would be tending the patients afterwards. I simply had to go.

I had almost gone through the whole hospital, and was about to pass out of the door with the humiliating sense of my visit having been a failure, when my eyes fell upon a young corporal of the 2nd Wilts Regiment lying on a bed in the corner. The fact

that he was in uniform indicated that he had only just been admitted to hospital; yet his face betokened an illness of a very serious nature. Our eyes met for a few moments, and then perhaps the fact that I also was a corporal led him to speak.

“Good morning, corporal,” said he. I returned his salutation, and went to his side.

“Were you at the corporals’ ‘turn-out’ yesterday?” he asked.

It was the custom for the regiments in India to play friendly cricket matches with one another. In this case the corporals of his regiment played the corporals of mine. Alas! these matches usually finished up with drinking and song-singing till late at night, to the ruin of many a noble young fellow.

On telling him that I was not, he replied: “Ah! you ought to have been there. Why, I got out of hospital specially for it. I had been in with enteric for some time, but I made the doctor believe that I was quite fit for going out; and he let me out, but said I was to take great care of myself, and that I was to report myself to him every morning at the hospital for a while. I didn’t take much care of myself, for I got so drunk that I could not get back to the camp, so I had to sleep out in the open air all night on the polo ground; and didn’t I wake up with a shiver this morning? so when the doctor saw me just now he ordered me back into hospital at once.”

“I should think so, indeed,” was my remark. “Why, you have evidently got a relapse.”

“Oh, no,” said he. “It is only a bit of a cold. I

will soon be all right again. And my time is expired. I am going home in the first troopship in October."

"I am afraid you are worse than you think. Now let me ask you a question. Supposing you never reached home. Supposing you were to die. What about your soul?"

"Oh, I am not going to die. I am going to get better soon, and then off home to England. And just as you were coming down the ward I was thinking that when I got home I would turn over a new leaf altogether, and become a Christian like my father and mother."

"But," I urged, "you may never get better. Would it not be much better and safer to turn to God NOW?"

He got annoyed as I pressed such questions home, and, leaning forward on his left elbow, he pointed with his right finger to the door, and said, "You see that door, corporal?"

"Yes," was my reply.

"Well, go out of it, and don't ever dare to speak to me of these things again. If you do, I will report you to the doctor, and then you will be stopped from coming here altogether."

Feeling that such would be the result of any such complaint, as I really had no permission to visit the hospital for such purposes, I sorrowfully answered, "Well, I will go; but there is one thing you cannot prevent me from doing."

"What is that?" he asked, leaning more forward still, as though determined to stop that if he could.

“Well, if you will prevent me from speaking to you about God, you can’t prevent me from speaking to God about you. I will pray for you.”

“Oh, you can please yourself about that,” he replied, as he sank back, evidently relieved that, in his estimation, it was no worse. Ah! little did he know the wonderful power of prayer, or the wonderful blessing “the God of all grace” had in store for him, and, I doubt not, as the result of prayer.

So I left him, and as I wended my way back to camp I felt that perhaps after all my *first* morning visit to that hospital had not been in vain.

That night, in a little tent where a few simple Christians of various regiments usually met, George C—— was the subject of earnest, *united* prayer; and as we parted we all agreed to remember him individually before God.

A day or two afterwards I again visited the hospital. As I approached the corner where George C—— was I could see the havoc that the disease had made with him during the short time that had elapsed since my last visit. Remembering his last words, I did not speak, but stood with my left foot on the threshold of the door, and my face turned towards his. Our eyes met once more. If mine expressed my feelings they expressed the deepest sorrow and pity for him, while his undoubtedly expressed heartfelt sorrow for the past. Still remembering his last words, I did not speak. At last, in a weak voice, weaker still with emotion, he said, “Corporal, come here.” Gladly I went to his side.

With tears in his eyes, he said, "Will you forgive me for what I said to you the other morning?"

"Forgive you, George? Think no more of it. How do you feel now?"

"Very bad indeed: In fact I fear I am going to die. And, oh, I am not ready to meet God. Do pray for me."

"I have prayed for you, George; a good many of us have been praying for you, and God will surely answer our prayers."

I stayed with him some time, and endeavoured to show him the way of salvation by quoting passages of Scripture which had been helpful to myself and others, but all without effect. Every spare moment found me at his bedside afterwards, and I did all I could to help him in his soul, but all seemed in vain. His remorse at his rude treatment of me that first morning seemed to trouble him most, though I did all I could to show him that it was forgiven and forgotten.

At last one morning (my morning visits were quite frequent now) I was delighted as I got near him to find his face beaming with joy. There was no mistaking it—it was the joy of a soul at peace with God.

"Why George, what has happened?" I asked. "You seem quite happy."

"Yes, I *am* happy," he replied. "Why, I am saved, *and I know it.*"

"Oh, I am very glad to hear it. But how did it happen?"

“Well, I dreamt last night that I was looking up into the skies, when right across the heavens there appeared in letters of fire and gold the words, ‘BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED.’ The words seemed to burn right from the heavens into my very soul. As I looked, an angel came to my side and said, ‘George, do you believe *that*?’ ‘I do,’ I replied, ‘I believe that Jesus died for me.’ ‘Then you ARE saved,’ said he. ‘Yes,’ continued George with exultation, ‘I AM saved, *and I know it.*’”

Those who seek in any measure to work for the Lord can well imagine with what joy I hastened back to the camp, to tell my fellow-Christians the joyful news. There was joy in heaven and joy on earth. How we praised God too that night in that little tent! Prayer gave place to PRAISE.

I am aware that some of my fellow-Christians are very dubious about dreams, visions, and angels, in the work of the soul's salvation; but that God in His sovereign grace does use such means is clear from Scripture. Specially so was it in this case where there was no one at hand “to expound the way of God more perfectly.” I was not twelve months converted at the time, and was painfully conscious of how little I could help souls. There was no clergyman resident at the station, the chaplain and the deacon of the Church of England at Peshawar taking it in turns each week-end to come up to Chirat to perform Divine service for the troops. I remember imploring the deacon to speak to George; but alas! he first excused himself by saying that he did not care much

for speaking to soldiers, as he was not much at home with them: and when at length he did speak to him, he touched on subjects that were of no possible use to a *dying, anxious* soul.

Well, George had another dream, and in this I can see that God not only *begins* the work of salvation, but *deepens* and *completes* it to His own satisfaction. For though George's joy may not have appeared so full as after the first dream, yet his peace was unspeakably deeper. Let me tell his second dream as far as possible in his own words.

"I dreamt I came to the gates of heaven and wanted to go in. The man at the gate asked me for my defaulter sheets. (The defaulter sheets in the army contain the records of every offence, great or small, for which the soldier has been punished.) I told him that I had not got them. 'Oh,' said he, 'you must get them, for no one is allowed in here without first presenting their defaulter sheets for inspection.' So I went to the colour-sergeant (who usually kept them) and got them from him. But when I looked at them I was horrified. I thought I had only two or three company entries (minor offences) and no regimental entries (more serious offences), but I found sheets full of both. So my heart sank within me as I went back and handed my sheets to the man at the gate. He shook his head solemnly as he looked at them, and said, 'You cannot get in here with these! Why, even ONE company entry closes this gate against you for ever.'

"I went away very sad, especially as I felt that after

all I must have been very much worse than I ever thought I was. But somebody shouted out to me from the top of the wall, 'George, why don't you come in?' 'I can't,' I replied; 'my defaulter sheets are too black. They are dead against me.' 'But,' said he, 'did you not say that you believe in JESUS, God's Son, whose "blood cleanses from ALL sin?"' 'Yes,' I replied; 'I do believe in Him.' 'Then look at your defaulter sheets again,' he said. I looked once more, and there was not one entry on them; they were all gone. And as I presented them once more to the man at the gate, he shouted out, 'CLEAN EVERY WHIT,' and I passed in."

From this point George began to long to depart and be with Christ. He had not long to wait. One morning, soon after, I found the cot in the corner *empty*. "George gone?" I asked the orderly, a comrade of his who kindly volunteered to see to him in his closing days. "Yes," replied the orderly; "he passed away about one o'clock in the morning."

"How did he die?"

"Most peaceful and happy. Just before he died he clasped his hands together, looked up, and said in Hindustani, 'Never mind; it's all right,' and he was gone."

"Yes, George," thought I; "it is all right. You are with Christ, which is far better. And it WAS all right, though at first it seemed all wrong. God, who works all things after the counsel of His own will, used what was no doubt the most foolish act of your life to be the means of everlasting blessing to your soul!"

By the next mail I wrote to George's father, who lived at Broad's Green, near Calne, in Wiltshire, just telling him that his son had departed to be with Christ, and promised another letter by the next mail giving fuller details. This I also sent, giving practically what is related above, and promising that I would call and see them, if anywhere near them on my return to England.

TWENTY YEARS AFTER.

Twenty years after this event I was at some meetings at Quemerford, near Calne. During a conversation I had with one of the Christians who so kindly entertained us, I asked how far away Broad's Green was, and was informed that it was only three or four miles off. On telling my reason for asking, this brother kindly urged me to remain till the Monday following, promising that he would drive me over to see Mr and Mrs C——, who, he told me, were still alive. I gladly remained, and on Saturday afternoon he drove me to Broad's Green. We pulled up just outside a row of cottages, and my friend said, "There is old Mr C—— working in his garden." I alighted, walked up the pathway, and called out, "Are you Mr C——?"

"Yes," was his reply, as he came forward to meet me.

"Had you a son named George, who died in India about twenty years ago?"

Without a moment's hesitation he asked, "Are you Mr M——?"

"Yes," was my reply.

"Come in and see the mother," said he, as he took my hand.

We went into the little cottage, and he called out, "Mother, here's the gentleman who was with our George when he died in India."

The old lady came with all haste, and never shall I forget that meeting. Though twenty years had elapsed, yet it revived sad and painful memories for the old couple. I sought to comfort them by reminding them of the fact that George was "all right," having been "with Christ" for the past twenty years. "Ah," said they, "if we could only be *sure* of that it would be a relief to us."

"Well," I said, "surely my second letter made that clear to you, beyond a shadow of a doubt."

To my utter astonishment they told me that they never received my second letter, nor his Testament. Hence for twenty years they had been almost "without hope" as to his soul's salvation; indeed the only ray of hope they had was in my first short letter. So I leave my reader to imagine the joy with which they heard for the first time the wonderful way in which God had worked, not only to save George, but also to give him the *assurance* of salvation before he died. I hid nothing from them as to the cause of his relapse, as I felt that it only magnified the grace of God towards him. With this they quite agreed, in fact they told me that George had to go away as he was such a trouble to them, and they were afraid that when he did return home and get amongst his old

companions, he might again yield to temptation and cause them sorrow of heart once more. But, as I pointed out to them, God foresaw all that, and so in His wisdom and grace took George home to Himself, where he is beyond even the sphere of *temptation*; and where he can neither grieve God nor his parents any more. They wept, and wept, and wept again, and repeatedly said, "Then our George is saved! Thank God! thank God!!"

So I left them, praising God, not only for the grace that had saved their son, but had given them to know it—AFTER TWENTY YEARS.

Now let me say a word to you, my dear reader, if you are like George C—— was before his conversion. You are sowing "wild oats" as they call it. What shall the harvest be? Let Scripture answer—"The end of those things is DEATH." And what after death? Let Scripture again answer—"After death the JUDGMENT."

"Ah," but you say, "I too like George C—— hope to be saved before I die." Yes, *just* before you die! That is—you intend to live for the devil all your life, except the "fag-end" so to speak, which you will give to Christ, when you cannot serve the devil any longer. How selfish! Not but that He will save you even at the very last moment of your life, if you turn to Him in heart-felt repentance, pleading nought but the value of His precious blood before God. But how do you know when the "fag-end" is coming? You may be cut off quite suddenly by accident, or by some serious disease which may render you unconscious from the

outset. It has been said that there was in Scripture ONE dying sinner saved at the last moment, that none might despair. Note, there was BUT ONE, that none might presume. And why not give *the best*—the whole of the remainder of your life to Jesus? Is He not worthy? Could all heaven answer, its *united* cry would be, "HE IS WORTHY," and George C——'s voice would be by no means the weakest.

And now just a word to the parents of such as George C——. Has that lad whom you love so well caused you many a wakeful night? Many a bitter tear? "Trust thou in God." George C—— was saved. Perhaps the lad whom you loved so dearly died in a far distant land, without, as far as YOU know, a kind hand to smooth his feverish brow, or a soul to speak to him of Christ—the only Saviour. "Trust thou in God." George C—— WAS saved, though his parents did not know it till TWENTY YEARS after. God can do His own work apart from any human instrumentality whatever. "Trust thou in God." Why that second letter was not allowed to reach George C——'s parents we cannot tell, but we do know that "as for God his way is PERFECT."

A word, too, to my fellow-labourers in Christ. What a blessed Master is ours! He could do all His own work without us, but He loves to use us. Poor things! Of course we are. He knows that, and the more we know it the better He can use us. Make mistakes? Of course we do. Are we to give up serving Him on that account? Not at all. Why, He can use these very mistakes for our ultimate blessing

and His own glory. What He doesn't *rule*, He can in grace *over-rule*. Blessed for ever be His name!

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

T. C. M.

A SOLDIER'S CONVERSION.

SOME years ago a soldier lay on his bed in the infirmary of — Barracks. Though his ailment was not a dangerous one it was serious enough to confine him to bed. Time lay very heavily on his hands.

One day a comrade went into the ward and sat down to chat with him. The sick man remarked: "Look here, I am desperately tired lying here doing nothing. I wish you would go down to the library and find some good novel or some book of that kind, and bring it up for me to read."

The man, who was invalided, it may be added, was one of the most vile and depraved in his regiment—a man who had no fear of God before his eyes.

His visitor, in reply to his request, said, "Oh, yes, I will do that for you," and in a few minutes he returned with a book in his hand, which he put on the bed, saying, "My good brother, I have brought

you a very pious and instructive treatise, which I have no doubt will be profitable to you, it is called 'James' Anxious Enquirer.'" So saying, he burst into a laugh, and left the room.

"Well," the sick man said, "my first impulse was to seize the book and fling it at him; but it occurred to me on second thoughts that it was better than nothing. When he was gone a strange curiosity entered my mind to read it. I opened it, and read the first few chapters; and, strange to say, I was wonderfully interested. But I was terribly afraid lest any one should find me reading it. My eyes and ears were kept open; and if I saw or heard any one, James' 'Anxious Enquirer' was under my pillow in a moment. I went on reading; and the more I read the more miserable I became. As I lay in bed, it seemed as if all my past life rose up before me—its guilt, debauchery, and the wretched souls I had helped to destroy. Oh, how miserable I became! Day after day my convictions deepened, until I made up my mind, and said, 'O God, I cannot go on with this life any longer.'

"When I recovered I made up my mind that I would join the little band of Christian men who used to meet in a shed a few hundred yards from the barracks to read the Bible together. I set forth and found myself in the middle of a sort of triangle. At one angle was the shed, and at another was a gin palace, where I had been in the habit of spending my evenings. When I got half way I was between two opposing influences, and found myself standing still.

There arose within my mind the thought, 'Now, then, you are not going to turn your back on your old life. Look at the gin palace; you have had many a pleasant evening there; if you go down to these saints, just think what a life you will lead in the regiment; the life of a dog would be nothing to it. You cannot stand that.'

"Then my courage began to give way, and I crept slowly towards the gin palace. I reached the door; I laid my hand on the handle, and was just going to enter, when, all of a sudden, it was just as if a voice of thunder spoke to me. There was no outward sound, but that terrible voice came rolling through my inmost soul like the voice of doom, and the words it uttered were, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels' (Mark viii. 38).

"I let the door handle drop as if it were red hot, turned away from the threshold of the public-house, and passed along till I found myself standing outside of the shed, where those Christian men were sitting reading the Word of God.

"Once again I was about to open a door, when the thought came into my mind, 'How queerly they will all look at you. There is not a man in the regiment they will be more surprised to see than you. What will you say? How silly you will feel! How foolish you will look.' Again I found myself standing still, and a voice seemed to say, 'Go home, go home—

don't make a fool of yourself.' As I stood hesitating, for the second time there came thundering through my soul, 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words . . . of him shall the Son of man be ashamed,' and as the words rang in my ears I gave the door a push, and sprang into the room. If a bomb-shell had dropped into their midst these good men could not have looked more surprised than they did. But one of them had presence of mind enough to greet me in a friendly sort of way.

I found I was amongst true friends and brothers. Every one had a kind word and a warm welcome for me. They stopped the Bible-reading, and all knelt and prayed with me, crying to God to have mercy on my soul, to wash me from my sins, and to show me the Saviour. Still I did not get the blessing; my heart was filled with doubt and fear; I crawled away back to the barracks, as miserable as I could be.

“When I entered the barrack-room it was like going from the porch of heaven to the gate of hell. One man was singing an obscene song; another was telling a filthy tale; another was swearing and blaspheming at the top of his voice; all was profanity, and for the first time in my life I felt horrified with it. I suppose it was no worse than usual, but I had never noticed it before. Now the whole thing was revolting to me. I crept to my bedside like one astonished, and sat there dumb-stricken, lost in a reverie of conflicting emotions. I was wondering what I should do next; and at last I thought I would get into bed and have a quiet time of meditation and

prayer, turning over in my mind all I had heard from the men in the shed.

“I undressed myself, got my shoes off, and was just on the point of stepping into bed, when, for the third time, that tremendous voice came thundering through my soul, ‘Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed.’ I dropped on my knees as if I had been shot, and cried aloud, ‘Great God, have mercy on me, a sinner!’ Well, if those Christian men had been electrified when they saw me in their room, I tell you these rebels in the barrack-room were ten-fold more astonished. They stood there gaping, petrified with amazement; they had not the presence of mind to say a word. They knew what kind of life I had led, and there they stood dumb and astonished. By-and-by, they stole off one by one to bed, and left me alone. They did not say a rough word to me; they were too much surprised. They knew it was the power of God; so, contrary to my expectations, they left me alone.

“The battle was won now—the barriers of pride and shame were swept away; and only a few days after light, and joy, and peace burst into my soul. But I always look back upon the moment I heard that voice of thunder in my ear as the turning-point of my life.”

“He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate,
His loving-kindness, oh how great.”

“SET HIM AT NOUGHT.”(Read Luke xxiii.)

THERE are four prayers in this chapter. (1) The prayer of hatred. Take care you do not join the people that make that prayer, or form one of those that are going to utter (2) the prayer of fear. Then there is (3) the prayer of love. You will never pray that. Lastly there is (4) the prayer of faith, and many of us have prayed that. Our hearts have been led to Christ, and we have got the answer from Him that gives us the knowledge of present salvation.

There was never a scene like this. Men had been saying, “Who will show us any good?” and absolute goodness was now here. God had visited the earth in the person of His blessed Son, and for thirty-three years He went about doing good. He never did anything but good. We are not told much about the first thirty years of His life, but after that wherever He went, if there was misery He brought in that which removed it. He unstopped deaf ears, bound up the broken-hearted, and healed the leper. Every kind of misery and need Jesus met, and the more miserable the case the more the Lord put Himself about to meet it. God in human form was travelling through man’s earth, where man was under the power of Satan, under the dominion of sin, with misery in his heart. There Christ moved about in blessed goodness, carrying relief wherever He went.

What He was, in Himself, rebuked and condemned man—of course it did. What will convict an unholy man? The walk of a holy man. That is what the Lord was. What could convict the religious men of that day? The path and words of Christ. He was there, a standing conviction to their conscience. He was fit for God; they were not, and at length this light became too great, and the testimony too strong. Then the evil of man's heart came out, and here you get the world exposed, and the hearts of men exposed. At the same moment you get Christ's heart exposed, and, oh, what a heart!

The love of God is brought out at the cross, as nowhere else; it is unfolded and demonstrated in the ways and words of His blessed Son, and in a world where death reigned, you get a man who had life in Himself, and upon whom death had no claim, going down into death to bring life to man. That man is the Son of God, and Jesus is His personal name. I would that ye knew Him.

In this scene, which Luke so touchingly describes, He had been betrayed by a false friend, Judas, denied by a true one, Peter, and the scripture was fulfilled, “Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness” (Ps. lxxxviii. 18). Again, “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” (Isa. liii. 7). He was in the presence of Pilate, and the more pressure is brought to bear on this blessed Person the more fully His grace, His love, His truth, His goodness come out. When you

put the sugar cane between the rollers of the mill, and crush it, the sweetness comes out. Nothing touches the Christian like the ways and words of Christ in the scene of His suffering and death.

Your eternal destiny hangs on your apprehension of who this Person was. Your eternity depends on your knowledge of Him and His grace, but, thank God, the preaching of the cross, though it be foolishness to those who perish, is the power of God unto us which are saved (1 Cor. i. 18). Perhaps you do not believe in the cross and in the atoning, dying agonies of the Lord Jesus Christ. You say, I do not believe sin can be put away in that way.

To them that perish the preaching of the cross is foolishness. See your future, dear unbeliever, see your eternity. "To us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). I like that word "saved." The cross to an unbeliever is foolishness, while to a believer it is the power of God unto salvation. Let it become so now to you; do not miss another opportunity of coming to Jesus and getting to know God. Ponder this wondrous scene.

They began to accuse Jesus of all kinds of untrue things, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king" (ver. 2). Never was there a bigger lie. Only two days before He had caught His accusers in their own trap. They said, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?" How had they become subjects of Cæsar? Through their sinful departure from God, and His

righteous judgment thereof. Mark Christ's reply: "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's" (Luke xx. 22-25). What a foul lie was told forty-eight hours after.

"And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest I am" (ver. 3). The effect upon the governor was this: "Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man" (ver. 4). If Pilate had only staked his soul upon that true conviction, how different would have been his future.

We are here in the presence of a faultless man. Three times over does Pilate say, "I find no fault in him." Can you show me that kind of man to-day in this world? No, you cannot. Why? Because "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). But here Pilate gives a true testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ. A perfect man was He, and I want you to see the perfection of His manhood. By-and-by the poor dying thief adds his testimony: "This man hath done nothing amiss." What do we see here? A perfect, sinless, holy man; a man who therefore ought to live, but He died.

The Holy Ghost says, regarding Jesus: "Who *did* no sin" (1 Pet. ii. 22); "Who *knew* no sin" (2 Cor. v. 21); and "In him *was* no sin" (1 John iii. 5). Could that be said about you? No. You have been rolling sin, like a sweet morsel, under your tongue, when no eye was on you but God's. Keep your eye on Jesus, for in this chapter you will

find that He was *made* sin, and died for sinners. What a Saviour!

Pilate's testimony only revealed man's heart, for "they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time" (vers. 5-7). When Pilate heard of Galilee he was glad to send Him thither and thus get rid of Him. He said to the soldiers, "Take Him to Herod." They took Him away. And you, have you not once and again sent Him off, glad to have got rid of Him? You may do that once too often.

I think Pilate would breathe more freely when rid of Jesus. And you too would rather not come to a decision for Christ just yet? You mean to come to it some day, a little later on in your life. In the meantime you would like to get rid of Him. That is Pilate all over again. He sent Him to Herod. "And Herod with his men of war *set him at nought*, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate" (ver. 11). Here was eternal love incarnate in that blessed Man, and yet Herod "*set him at nought*." That is a very serious thing. How have you treated Christ up to this moment? What about your life, your whole history? Has He had a place in your heart? Have you not "*set him at nought*"? Unserved reader, it

is about time you pulled up, and came to a pause in your history. Take my advice and make everything of Him.

Do not forget this; as Herod arrayed Jesus in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate, he got a chance of salvation, and *missed it*. He got an opportunity of receiving Christ and missed it. His worldly position was at stake; he thought, If *He* goes up and becomes king, *I* must go down. He thought nothing of Christ and sent Him away. Perhaps you are doing as Herod did that day. He sent Him away. Fatal act!

He is taken *again* to Pilate, and Pilate had another chance. God is giving you to-day another chance of receiving Christ—of getting your eyes opened to see the beauty and glory of His person. Let me urge you to take it. What God has put down in His book is but a picture of what often goes on. Two men shook hands that day over the murder of Jesus, they were reconciled over the determination to get rid of God's blessed Son. Awful picture! What a heart man has!

Pilate has again to confess that Jesus is faultless, and not worthy of death, and seems determined to let Him go. Why did he not let Him go that day? He loved the world—do not you? He was part and parcel of the world—are not you? You would not like to lose the favour or smile of the world; you would not like people to look down upon you as a follower of Christ. Pilate was evidently inclined to let Him go, but some one said, “If thou let this man

go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar" (John xix. 12). Then came out the plain issue—Cæsar's friends must side with Cæsar, and Jesus' friends must side with Jesus. Alas! none sided with Him. Who have you sided with as yet—the world, or Jesus, the despised Saviour? You would not like to lose the favour of your master, or your position in this world. That is Pilate over again. True, he washed his hands of Christ, but you cannot do that. You will never be able to wash your hands of the refusal of Christ for eternity. Herod had his chance, Pilate had his; they both missed it. Be warned by their folly, and do not join them in a lost eternity.

We will notice the four prayers in our next number.

W. T. P. W.

A SOLDIER'S CONFESSION.

A CONVERTED soldier thus writes to the Editor of *The Gospel Messenger*: "I have felt many times I would like to tell the Lord's dear people the way and the means He used to bring me to Himself, to know Him as my own dear Saviour.

"I joined the army on the 1st December 1887, and lived a careless and indifferent life, caring only for the things of this world. Regardless of my immortal soul, I continued this course of life until the

month of June 1890, though several months before then the Holy Spirit was striving with me. Sometimes I would be on my knees before the Lord, and at other times as careless as ever. Often those words have come to me, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' I knew it was the Spirit of God that was striving with me, and I used to dread the thought of the Spirit of God leaving me to myself.

"But, blessed be the Lord, it was the Shepherd seeking the lost sheep. He sought me, and He found me. It was one Lord's Day, the latter end of June 1890, that the Lord spoke to me again, while I was at the regimental church. It was nothing that was going on in the services, but a verse of a hymn that I had often heard my dear mother sing, and had sung myself when a boy. The words were these—

'One there is above all others,
Oh, how He loves.'

I shall never forget that moment, so real was it, as if the Lord had spoken to me from glory, though this hymn was not being sung. It was not then that I found peace, although I got it the same day.

"I was stationed at the time in the Isle of Wight, at Sandown, and myself and two other men were put in charge of a small battery or fort, and this day, after we had returned from church and had our dinner, one of the men went to the gate and found a periodical which some one had put through the door of entrance into the fort. He picked it up, and just looked at it, and then gave it to me. This monthly serial was *The Gospel Messenger*. The Lord had

sent some one with it as a message to my soul. The piece which was used of the Lord for my conversion was 'How a Sinner can get Saved' (Vol. V., No. 6, of 1890). I was shown that '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' (John iii. 14, 15). These words brought peace to my soul. The writer was showing how the Israelites only had to look to the brazen serpent; and I could see it so plainly that I was to look to Christ by faith, and live; and I knew I was born again.

"Before that I had not realised what sin was in God's sight, nor yet what a sinner I had been. But now all the sins of my past life seemed to rise up before me as they had never done before, and I was in greater darkness than ever. Satan was using all his power and telling me that I had only been deceiving myself, and that it was impossible for the Lord to forgive me, for I had been too bad.

"Not knowing what to do, I was almost despairing about what I had been. The Lord then spoke to me in a still, small voice by His Word, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin,' and I said, 'Yes, Lord, it does,' and a sweeter peace filled my soul than had ever done before. And since then I have not had a doubt. All praise be to the Lord, who works in mysterious ways. When I think of all His love to me I can but praise Him. All His dealings with me have been wonderful. This last year again, He has led me into fuller light,

giving me to know Christ as the object of my heart, and gathering me out to His precious name.

"I felt, dear brother, in writing these few lines, showing you the Lord's dealings with one so unworthy, that you would be able to praise Him and thank Him that your work of faith and labour of love is not in vain in the Lord. To Him be all the praise and glory, for He is worthy. I would love to know the dear one who put the monthly through the gate. I have it still, and it is very precious to me."

A. M.

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE
LIFE" (John xi. 25).

LIGHTLY tread, the day is breaking,
Dwell not on your sorrows now ;
Soon shall cloudless morn awaking
Chase the sadness from your brow :
He is coming—
Heart and knee to Jesus bow !

Did not Mary lay her sorrow
Low before the Master's feet ?
Sore her wound, and dark her morrow,
'Reft on earth of love so sweet :
With her burden
Thus she came her Lord to meet.

Ah ! she knew not all the glory
Hid beneath that lowly guise ;
Knew not that her heart's sad story
Soon would end in glad surprise :
Resurrection
Burst upon her ravished eyes !

'Tis the great I AM who standeth
Now beside that rocky tomb ;
'Tis His voice that loud commandeth
Lazarus from the dead to come !
Thus His glory
Shines above the deepest gloom.

Precious Saviour ! through Thy dying
Vanquished are the foe's dark powers ;
And, Thy name still magnifying,
Grace brings forth exhaustless stores :
At Thy coming,
Life and incorruption ours.

Eyes to see Thee, ears to hear Thee,
Voices tuned to heavenly lays ;
Thus to dwell for ever near Thee,
Learning all Thy wondrous ways ;
To Thee rendering,
With the Father, perfect praise !

"I WANT TO ENLIST FOR JESUS."

I HAVE seldom seen such an exemplification of God's wondrous grace as in His dealings with the subject of this paper.

H—— R—— was apprenticed by his parents to the engine-fitting trade. From this he ran away, and enlisted in the army. His regiment was sent abroad, and after being at different places in the East, was ultimately stationed in South Africa. R—— had meantime got married, and had two or three children.

Up to this time his family had been what is called on the strength of the regiment, but owing to R——'s repeated bad conduct, they were removed, and his wife had to work to support herself and her children. R—— being now alone in barracks, went from bad to worse. At last he found himself one night with two comrades in the lock-up, charged with drunkenness. They had sense enough left to concoct a plan of setting fire to the guard-house. One man had a match, another a piece of paper, and between them they managed to set light to the roof, which was thatched, and in a few minutes the building was in flames.

Now they were thoroughly frightened, for they were in danger of being burned with the house; but after being in this unenviable position for some time, they were at last brought out, hand-cuffed, and put into prison to await their trial before a court-martial.

It was while in this prison the Spirit of God first began to work in R——. He was very lonely and miserable, for he did not know whether he would be tried by a district or a general court-martial, and if by the latter, he might get a very heavy sentence of penal servitude.

While in this state, the inspecting officer on his rounds asked him one day if he had any complaints to make. He said, "No, sir, but I have to ask as a favour that you would send me a Bible." The officer said, "Certainly, I will send one this evening." R—— said after he did not know what made him ask for a Bible, only that he knew novels were not allowed by the prison rules, and he thought he might as well ask for a Bible as anything else, just to see what was in it.

The Bible was sent that evening, and so little did he care for it that he flung it on his pallet, where it lay for the next three days, and then he took it up, and began to read, for mere diversion, the Old Testament stories. He read one after another and got interested. Then he turned to the New Testament and began to read the story of the cross. As he read that wondrous account of the One who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, the Spirit of God used the word to pierce his conscience, and for the first time he realised himself a sinner before God.

He could read no more, but flinging himself on his knees, cried out to God to be merciful to him, a sinner. He had been in this state for some days, when he received a visit from the chaplain. "He

never asked me,” says R——, “even if I had a soul, never spoke to me of God, but just advised me to be a brave man, to plead guilty on my trial, and I would get off with a lighter sentence.”

Thus the chaplain left him, and as he put confidence in the man he had been accustomed to look upon as a trustworthy, spiritual guide, R—— thought that if he could plead guilty at his trial, God would be pleased with him. He accordingly commenced crying to God to give him strength to plead guilty. This was his one desire. Peace for his troubled conscience was, he thought, to be his reward. A thought, dear reader, as natural as it was erroneous. But God's thoughts are not man's thoughts — they are not according to the natural mind. They are opposed to human ideas, human wisdom, human thoughts. Peace with God is not to be obtained in the way your thoughts would suggest.

Many say, “You cannot have peace with God except you bring Him something of your own doing as payment.” So thought Cain, and thousands since, who have toiled hard, like him, to bring to God the fruit of their labour as an offering whereby they may be accepted of Him. But Abel, on the contrary, knew God's thoughts. He knew God could have none of his works—his righteousness—his filthy rags. “By faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.”

And, dear friend, God's word for every poor needy sinner is, “To him that **WORKETH NOT** but **BELIEVETH**

on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). And again, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1).

To return to R——, when his trial came on he pleaded guilty, and, as the chaplain had told him, he got a lighter sentence in consequence. His conscience too, poor fellow, was eased, and he began to think God was pleased with him. Ah! it was but the peace Satan gives. He was dealt with falsely. "From the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. vi. 13, 14).

Dear reader, let me warn you solemnly that Satan has no greater ruse, and none more successful with souls, than the offering to them as peace that which bears a semblance to what is real, but which is utterly false. He knows well that a troubled soul will not be satisfied without something to rest on, and so he presents a foundation, which, alas, is but a foundation of sand. It is "healing the hurt slightly." It is a "refuge of lies" (Isa. xxviii. 15). Take heed lest you discover the bad foundation you have been resting on, only when you feel it sinking beneath your feet, and you sinking with it into an eternal hell. It will then be too late to alter your future. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still."

I beseech you earnestly then, dear reader, if you think yourself safe for eternity, to ask yourself what is your ground for so thinking. Is it Christ? Be

assured if you are not resting on Him, the "sure foundation," you are utterly unsaved. The peace which Christ has made by the blood of His cross is the only true peace. "He is our peace," says the apostle. Say, dear friend, is He yours?

If you cannot, before God, say "Yes," I entreat you deceive not yourself by resting on anything short of Him. There is NO PEACE, apart from Him, NO FOUNDATION for the soul for eternity but Him. Good works apart from Christ are useless. Religion without Christ will not avail; a blameless life, outward morality, kindness to the poor, almsgiving, even though you "give your body to be burned"—any or all of these things, will yet be proved to be no foundation at all.

Christ, and Christ alone, is God's "sure foundation." "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." But all else will assuredly prove as a "bed that is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it," and as a "covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it" (Isa. xxviii. 20).

H—— R—— was just in this case, but, blessed be God, He would not allow this straying sheep to go on thus. His regiment was ordered home from South Africa, and on arriving was stationed in the town of N——. Here, too, I had been sent some months previous. R—— had by this time been released, after having undergone twelve out of eighteen months' imprisonment. One day he came across one of the Lord's dear people in the town,

who spoke to him about his soul, and brought him to the gospel meeting.

I noticed how attentive he was, and being interested in his case from what I had already heard from the one who brought him to the meeting, I went up and spoke to him after it was over.

“Ah, sir,” he said, “I thought I was all right, but since I came to N—— I have found out I am all wrong, and now I am very miserable, and more so than ever after hearing these words in the hymn to-night:—

‘Our God in pity lingers still,
And wilt thou thus His love requite?’”

I saw with thankfulness God was working in him, and I endeavoured to explain how God had given His Son in full and perfect love, to meet him in all his need, and save him out of all its solemn consequences. He did not get peace then, but left, promising to come and see me.

I could but cry to God for him, but I felt sure that since he knew himself a sinner, he would very soon be brought to know Jesus as his Saviour. Nor were my expectations disappointed. In this case, as in how many others, God was beyond my utmost hopes. Ah, He would have His own heart’s joy over the repenting sinner.

Who can know it—the joy of God in the presence of His angels, over the bringing back of one stray sheep?

R—— came to my house at the appointed time,

and never, I may say, did I spend such an evening. It was like pouring water on dry and parched ground, that wanted it so badly, you would think it could never get enough. When the dear fellow came in he said, "Sir, I want 'to enlist for Jesus. Will you pray for me?"

We prayed together, and then after telling me his history as I have here recorded it, I put before him, as God enabled me, how utterly helpless he was to do anything to save himself, but how God was a God of such wondrous love to the poor sinner, that when He knew our helpless condition as "ready to perish," He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That Blessed One came, and shed His precious blood, which God says cleanseth from all sin, and thus God is free to act in love, and in righteousness too, in saving the sinner.

Even as I spoke God blessed the word, and R—— received it as a little child. He was too needy to raise any questions or doubts. He saw how exactly suited the salvation of God was to the need of a sinner like him. He believed on Jesus, and believing was "by him justified from all things," and passed "from death unto life." We knelt down and thanked God together for His goodness, and dear R—— went that night like the eunuch of old on his way rejoicing.

"Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine.

Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!"

ANON.

FOUR STRIKING PRAYERS.

(Read Luke xxxiii.)

IN the account which the Spirit of God gives us, by the pen of Luke, of the trial and crucifixion of the blessed Lord Jesus, we have four very striking prayers, to which I desire to draw your attention. Let me ask you first of all to quietly read Luke xxiii. In so doing you will find—

(1) THE PRAYER OF HATRED.

It was this—“*Away with this man . . . crucify him, crucify him!*” (vers. 18-21). What a prayer! You say, I have not prayed that prayer. No; but the man that sides with the world is part and parcel with it. You cannot get out of it. Christ is the touchstone and test, and every one is either for the Lord or opposed to Him. You would not like to draw the line so clearly as that, but God draws it. “He that is not with me is *against* me” (Luke xi. 23). In all that company there was no one for Him. Perhaps I hear you say, “If I had been there that day I would have stood for Him.” Have you stood for Him to-day. As He looks down from heaven at your life, can He say of you, “That man is thoroughly for Me”? If not, you must see the ground you are on is very serious.

How awful was this prayer, “Crucify him,” which the till now vacillating judge granted: for “Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired ; but he delivered Jesus *to their will*" (vers. 24, 25). With one stroke of his pen, Pilate signed, I fear, the death warrant of the Son of God, and that of his own eternal damnation. You miss God's opportunity of receiving Christ now, and you may miss it for ever. If God cut the thread of your life to-day, how would you pass into eternity ?

(2) THE PRAYER OF FEAR

comes next before us. A great company of people follow the Lord towards Calvary, who "bewailed and lamented him." "But Jesus turning unto them said, 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*" (vers. 26-30). That is the prayer of fear. The Lord Jesus says this prayer will yet be prayed, and I believe the moment is at hand. One day the Lord will come and the saints be taken up. Antichrist will appear, and then God gives signs of the Lord's coming, the return of the Son of man. Men will be wakened up throughout Christendom with the feeling that they are guilty and godless, and will say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the face of the Lamb : for the great

day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" (see Rev. vi. 16, 17). They will turn to creation and say, Hide us *from* God. If you are wise you will hide yourself *in* God now, and you will find a Saviour. That is what the dying thief found.

(3) THE PRAYER OF LOVE.

I do not accuse you of praying the first prayer, but I am not at all sure you will not pray the second. Have you ever noticed the third? Pass on to Calvary and heed its time and meaning. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, *there they crucified him* and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left" (ver. 33). There, in a graveyard, the martial Roman, the religious Jew, and the polished Greek gave the most shameful death possible to Jesus. They nailed Him to a tree, they crucified Him, God's Son, Creator of all things, Lord of all, brightness of the Father's glory, the very essence of God made known down here, God manifest in the flesh. "There they crucified him." In a cemetery the world killed God's Son. All turns now on your relation to the One who died on that tree. What does God do? Does a thunderbolt fall from heaven? No, in all the stir of that awful scene, and at the climax of man's wickedness which that scene brings out, love in all its resistless energy appears. A voice is heard—it is the voice of love, listen—"Father, forgive them, for they know not *what they do*" (ver. 34). The prayer of love is divine indeed.

Who prays that prayer? Jesus, the Saviour, the One who is being murdered. You have in His prayer the revelation of what was in the bosom of the Father—love. What blessed words! Can you hear them unmoved? What is the effect upon those who heard that prayer? If the revelation of grace does not soften people's hearts, alas! it hardens them. "And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them, derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God" (ver. 35). They are compelled to give testimony to the glory of His Person and the blessedness of His actions—"He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." Everything turned upon this—was He the Messiah, the King? Will He save Himself? No, blessed be His name! because if He had saved Himself that day, and come down from the cross, He could never have saved you and me. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). He was being hated without a cause, and those who hated Him taunted Him. He says, "I was the song of the drunkards" (Ps. lxxix. 12).

To all the taunts He makes no reply. "And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, and saying, *If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself*" (vers. 36, 37). He was there for God's glory, and there and then unfolded all the deep and eternal love of God. He would not save Himself that He might save others. "And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and

Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (ver. 38). There was no doubt that He was.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us*" (ver. 39). There was no faith in that, it was mere reason. You have unfolded at Calvary's cross, in a most wonderful way, the difference between rationalism and revelation, darkness and light. "*If thou be Christ*" meant this—If you really were the Christ you would not allow yourself to be nailed to this tree. The mental process was and is this—*If you be what you allege you are, you would never suffer yourself to be put where you are.* That is mere rationalism, which has never weighed the dreadful fact of what sin is in God's sight, but Christ has, and He took up the whole question of sin before God at that moment. He absolutely gave Himself a sin-offering and a burnt-offering to God. He "who knew no sin was made sin," and He took up between Himself and God the whole question of man's sin, as God knows it and measures it. He gave up His blessed, holy life, a sacrifice for sin to effect atonement, and, blessed be His name, He effected it by pouring forth His soul unto death, and passing on to the deeper moment of agony when God forsook Him, because He was made sin.

Ere that moment came He listened to a touching prayer uttered by one dying by His side. One thief could only jibe, "But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly;

for we receive the due reward of our deeds : but this man hath done nothing amiss " (vers. 40, 41). What produced this right judgment? God wrought in his soul, and what produced infidelity and jibes in the mass of the people—the truth conveyed in these words, "*Father, forgive them*"—became light to that man's soul. He got light to see that the One dying by his side was the Son of God, and that He was dying for His murderers. As light got into his soul, faith sprang up, and he turned to Jesus, and seeing all the blessedness of Godhead in Him, says, "*Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom*" (ver. 42). Was not that exquisite faith at such a moment? Verily was it most manifestly.

(4) THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

The fruit of the Spirit's work in that man's soul is very manifest, as, fearing God himself, he rebukes his neighbour. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil : pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (Prov. viii. 13). He judges evil, is brought to repentance, having the fear of God before his eyes. To his neighbour he says, as it were, "You and I never did a right thing; and here is a Man that never did a wrong one." Assured that Jesus would rise again and have a kingdom, he would like to have a place in it, and hence his prayer, "*Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom*" (ver. 42).

The Lord has not come back yet. If the thief had got his prayer answered on his own terms he would

not have got blessing yet. The Lord, however, always reads the heart, and He knew that his heart was touched, and that he meant, "I should like to be near You and to be a subject in Your kingdom." Would not you like to be there too? What folly to go on as a slave of Satan. God enable you to say, I will bow to Christ, and be a subject in His kingdom.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto you, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (ver. 43). That meant present and eternal salvation for him. Christ has not come yet in power, but He is coming, and in the meantime what has become of the thief? He has had eighteen hundred years with Christ in paradise. I suppose that one thief went to the pit, and the other to paradise. Where will *you* spend eternity?

After the Lord's reply to the prayer of faith, we read, "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour" (ver. 44). That was when atonement was effected, as He bore the sins of sinners. "And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst" (ver. 45). God rent it, and the Holy Ghost came down after Christ went up, and He is bidding men to come unto God now, through the rent veil. The question of sins is all settled, and there is now no barrier to God, and He can come out, in all the love of His heart, and bless anybody and everybody: hence the glad tidings of the grace of God are to be proclaimed throughout the world.

Reader, we have been considering a wonderful

scene. How do you stand in relation to the One who was on that central cross? Is He your Lord yet? Do not let the sun go down, and do not put your head on your pillow till you have got into the presence of the Lord Jesus, and said, “Lord, remember me.” “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Rom. x. 9). W. T. P. W.

“THAT IS WHAT I NEED.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”— 1 JOHN i. 7.

IT is deeply interesting and touching to the heart to witness from time to time the wondrous ways of a Saviour-God in doing His own blessed work in saving poor lost sinners. Ah! it is His work, the work of God, the work of divine power and love, and it ever bears all the blessed marks of His wonder-working hand.

God does not use angels to set the gospel before poor sinners; it is saved and pardoned sinners that God uses to do this, for they can speak that which they know, and testify that which they have seen of the Saviour's love and power to save with an everlasting salvation all that come unto God by Him. He may use an angel to direct the anxious sinner to

send for a servant, as in Acts x. 5, or to direct a servant to go to an anxious soul, as in Acts viii. 26; but it is not theirs to prove, as these, the cleansing virtue of Jesus' blood.

The writer was privileged some time ago to witness God's blessed work in the conversion of his landlady. Being often brought through this connection into contact with her, there sprang up in his heart a deep desire for her soul's eternal welfare. Naturally she was kind, amiable, and very right in her ways and dealings, but always kept a perfect silence and marked refusal when anything as to the soul and God, and a hereafter, and our need of Jesus the Saviour and Friend of sinners, was alluded to. She would always close and draw tightly in her lips, and assume an impenetrable silence.

She had been brought up amongst Unitarians, and had evidently fallen under the influence of their grave soul-darkening errors. "O God! work in her soul! O God! come in and deliver from the blinding darkness of soul-destroying error," we prayed and cried to God. He did, blessed be His name, all at once. A grave internal malady came suddenly upon her, and the doctors said a major operation must be performed without the least possible delay. It could not be done at her home, it must be done at an institution. It was of so serious a nature that but three cases only out of every hundred survived, and not to undergo it was certain death.

She went at once into the Bristol Royal Infirmary, and on that bed God used the few preparatory days

before the operation, with death so near in view, to give her to see her ruined state. She trembled to die. She could not die resting on Unitarianism. She needed a Saviour, and, blessed be God, He at once revealed to her His remedy for her need.

Exactly opposite her bed, hung before her eyes, was a large wall text—“THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN.” “Bless God,” she said, “*that is what I need.* I have often heard of it before. I now put all my trust in it and in the blessed One who shed it.” She found peace. God also brought her safely through the operation, and she came out of that abode of suffering a new creature in Christ Jesus, magnifying and praising God. Later she had a little meeting at her house in the country for the gospel to be preached, in the hope that her husband, who was a hay farmer, but a godless and drinking man, might hear the glad tidings, and himself and others be saved.

Oh! that the writer could raise a warning voice by this little paper to Unitarians and all who are being influenced by their soul-destroying doctrines. It is much laid upon him to do so. Oh! listen, he beseeches you, for unbelievers in the Son of God are in soul-peril! If salvation is on the ground of faith in Him, as stated in the Word of God—the Bible—both Old and New Testaments, AND IT IS, Christ’s rejecters are lost to a certainty. If salvation is only and entirely by GOD THE SON—the Son of God—the Son Jesus Christ, and His atoning death and blood-shedding upon the cross for sinners, AND IT IS,

I would ask, "What think ye of Christ?" If you deny and reject all this, you are infidel and antichrist as to HIM, WHO IS GOD THE SON, and if you remain so, I repeat you will be lost for ever and for ever. May God in mercy deliver you. Heed His word:—

"Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. . . . Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also" (1 John ii. 18, 23).

On the other hand, ponder the Lord's statements: "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John v. 23). "I said, therefore, unto you, that you shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John viii. 24). "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30). "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John xiv. 1).

W. F.

THE POWER OF CHRIST.

"AH, me, I'm never well
 But when I on my Best Beloved lean,
 And then I'm never ill:
 Crosses and trials all are right,
 And pain is sweet and trouble light,
 When Christ my heart doth fill."

ANON.

PEACE IN TWO ASPECTS.

“ I WOULD give all the world, if I possessed it, to be able to say that I enjoyed
PEACE WITH GOD.”

Such was the exclamation of one well known to the writer, and it is expressive of the desire, we believe, of many sincere souls. If they do not utter it in words, God sees it is the deep yearning of their hearts.

Many have I met who sincerely believe in Jesus, but do not enjoy settled, abiding peace—peace that knows no change, peace without a ripple. It is most important to get hold of the simple fact that God is pleased to call Himself THE JUSTIFIER of those who believe in Jesus. He could not be known in this character if He had not justified those who believe.

What is it, then, to be justified? Is not a justified person, according to Scripture, one who is made righteous, as well as cleared from all charge of past guilt? If we are made righteous before God by God Himself, *then we must be right with Him.* If we are right with any person, or with any government, we have no dread of that person or of that government. If God has made us right with Himself, what is there ever to disturb us, or hinder us from enjoying His blessed love, which is the source of our justification?

Every one who believes the testimony of God's Word concerning the death and resurrection of Christ, whom He in love delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, is a justified person in the sight of God. "Whom he called,

THEM HE ALSO JUSTIFIED."

"By him all that believe ARE JUSTIFIED." What is the ground on which we are justified? Clearly the death of Christ for our offences, which were against the righteous throne of God. It has been shown in the suffering and death of Jesus what a very serious thing it is to offend against God.

Instead of God hating me for my offences, they were the occasion on His part to show His love to me, which is beyond all human idea or expression. The gift of His infinite Son proved His love for me was infinite.

Why was all this love expressed to me? What need for all the suffering and agony of One who was equal with God? It was because He was holy and righteous, and therefore hated my sins (not me) and must express that hatred before all the universe, in the forsaking of the very One in whom all His love was expressed to me.

Because He is righteous, and could by no means clear the guilty, He put to death and punished the very One He loved so much, and in whose death all His love was told out. The ground, then, of our justification is the death and blood-shedding of Christ. That met all God's holy and righteous claims on us

as sinners, so that now before heaven and earth the justice of His throne is maintained in His justification of all who believe in Jesus. So the apostle argues, "Being now

JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD."

When this simple truth is pressed home on souls, a common expression from some is, "Oh, but I cannot feel it!" Where in all Scripture does God say that you must feel it? Believe first, and feeling will follow. God presents it, not to your feelings, but to your faith.

Let me illustrate. Some time ago I was preaching in a town in Scotland. As I was speaking on faith, honouring God in spite of feelings, and God honouring the faith that trusted Him in spite of seeing any sign, or feeling any inward emotion, a woman arose in the meeting and said before all the people, "I take God at His word, and I take Him at His word now." She believed God that she was justified, because God said so of all who believe in Jesus.

Her bold testimony sent a thrill through my heart, and through many another heart in that meeting. Amongst those present who had been deeply affected was a young person, brought there by two earnest Christian ladies. After the meeting this person said to me, "Oh, I wish I could say that!"

"You wish you could say what?" I said, rather abruptly. "Do you mean you wish you could believe God?"

"Yes," was her reply.

“Think of what you are saying,” said I. “You WISH YOU COULD BELIEVE GOD. Has God not given the greatest proof of His love to you, and what occasion has He ever given you to cause you to doubt Him?”

“None; but oh, I wish I could believe His word.”

“Suppose when you get home to-night your mother said to you, ‘M——, I want you to go with me to North A—— to-morrow, that I may purchase you a new dress,’ and you looked up into your mother’s face and said to her, ‘Oh, mother, I wish I could believe your word,’ what would your mother think? How would she feel about you? Would you dare to treat your mother like that?”

With this simple illustration the light of God broke in upon the girl as we walked along, and she gave a great sigh, and said, “Oh, I see it! Oh, I see it! I am saved, I am saved now.”

Peace flowed into that dear girl’s heart like a river, and she lived several years to enjoy it, and adorn the doctrine of her precious Saviour-God. A little time since I heard she had passed in triumph to be forever with the Lord.

READER, HAVE YOU PEACE?

The fact that Christ is risen shows God’s acceptance of the blessed work He gave His Son to accomplish. The fact of Christ’s resurrection proves that my peace is now made, and that I am eternally cleared from every charge, and in resurrection life He has become my righteousness, and is also my life.

“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). That is, He displaces me in the eye of God, and when I learn that, He will then displace me in my own eyes. *As light accompanies the sunrise, so will peace follow as the result of my faith resting in Him, and seeing that He has displaced me before God. Before God Christ is everything and I am nothing.*

PEACE OF COMMUNION is next in order to peace of conscience. It could not be entered upon until peace of conscience is known, as the result of seeing God as my justifier, and myself justified by God in the risen Christ. I cannot constantly enjoy the peace of communion unless I walk with a good conscience before the One who justified me. It is in the Holy Spirit's power I enjoy this peace of communion. He dwells within each believer, to maintain us in the constant enjoyment of the love that is the source of our justification—“the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Apart from His indwelling we could not have any experimental knowledge of God's unchanging love to us, which casts out all fear. It is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us (Rom. v. 5). Peace is said to be one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. vi.). If we are always to be maintained in the enjoyment of this peace, we have to be most careful to walk in the Spirit. This involves exercise, and prayer, and the judgment of every outside influence which would grieve the Spirit in us. Hence

it says in Romans viii., "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is

LIFE AND PEACE."

Carnality or fleshliness is the allowance of what is contrary to the Spirit, and *that state is death, and hence misery*. Spiritual death and unhappiness go hand in hand: spiritual life and peace go hand in hand.

As we cannot enjoy natural life apart from the sunshine, neither can we enjoy spiritual life and peace apart from living habitually in the sunshine of God's deep unchanging love to us in Christ.

What perfect peace flows from knowing His love to us, as that love is known now to Christ as man at God's right hand. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me might be in them and I in them." As we in the power of the Spirit drink daily into that love that always thinks the best about us, so will our souls respond to that love, and so will our peace abide, amid all the vicissitudes of changing time and circumstances.

But suppose we grieve the Spirit, and lose this peace, what then? Do we cease to become objects of God's wonderful love? Never: if we grieve the Spirit, He, in faithfulness to Christ, our ever-living advocate at the Father's right hand, will grieve us and make us so miserable that we shall be glad to go right down on our faces in the dust of self-judgment, repentance, and confession, and own our sin to the Father. Then we get the sense that we are forgiven,

as His children, and the consequence is the peace we had been in the enjoyment of, but had lost through unwatchfulness, and perhaps prayerlessness and carelessness, is once more restored to us. “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John ii. 1). Satan can never bring a charge against that righteous One, though he might at times have good reason to accuse us. “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). P. W.

“HIS MERIT.”

MRS R— was dying without Christ; her end was near. The doctor had pronounced her case hopeless, and now she was aroused as to the condition of her soul, as well as her body. She was troubled and anxious, and her husband (a Christian) called to ask me to come and see her. I promised to do so as soon as I was free in the evening; and, my work done, I lost no time in going on such an important errand.

A brother in Christ went with me, and we felt our business so extremely solemn, that before reaching the cottage where Mrs R— lived, we halted by the roadside for a few moments' prayer for His guidance who alone could guide. Knocking at the door it was answered by a neighbour, several of whom

were sitting in the kitchen, ready to render any little service which might be required. We were ushered into the bedroom where on a small chair-bed Mrs R—— was lying.

A few observations having been made as to the reality of eternity and the blessedness of being ready by resting on the work of Christ, she abruptly broke in by saying that during the afternoon she had felt so happy that she could not help singing. Jealous lest Satan might be deluding her by occupation with frames and feelings, to cheat her out of the salvation which God was offering even at this eleventh hour, I inquired as to the ground of her happiness, and what would be her plea if asked for one on entering the gates of heaven. I shall never forget the simplicity and frankness of her answer, as she replied, "*His merit.*" Her answer was conclusive, and it was my happy privilege, instead of pointing to Christ, to seek to build up *in* Him. I referred to various scriptures calculated to establish her soul in Christ, but fearing lest our presence was taxing her bodily strength, we soon left, cheered in spirit and thankful to God for what we had witnessed.

I never saw her again, for two days after she passed away to be "for ever with the Lord," being sustained to the last.

My dear reader, may I affectionately ask on what are you resting the eternal welfare of your soul? Perhaps you, like Mrs R——, are trifling the precious moments away, regardless of that eternity which is soon to come upon you. She put it off to the last:

and by a hairsbreadth only escaped the torments of the lake of fire. I entreat you now to "consider your latter end and be wise." "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cxl. 10). The apostle Paul could say, "Whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts xiii. 26). Also, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" (Heb. ii. 3). Again, "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. xii. 25).

But may be the eye of an anxious soul will scan these lines. You are awake as to your state before God; you have sought rest by various means, but *have failed to gain it; you feel worse than ever, like a person racked with pain, who tries every posture to gain a little ease, but nothing avails, and from the depths of your soul you are ready to cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone"* (Isa. vi. 5).

Well, thanks be to God, if such is your experience. When the Lord Jesus Christ hung on Calvary's cross, we read that "darkness was over all the earth until the ninth hour" (Luke xxiii. 44). No human mind will ever be able to estimate the sufferings which the Lord Jesus endured during that period of darkness. It was there, dear reader, that He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18). It was then His soul was

made "an offering for sin" (Isa. liii. 10). The testimony of Scripture is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3). "God commendeth his love toward us, that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). Thus the atoning sacrifice and death of the Lord Jesus meets the claims of a holy God against sinners, and the sinner is accepted before God by virtue of what Christ is, and has done.

"It is not thy tears of repentance, or prayers,
But the blood, that atones for the soul."

With these lines see how the testimony of Scripture accords. "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12).

If ever you and I are to have a place in God's presence it must be on the ground of what Christ is, and has done. We are "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 6). "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. v. 1, 2).

Thus, dear reader, we point you to the One on whom Mrs R—— could pillow her weary soul. How blessed to be able to give as your answer when asked your passport into the glory of God, "His merit."

THE RUNNER.

WHEN very young I often had serious thoughts about my soul and eternity, but they became fewer as I grew older and more careless.

When about sixteen years old I began to run races for small sums of money, and this continued until I competed for large stakes of fifty pounds. I soon became regardless of everything except running and gambling. Growing discontented where I was, I went to England, where I took part in all the principal races. Yes: I was running away from a loving God all this time, living in all kinds of sin amongst the worst class of society, filling to the brim my cup of iniquity.

One day when out shooting I aimed at a bird, and pulled the trigger. The gun did not go off, so I reversed it and looked down the barrel. No sooner had I taken away my head than the gun went off. Had it been a few seconds earlier my brains would have been blown out, and I sent into eternity without God and without hope. Truly "the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. iii. 15).

Tired of England, but still unchanged in heart, I returned to Scotland to be married. I tried to mend my ways a little and settle down, but my conscience troubled me, so I joined the Templars, thinking that would give me peace. Still dissatisfied, I started church-going as in my younger days, but in this forced religiousness found no rest for my wearied, sin-burdened soul.

My wife, whose health had been failing, became very ill, and also my child at the same time. All this made me feel very serious. A young Christian who worked with me spoke to me about salvation, and the texts he quoted often troubled me. Never shall I forget the sleepless nights I spent, haunted by the words, "In that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left." "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke xvii. 34, 36). I feared I should die before morning and awake in hell, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." I determined on a complete reformation, and started to try and keep the law of God. This proved worst of all, because I found myself utterly unable to meet its demands, and only became more miserable, discovering that I was worse and worse, while the word rang in my ear, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10).

Despair seized me. I knew not where to turn or what to do. My wife meantime becoming worse, some of God's children came to see her, and they spoke also to me of Christ, but I could not get peace. One night after getting home I lifted a tract to read, and these words impressed me very much, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Again, a few days after, a lad gave me another tract, in which the self-same words appeared, and they came home to my soul in convicting power. "What shall it profit a man if he gain

the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36).

One Lord's Day night, when returning from an evangelistic meeting, where I heard little owing to being rather deaf, the truth came home with great power to my soul that I was a poor, lost, helpless sinner, utterly unable to save myself, without strength, and ungodly, as all my experience and efforts had only proved. But suddenly the blessed truth was revealed to me that Jesus Christ had done all by dying for me. Salvation was completely outside myself. Blessed moment! As the light broke in I was filled with joy and peace in believing. This was my turning point from death unto life. I had been running fast to death, but Jesus arrested my steps and gave me life. I fell on my knees and thanked God for His salvation.

Next morning when I awoke I was again puzzled about how I was to keep the law. I took the Word of God to see what it said, and my eye fell upon this verse, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4). Oh, what a deliverance! I was not under the law but under grace. I could rest in His love who died for me. It is now many years since I came to Jesus and found sweet rest and peace in Him.

"To Him I look, while still I run,
My never-failing Friend ;
Finish He will the work begun,
And grace in glory end."

Dear unsaved reader, are you striving for pardon,

peace, or life? Lay your deadly doings down. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5). The Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished the work of redemption. Hear His cry of triumph, "It is finished." Look to Him and live. You may be a careless, wicked sinner, by nature and practice far from God, but God has a remedy. Look back at Calvary's cross and see what God thinks of sin, when the spotless One beneath its judgment cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah! there hangs the Divine Substitute charged with a world's guilt, bearing His heavy load alone. Christ has died: nay, rather is risen again. God now comes "to declare *at this time* his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

I beseech you, despise this wondrous grace no longer. Say not with the king, "Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian," but be a Christian by receiving God's gift. Postpone not your decision to a more convenient season which may never be given, but accept Christ now—believe on His name. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." His loving voice cries, "Come unto me." "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

LOVE AND ITS WAYS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON LUKE xv. 1-24.

I SUPPOSE there is no one who will not own that man has a need: every man looks forward to some improvement hereafter. No man can own that his position here is a satisfactory one. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." Some one has said that every great thought is allied to melancholy, because it gives the truth of what man is. No man is in a state of happiness; he may be looking for happiness, but he does not possess it, and the one great question with him is, How is my position to be improved? All must own that there is *need* of improvement.

We get a definition of the state of man's mind in Proverbs v. 6—"Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them." One object after another calls your interest and attention, and you cannot give your attention to find the path of life, which is the one important thing. Nothing can be plainer than that man has a need. All admit the need, the necessity of man's condition being improved, and the desire for this in man's heart is what is commonly called *thirsting*. Ambition is seeking to improve one's condition, and the more vigorous the man is, the more he labours to improve it.

According to the world's idea, a man who has not ambition is not worth much. An able man tries to

improve his condition, that his sense of need may be removed. But there is one thing at the bottom of it all which cannot be removed, and that is *Death*. No one can be perfectly happy because of death. However he may think that he can arrive at surroundings in this world in which he says he can be perfectly happy, there is one terrible thing that mars it all, which he cannot either face or remove, and that is death; and the nearer man has reached the acme of his ambition, the more he fears death. Do what he will, arrive at the greatest improvement that is possible down here, he cannot remove that most terrible thing—death—the consequence of man's sin. The wine is out, and man's own resources to relieve his necessity have come to an end, and he himself must come to an untimely end.

But there is another thing beside man's necessity, and that is the love of God. Revelation alone brings out what that love does, and what an interest God has taken in man's happiness. Our blessed Lord has come, not only to meet man's need, but to meet all that divine love requires. This you get set forth in the scripture I have just read (Luke xv.). What a difference it makes to the soul when it gets an idea of what God is—not only that He is good, but that He is love, and you cannot account for that love, it acts simply from its own motives. You may know that God is good and still not know that He is love. *He is good*—He would do everything for your good. But He is more—He is love. Love is quite beyond merely providing for your comfort.

What our Lord sets forth in this gospel, and what He enlarges upon as He goes on, is what He propounds here to the publicans and sinners. He here sets forth not only that He came to save sinners, but that the three Persons of the Trinity are engaged in the sinner's welfare, and that to their own delight; and that the love of God not only relieves my necessity, but makes me suited to be in His company. He shares with me His own joys. Think for a moment, that God delights in having you with Himself. I think you have no idea what a man is to God, what an interest He has in him. Satan's whole work was against man.

It is written, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Ps. viii. 4); but man was the being God took an interest in. He set him in the garden of Eden, and when he failed there God sought him, and in that very place, the garden of Eden, God manifested His grace before turning him out. He clothed Adam and Eve with skins. Thus we see what an object man is to God. The Lord Jesus Christ is, of course, *the* great object to God, and what belongs to Him (the Church now). Man has been under trial over and over again, but every trial has only proved more and more how lost and ruined he is. God came in and sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, and He could say, "My delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 31). Eve's feeling about God was entirely incorrect. She thought she could do better for herself than God could do for her. When

a soul is converted, it is a contradiction of that. The point of departure is the point of restoration. The prodigal went the very opposite way to Eve.

Man, at the outset of his history, got a false impression of God. Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning, acted on the mind of man, and man accepting this wrong impression brought in death. A natural man thinks, "If I had God's power I would do great things for myself." That is at the bottom of his thoughts—that God has the power but not the will. That shows he has an entirely wrong idea of God. Man harboured that wrong idea of God, sinned, and God acted in judgment, and death came in.

I turn now to Luke xv. What the Lord sets forth in this parable, in the company of the publicans and sinners, and what He insists upon, is the delight of the one who finds that which was lost. The lost sheep had wandered on the dark mountains of sin, the Shepherd had sought it, and when He found it, laying it on His shoulders He says, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke xv. 6). Have you got the sense in your soul that that is how God feels about you? There is no way of feeling toward God except as knowing what His feelings are towards you. That imparts confidence. The Lord says here, "That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance" (ver. 7). Confidence is when you act on how He feels towards you—presumption is to act on your own feelings.

The next part of the parable is that of the woman and the lost piece of silver. Again it is, "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost" (ver. 9).

What I want, beloved friends, is, that your hearts should be opened to the fact that the Lord has a pleasure in getting the lost sheep—the lost piece. No doubt it was immense gain to the lost sheep wandering on the dark mountains, to be carried back on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd, but what establishes the heart is to know the *love* that rejoices in finding the lost one.

How slow we are to believe the interest and delight that God has in having us with Himself. Look at all the wonderful actings of divine love—the magnanimity of it. If the shepherd had not borne the judgment, there would not have been freedom to come out in these manifold expressions of divine grace to the poor sinner.

In the first part of the parable we have the work of Christ, in the second the work of the Spirit, and now we come to what is called the Parable of the Prodigal Son, but it is not rightly so named; for it is really the third part of one parable, which now describes the father's feelings about the son. In order to understand these feelings, and what necessarily must follow from the actings of his heart, let us see what the course of the prodigal was. He says, when he is in want and comes to himself, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (ver.

18). But how was it on the father's side? "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" (ver. 20). Do you believe God would do this towards a poor sinner? Have you really the sense that God loves you, that He has communicated it to your heart? It is not simply a question of forgiveness here, it is reconciliation and proving that there was love.

We get the two things brought together—necessity brings the prodigal to the father, and love brings the father to the prodigal—he had a sense of his father's goodness. You are lost because you do not believe in His goodness, therefore God has to bring a man down, putting him into straits, and then compelling him to come like the prodigal. He was brought to his last end, no hope left, "no man gave unto him," and then comes the light into his soul and he says, "I will arise and go to my father." Oh, what a moment when the soul learns there is goodness in God! That is conversion—and a wonderful conversion change it is—built not upon what I am, but upon what He is. But he had to learn that there was not only goodness but love; how surprised he was to find that when he was a great way off, in the place of suffering and need, his father saw him, and ran towards him. Love travels faster than necessity. Is your soul exercised about this, and can you say, God had a greater delight in having me than I had in going to Him? Necessity was what was before the prodigal, and he counted on his father's goodness,

but not upon his love. Love surpasses and runs faster than necessity. Are you sensible of His love? Do you believe that the first thought of God toward you is love?

Now come out two things which always mark the love of God. The first is that I must be actually suited to Him, and the other, that I must share His joys. God does not only get a man out of his necessities. A benevolent person might say, "I will make that man happy" *in his own way*. Some people think of God as benevolent, and look to Him for the favours of this world. They know their sins are forgiven, and expect easy, happy times here, to be prospered in business, &c. That shows they have not got to His love. I say again there are two great underlying qualities of love. God grant, beloved friends, that your hearts may be awakened to its reality. It is beyond all human expression that God loves to have me with Himself. I speak to those who are converted. How little does the soul enter into the fact that God intends I should share His joys.

Nothing can equal it, nothing is so captivating to the heart as to hear the blessed God say, I love you and must make you suitable for My company and make you a sharer of My joys. Therefore the apostle says, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." How many of us do that—joy in God? It was said of the Philippian jailer, "He believed in God, and rejoiced with all his house." "And not only so, but we also joy in God through

our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. v. 11). That is where the love comes in first. I want to get the simple sense in my soul—that is true of God. Therefore we have confidence in Him, and can say as in Colossians, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints" (Col. i. 12).

This was the manner of the father's reception of the prodigal, making him fit to be at home in the house—the best robe, the ring, and the shoes, all showing the distinguished nature of his reception, and the welcome he had; nothing was wanting, it was complete. If man's necessity only were before God, He would have given him what he wanted and made him happy in the things men are happy in—natural things. That would have been benevolence. But love delights to share its joys, and to make me suitable to its company. This is so profound that we cannot take it in, but here it is set forth by this parable and also in other parts of Scripture.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32). And to what end? Oh, may the eyes of your hearts be opened to see that you are not only made suitable to Himself, but that love does its best for its object! What an effect it would have upon us did our hearts enter more fully into the thought that God delights in our company. He wants to have us in His presence, and to have us suitable to be there. The

prodigal was made suitable; he could not go in in all the rags his prodigality had brought him to. No, he was to come in invested with all that suited the father's house, and in what came from that house—an entirely new creation, in a new order of things altogether.

Then it is, “bring hither the fatted calf, and let us eat and be merry.” Those are the actual joys that are in His own presence. How are we to know this now? By the Holy Ghost come down from a glorified Christ. I believe it, and I value it. When there is real faith you will value it. Do you really believe that this is what God is? “The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John i. 18). What an unaccountable thing, beloved friends; we cannot understand it, but we have to believe it. It is not simply that He clears me of my guilt, but love has come out now—God has declared His love, and says, as it were, “I cannot do without your company, and I will fit you for My company.”

Then I go in, and there is the great feast. The greatest feast in heaven is when a sinner repents and turns to God. The blessed Lord had to meet your necessity, and accomplish the Father's will and pleasure; so He could say, “He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me” (Ps. xviii. 19). I want this to rest in your hearts, the delight the Father has in having you in His own presence, and then you will find in your measure how you can delight in the joys

of God. If you have not got beyond the fact that your need is the measure of God's grace, you have only got a measure of the gospel. "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). J. B. S.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT.

MISS E—— had been a bright, clever woman, and had made a fortune in business, out of which she gave large sums to charities, hoping thus to merit the favour of God. Now, at ninety years of age, she was without Him, and had no hope. I was grieved to hear her sad expressions, as I ministered to her bodily needs, and told her, with tears, of that world where nothing that defileth can ever enter.

"Do you think I care?" she laughed. "I am not afraid of God like you." But she was arrested, and soon absorbed in thought. She was a Roman Catholic, and asked to see a priest. I pointed her to the blessed Lord, the once Crucified One, now risen and ascended, whose ear is ever open to the sinner's cry.

When she thought she was alone I heard her say, "What shall I do? Oh, what *can* I do?" Again I spoke to her very simply of the Lord Jesus, and His perfect finished work. "Let me alone," she cried, "*the fire and torment are inside me.*"

Feeling my utter weakness, I could only look away to the Lord to bless this poor aged one with the knowledge of His most wonderful love. He led me to deal very gently with her, and whilst attending to her I sang in a quiet tone—

“None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good,”

and

“Sweetest rest and peace have filled me,
Sweeter peace than tongue can tell ;
God is satisfied with Jesus,
I am satisfied as well.”

She listened, and said, “Those are very good words.”

“Yes, dear Miss E——, but you are not satisfied with Jesus.”

Next day she called me to her and said, “You must not interfere any more with my religion.”

I replied, “I have not once mentioned that to you ; I have only spoken of the Lord Jesus. Will you not hear of Him again ?”

“No, because I know you are a heretic,” she said.

Feeling assured that the Lord was working in her soul, and that this was only the enemy's assault on the truth of God, I waited three days in silence. On the fourth day she called me back. This time it was not “Send for a priest,” but “Is there anybody anywhere who will pray for me ?”

“Yes, dear, there is one who does pray for you very often.”

“Are you sure ? Do you know who it is ? Do I know the one ?”

Then I told her that since she had refused to hear me speak of Jesus *to* her, I had spoken to Him *about* her, and she at once drank in every word, as I told of His great love in taking the sinner's place in death. Then I sang—

“Nothing either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no ;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago. .

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

When I got to “It is finished” a look of peace settled on her face, and as I spoke of those three precious words she exclaimed, “I do trust Him. I see it now, but not so clearly as you do.”

I replied, “Soon you will see His face, and then you will fully know His love.” I spoke of the dying thief who went to be with the Lord the day he trusted Him.

To my surprise she said, “I ought to have known sooner ; my father talked to me just as you do, when I was a girl.”

I learned afterwards she was of Christian parents, but turned to the Church of Rome in early youth. Now, at this advanced age, the seed sown in childhood sprang up in her heart. Never again was there a doubt or fear—only one shadow clouded her joy, it was on account of the years that had vanished in

gloom. She remarked, "I am only a little child, and you are like a grandma," thus admitting, in her quaint way, that she knew she had only begun to live.

A few days before she passed away she was telling how she loved me. "

I answered, "Yes, dear, but you love the Lord Jesus—that is best of all."

"Well, yes, I do now," she said reservedly, no doubt with regret for the past.

So I asked, "But does not the blessed Lord love you?"

"Yes, yes, oh yes," she exclaimed, and her dear old face lighted up with joy as she added, "Why, He died for me."

She loved to hear His name now, and to have His words repeated to her, and would say, "What a nice little talk we have had." The priest called once to see her, and after he left I inquired if he said anything to comfort her. She said she thought so, but could not remember what he said, as she was thinking of what we had been talking about before he came. So the Lord kept her mind at rest.

About a fortnight after she found "peace in believing" she passed away, as gently as a tired child falls asleep, when laid to rest on its pillow. To His precious name be all the praise, who is wondrous in working, and excellent in all His ways.

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,

And drives away his fear."

A BRIGHT TESTIMONY.

I WAS seated at breakfast one morning in a small tavern in the town of C——, when a visitor who had been staying the night there came into the room and took his seat opposite me. I thought what a lovely expression there was on his noble face, and very soon discovered that he was a Christian. He had a "good morning" for all in the room, and a word in season for each; but alas, as is often the case to-day, his talk about the blessed Lord was not appreciated. He inquired of me, "Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" I replied, "Yes, I do, through grace, and I am pleased to meet with another who does." "Oh," he said, "He is the best friend I have. I was such a wretched old sinner, but He died for me, and now He lives to make intercession for me."

He then proceeded to tell me something of his history, and I listened with great interest. Some fifty years ago or more he had helped to pierce the noted Box Tunnel on the G.W.R. One day he stepped into a bucket, to ascend to the top of the shaft, and when the top was nearly reached the rope snapped, and he fell to the bottom, a distance of seventy feet. He was terribly bruised and shaken, but through mercy he was not killed, and had not even a bone broken. God used this incident to awaken him, bringing those words home to him with great force, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. xci. 11, 12). He was led to see himself as a lost sinner needing salvation, and He who had been the preserver of his body now became the Saviour of his soul.

The foregoing incident is one more proof of the mercy of God to a poor rebel sinner, who deserved nothing but the judgment of a thrice holy God for his sins. Friend, perhaps you too remember some event in your history, when the blessed Lord in mercy knocked at the door of your heart, it may be through some accident, or the removal of a dear friend or relative by death. But, alas, you have turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of love. He is saying to thee to-day, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?" You say, perhaps, "I mean to turn some day—it is a long lane which has no turning." True, friend, but forget not that the road you are pursuing will land you in hell, for it is written, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

Consider this matter, I pray you. The issues are eternal. Are the knowledge of God, with all the joy and peace it brings, and heaven with all its everlasting blessedness, worth anything to you? Or do you prefer to go your own way, and lose all, for "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. xiv. 12). Come to Jesus to-day, for He says, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

THE COURAGE OF CONVICTIONS.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.”—HEB. xi. 24-28.

TO have the courage of your convictions is an immense thing, and I want to show you from Scripture a fine illustration of that principle, and what it led to. I do not know if you have any convictions about divine things. Convictions can never be really divine unless they are based on God’s Word; and that connects itself with faith, because faith is the soul’s reception of a divine testimony, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. x. 17).

When divine conviction is wrought in the soul, it may be conviction of sin, or conviction of the love of God, or of coming judgment, all great realities; but the point is this—when conviction enters a man’s soul something has taken place of an entirely new order in that man’s history.

But a man may be convicted about a thing, yet not have the courage of his convictions. Pilate was convicted as to the glory of the Person of Christ, and yet had not the courage to hoist his colours, hence I do not expect to meet that man in eternity; and I do not expect to meet *you* unless you have the

courage of your convictions. That will impel you to cross the line to Christ, and be out-and-out for Him. I am not going to appeal to your feelings, though you have them; you are not made of stone, for you have a conscience, and you know when you sin; further, you have a heart, and you know whether it is filled and satisfied or not.

It is a grand thing to know what is coming. I could not be sure of anything in this life, but the one thing I *am* sure about is what is eternal. Presumptuous, you say. Where is the presumption? Am I to believe what God says, or to doubt it? God never tells lies, and never holds out baubles to men, like the devil, and He never promulgates untruth. He is true, and what He is has come out in the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is not called the Truth. Christ is the Truth. The truth is the exact expression of something that is; and when here Christ expressed all that God is in the goodness of His nature, as well as the love and the holiness of His being; and He has not only expressed all that God is, but He has expressed all that a man should be, in love, tenderness, holiness, and grace; and more than that, He has gone to death in order that He might take up and then wind up and for ever close the history of the man that has not one single point about him that will do for God. When Christ died my history as a responsible man in the flesh came to an end in God's eye, and when Christ rose He rose for me. Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God; everything that is in God is wrapped up in Christ,

and every blessing God can give is wrapped up in the Person of His blessed Son; hence the moment there is the perception that everything is in Christ, a man will make for Christ, and get Him.

Moses presents a fine illustration of my theme, and there are four points in his history recorded in these verses before quoted, which elucidate the subject:—1. He refused. 2. He chose. 3. He forsook Egypt. 4. He sprinkled the blood.

1. First of all, where was he? In Egypt, and of the world. He was a man who had been lifted from obscurity to a position every man in Egypt would envy. Moses is rather pooh-poohed nowadays; when his detractors have descended into the pit, you will find Moses in a remarkable place. He earned a wonderful title—"Moses, the man of God" (Deut. xxxiii. 1). *You* have been the man of the devil, and so have I; he never had a better servant than I, but it is a wonderful thing when conversion takes place. Moses was in a remarkable place, next the throne, although not a prince of the blood, but of obscure origin. You know the story. I believe the Scriptures; do not you? You say, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but this tale about Moses I doubt. Well, in that case you must give up the Lord Jesus Christ, because if the tale of Moses be not true, the Lord Jesus, in affirming what He did as to Moses, has told lies. People do not see where their thinly veiled infidelity and higher criticism lead them. They really lead to the setting aside of the testimony of the Lord Jesus, and with that both God's revelation and salvation go as a consequence.

But we will listen to Scripture, not to infidelity. Everybody knew that Moses was next to Pharaoh at court. The latter had no son, and his daughter had no children; but Moses was brought up as her son, and the natural outloök was that, since she had "nourished him for her own son" (Acts vii. 21), he would come to the throne. It is then we read:—"By faith Moses, when he was come to years" (*i.e.*, "full forty years old"), "*refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" (Heb. xi. 24). At that time of life his judgment was matured, and, more than that, "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts vii. 22). The Egyptians were no fools; it would puzzle our architects to build the Pyramids, and Moses was no fool. Perhaps you think he was a fool to give all up as he did—that is where you and he differ. He showed magnificent wisdom; the wisdom of the Egyptians is not to be compared with the wisdom of Moses when he weighed facts, and said, The riches of time are not to be compared to the riches of eternity. The last time we read of him he is in the company of the Son of God on the mount (Matt. xvii. 3). If, for eternity, you are found *not* in the company of the Son of God, it will be *you* who will be the fool then.

Moses must have been a very all-round man. Evidently, when in and of the world, he was a splendid orator, as well as a doughty man in deeds. When forty years old he was not a young man, except that he was young according to the time men lived

then. He lived three forties; during the first he served the devil; in the second he was at school; and in the third he served the Lord. Moses' action when forty is very remarkable. The ball was at his foot and every earthly glory before him, when all of a sudden he "*refused* to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; *choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. xi. 24, 25). There came somehow or other this deep conviction into his mind, I am not right. He looked round at the sphere in which he lived, and found it to be the world, and all passing away. There was nothing for God; God's people were not known, and were working in the brickfields.

2. Moses found himself in a position entirely out of keeping with what was in the mind of God for His people. This conviction led to action. Doubtless there would be a great commotion when he formed his judgment, turned his back on the court, and identified himself with God's people. It is a great thing to find out that your life, your relation to God, and to His people, is wrong. I do not ask whether you make a profession of Christ, but has your conviction led you to do what Moses did? The thing is reduced to these two points: every man has to *refuse* and to *choose*. Has that taken place in your soul's history yet? Have you *refused* that in which you find yourself by providence and nature? Have you really *chosen* Christ?

Notice the energy of faith in Moses' case—"Esteem-

ing the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (ver. 26). Somehow or other light divine had got into that man's soul. He paused and balanced things, looked at what was all round about him, and then, looking right into eternity, made his choice. I wonder if *you* have ever taken a solemn, serious, grave look right into eternity. What I want is for you to know Christ as your own Saviour, and, if you are wrong, to get right with God. If you have been convicted that you are wrong, take the step that will set you right. You say, I know I am wrong, and I would like to live the right life.

Look at Moses—with everything to hold him back, and every influence to make him stay where he was, he went forward. Satan doubtless said to him, What a foolish man you are ; why do you not stay and use your influence to ameliorate the condition of those poor people ? No, says Moses ; I see the whole circle in which I am is a system of sin, and lies under impending judgment. What was he in ? The world. What have you been in up to this hour ? The world also, with its pleasures of sin. There is great pleasure in sin, but forget not that there are eternal consequences, terrible penalties attached to it. It does not need to be gross sin. Sin is doing what we like—taking our own way. Moses saw that the pleasures of sin were *but for a season*, and he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than continue in what were transitory pleasures, with everlasting penalties attached thereto.

Now, you, my unconverted reader, are going on with the world, and the pleasures of sin. What will end for you these pleasures for a season? Death, and how near it is you know not. That will not do for me; I have heard of "pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). I am going in for them, and I have them on the road too. All believers in Jesus have the pleasures that are eternal, and we have them also on the road—the sweet sense of having the Lord, belonging to the Lord, knowing the Lord.

Perhaps you say, I admire a consistent Christian life in others. Then why do you not adopt it? If it is worth *admiring* in some one else, it is surely worth *adopting*. Sin is sin, and God will judge it. I know that by the cross. If Christ has suffered on the cross to bear the sins of sinners, as He did suffer, that is God's estimate of what sin is, and it shows us what must be the consequences of man's sin in a day to come. You may tell me you are not clear about the punishment of sin. It must be something unspeakably terrible, because it fell on a holy sinless Man on the cross, involving such agony of soul, that at length He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). If God forsook me for ever in hell I should feel I deserved it; but why did He forsake Christ? Because, in grace and love, He took our place and bare our judgment. Well wrote the poet:—

"He took the guilty culprit's place,
He suffered in his stead;
For man, oh miracle of grace,
For man the Saviour bled."

Moses refused and then he chose; he looked right on to the future. He said, If this is going to hinder me from getting God's mind it must all go; so he laid aside his princely robes and identified himself with God's people. Men might call him a fool, but look at his end. It is a great thing to bear the reproach of the Lord, and to be on the Lord's side. Moses had without doubt pious parents. You say: "My parents were pious." Why is not their son? You say: "I had a godly father." Are you walking in his footsteps? You admire them, and you reverence his memory—why do you not walk in his steps? It was a grand moment when that man esteemed things rightly before God, and looking full into eternity said, I am wrong, and I am going to be right, cost what it may.

3. The second forty years of Moses' history rolled by, and then we read: "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (ver. 27). He turned his back on the world. The danger for young Christians to-day is they want to be Christians and go on with the world. I know scores of young people to-day who have just enough Christianity to make them miserable. They think they have the forgiveness of sins, but they have doubts, and fears, and uncertainties, because there has never been that break with the world. Egypt is a system that wants to go on without God. The eye of Moses was fixed on God. God was to bring His people into Canaan; Moses says, I will go in for it, I will turn my back on Egypt; and he becomes a separate man.

Very likely, my reader, the reason you have not got much joy in the Lord is, that there has not been a break with the world. Moses made it; he had the courage of his convictions. He says, I am wrong where I am, and I am coming out of it. What next? I am going to identify myself with God's people. He then had to go to the backside of the desert, and learn some remarkable lessons.

4. Thereafter we are told: "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them" (Heb. xi. 28). That was the fourth point in his history—he got into right relationship with God on the ground of redemption.

W. T. P. W.

FRAGMENT.

WHEN I see a Christ come out of glory, bearing my sin in His own body, and going back again to glory, and going on for eighteen hundred years waiting and gathering poor sinners into the Father's heart, there is something exquisitely beautiful. My heart is stolen away by everything Christ does. Is there no beauty in the walk of Him who did all for you? Don't you want to be like Him? Have you not a model before you that attracts the whole heart? How we should long to resemble this Christ and to have His *mind*. I have got a Christ in heaven, and I desire to meet that Christ's thoughts in *everything*, and to be one with Him in the world where He was rejected and crucified.

G. V. W.

“OH, THAT I COULD SEE THROUGH
YOUR GLASS!”

WHAT a terrible thing to be within three days of death, within three days of an endless eternity, and still unsaved. Such was the case with Emma B——. And perhaps some whose eyes may fall upon this little paper may be even nearer death and eternity. Oh, if any unsaved soul should read this, may the narrative of Emma B——’s last hours lead such a one to think of eternity, and flee to Christ as the only One who can save from endless woe.

Mrs B—— was a Christian lady living in the neighbourhood, who called to see her Monday and Tuesday afternoons, and on Wednesday night sat up with her till she passed into the presence of the Lord.

On Monday Mrs B—— asked her if she suffered much. She said, “No, I am not very sick, but oh, that I knew I had the salvation of my soul.” She then asked Mrs B—— if she had ever passed through times of anxiety about her soul. Mrs B—— told her she had at different times for twenty years been anxious, before she knew what real, lasting peace was; but that now she had settled peace with God which nothing could move or disturb. Then she read to her from God’s Word of the sinner’s lost condition; and also of God’s wondrous love and grace in making provision for the sinner’s need.

“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). She also read scriptures to show her, in answer to her questions, that settled peace could be known and possessed in the soul.

Emma thought her sins of too deep a dye to be washed out; and Mrs B—— read to her, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. i. 18). “Is that just as it is in God’s Word?” she asked; and then she said, “If this sickness would bring me such peace as you have, it would be the greatest blessing that ever came my way.” She also said, as Mrs B—— was leaving, that she would think of these things.

As soon as Mrs B—— entered on Tuesday afternoon, Emma raised herself up in bed, and said, “Oh, I am so glad you have come. Did you bring your glass along?”

One of her relatives had told her Mrs B—— was a very good woman, but would have nothing to do with any one who did not see through her glass; and she had replied, “It must be a very good kind of glass, because she (Mrs B——) got it out of the Bible.” She was delirious when these things were said. After asking Mrs B—— if she had brought the glass along, she turned to her father, and said, “Oh, father, here is a lady who has the most perfect peace, and it is founded on the Bible. I would give the whole

world if I could see through her glass. But that would not do; we could not buy it, could we?”

Her father then broke in, and said she had always been a good girl, and if she would continue to do the best she could, she would be all right. “Do: what can I do?” she replied. “You know I have broken God’s law, and Mrs B—— read to me yesterday that there was a curse on every one who had broken even one command.” Her father then told her not to think or worry about these things: she would soon be well, and then there would be time enough to think about these things.

“But what if I do not get well?” she said, and turning to Mrs B—— she asked, “Do you think I ought to quit thinking about these things?” Mrs B—— told her she thought she would rest better if the matter was settled. Then she was delirious for a time, but soon quieted, and asked Mrs B—— to pray for her, after which she spoke of the comfort she had received, and referring to her relatives, said, “But they keep telling me I must strive, and keep on striving: but how can I strive?”

On Wednesday she had been asking for Mrs B—— all day, and wanted to see through her glass, and did not care to talk with any one else. She had not recognised any one in the afternoon; but as soon as Mrs B—— entered, her face lighted up, and calling her by name, she said, “I am so glad you have come. I want you to read to me again some of those passages about God’s love. They do not read to me from the Bible: they just keep telling me to do this,

and to do that." Mrs B—— read the passages of Scripture about God's love; and she said, "Oh, how nice that is."

Her father, who was present, said, "Now, Emma, do not begin worrying about that again." Then she gave expression to her feelings in the following words, "Oh that law; that terrible law; that fiery law: I have broken it, and you (turning to her father) would drive me down to hell under its curse, and I could drag you along for misleading me."

What a terrible rebuke to a father who was making light of sin, and tampering with his daughter's eternal interests, just as she was about to pass from time to eternity. But he only thought it was delirium, and wished Mrs B—— to desist from talking further to her. Mrs B——, however, asked liberty to read a little to her from God's Word, and read Isaiah liii. Emma was then quiet for a time, but rousing up again spoke of the law, and her desire to be delivered from its curse, and addressing Mrs B—— said, "Oh, if I could only see through your glass! I saw through it once, and I was so happy." Mrs B—— told her that if she had believed in the Lord Jesus, she was saved, and never could be lost, quoting from John x., "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (vers. 27, 28). She said, "Is that in the Bible?" and caught Mrs B—— by the hand, adding, "If I get well, I want to live with you always."

Soon she became delirious again, and was very wild, but this did not last long; and when she became quiet again, she raised herself up in the bed, her face radiant with joy, and said, "Thank God, now I can see through your glass; and oh, I am so happy." These were her last words. An expression of calm peace and unspeakable joy rested on her face, which remained to the last—remained even till the body was committed to the tomb, to await the descending shout of Him who redeems the body as well as the soul.

I doubt not, dear reader, Emma B—— is in the presence of her blessed Saviour, beholding, face to face without a "glass," Him who had saved her from the curse of "that terrible, that fiery law." Oh, let me affectionately ask, have you been saved from that curse? Your sins are of as deep a dye as those of Emma B——. Yet He, who through His own blood washed out her crimson stains, can cleanse you too. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

You have been ruined by sin, and, as with the serpent-bitten Israelites, there is but one remedy. They looked on the lifted-up brazen serpent, and were healed. For you the Son of man has been lifted up on the cross, as the bearer of sin, that believing on Him you might have everlasting life. Look unto Him, through the "glass" of faith, and everlasting life is yours. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

PILATE; OR, CONVICTIONS WITHOUT COURAGE.

I DO not think we are alive to the way we influence others. Look at the influence Moses had in his day, and Daniel in his. He "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine that he drank" (Dan. i. 8). He was firm and decided, and his courage helped Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to the same. Later in his life he is told he must bow down and offer a prayer to the king. That were idolatry, said Daniel, I could not do that, but went down on his knees, and, with windows wide open, "prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime." That led him to the den of lions, but he came out scatheless. He, like Moses, had the courage of his convictions.

Take another man, Nicodemus. He was convinced that he ought to be on the Lord's side. First, he "came to Jesus by night." He then learnt that he must be born again, and that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 14, 15). He went away. A few months rolled by, and there was then a plot to take the Lord Jesus. He was on the council, and there timidly he put a word in edgeways for Jesus. He

had not then the courage of his convictions, though he said, "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?" (John vii. 51, 52). "Art thou also of Galilee?" sent him into his shell. He was like many others to-day—they know what they ought to do, but they are affected by the opinions of others. "What will *he* say? what will *she* say?" often hinders bold confession of Christ. Nicodemus came to Jesus *by night*, but, thank God, he came to Jesus. Have you?

The time came when the blessed Son of God was hanging on Calvary's tree. Then it was that Nicodemus went to Calvary with a hundred pounds' weight of myrrh and aloes on his back. He had heard news that moved him mightily, he had heard that Jesus was dead, and then brought spices for His burying. Everybody was against Him—Pilate, the people, and the priests. He said, by his actions, I am *for* Him. When everybody is against Him is the time to come out and stand for Christ. Nicodemus was a loyal soul; he had the courage of his convictions. You have stood on the threshold of uncertainty and indecision for months and years. Look at Nicodemus. That man took his stand at the cross, and it went through Jerusalem like wild-fire, "Nicodemus is on His side!" Do not be ashamed to be on His side. What I *am* ashamed of is that I have been so little devoted to Him.

The murder of a servant of Christ—Stephen, the first Christian martyr—was taking place, and the murderers "laid down their clothes at a young man's

feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts vii. 58-60). Just ere he died Stephen said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Now "Saul was consenting unto his death" (Acts viii. 1), but evidently his heart got pricked then, and as he was on his way to Damascus to persecute the saints, a light from heaven shone upon him. He was smitten down, and had a most remarkable conversion. The Holy Ghost tells that story three times over. Referring to it Paul says, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, *I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision*" (Acts xxvi. 19). Light from glory flooded his soul, and when he was smitten to the ground he heard a voice saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He was converted, got his commission as a preacher, "and straightway he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20). He too had the courage of his convictions. He began at once to tell the tale of what Christ had done for him. I do not understand people being converted and telling no one else. I know that blessed Christ myself, and I want you to know Him and confess Him. Friend, repent and turn to God if you have never done so yet, and then tell others what great things the Lord hath done for you.

I think that Moses, Daniel, Nicodemus, and Saul of Tarsus are four striking illustrations in Scripture of the blessedness of having the courage of your convictions. But God also tells us of a man who had his convictions, but had not the courage of them. After the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter, when

charging Israel with their sin of refusing their Messiah, says, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, *when he was determined to let him go*" (Acts iii. 13). God there unveils the purpose of Pilate. Why then did he not let Him go? He joined in the murder of God's Son because he was a chicken-hearted, pusillanimous creature, who had not the courage of his convictions.

His wife was the voice of God to his soul when she warned him, "Have thou nothing to do with that just Man" (Matt. xxvii. 19). What happened? Pilate is a beacon to all waverers regarding Christ. He knew He was the Son of God, the Saviour, the Messiah. Did he not speak with Him, and ask, "Art thou a king?" He did, and got for answer, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37). Pilate carelessly inquired, "What is truth?" then turned his back on the Truth, and though fain thrice over to confess, "I find no fault in him," condemned Him to death. Why did he not come boldly out on His side? For worldly reasons. What were the reasons? He had made up his mind to deliver Jesus, for he said, "I have found no cause of death in him; I will therefore chastise him, and let him go" (Luke xxiii. 22); but just at that moment, a voice came from the multitude, "If thou let this man go, thou art not

Cæsar's friend" (John xix. 12). Thought Pilate, Cæsar is my master.

Cæsar's friends must side with Cæsar, and Jesus' friends must side with Jesus. Who sided with Jesus? Nobody; certainly not Pilate. On reflection he said to himself, "I know He is innocent, but if I let Him go some one will say to Cæsar I have let off his rival—for He says He is the King of the Jews. I should not like to lose his majesty's favour." Poor Pilate! He sold his soul for the world's favour. Exactly as much as you are in the world and of it, you are under its thumb, and afraid of it. You may talk about your liberties, but it is all a mistake. Exactly as much as I am supported and sustained by the world, I am under its thumb, and when any one rings out, "Thou art not Cæsar's friend," I am in danger of giving in.

My dear reader, I charge you by the joys of heaven and the horrors of hell to make up your mind for the Saviour at once, and if you have convictions, have the courage of them. It is about time they were brought to a focus. Fling in your lot with Jesus—surrender to Him. He is worth serving. He is such a Master. It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian; you have a title to glory without a flaw, and a prospect without a cloud. You have the blessed Lord as your Master, and God's people as your companions; the Comforter—the Holy Ghost—dwelling within, and the Scriptures as your guide. Will you not have the courage of your convictions? Do not spend eternity with Pilate. That man had a wonderful

opportunity of siding with Christ, and missed it. You to-day have your opportunity of believing in Him and confessing Him as your Lord and Master. Do so.

W. T. P. W.

"THERE IS A MAN."

BELSHAZZAR the King of Babylon, feasting with his lords, drank with them out of the holy vessels of God's temple, which had been despoiled by his father Nebuchadnezzar. God was publicly insulted by the greatest potentate on earth. Alas! history repeats itself. To-day the holy things of God are dragged down in a thousand ways more or less to the level of man's carnal feasting and pleasure (Dan. v. 1-4).

In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, writing mysterious words upon the wall over against the candlestick (probably the seven-branched one). No voice was heard, no form seen beyond those significant fingers. It was enough. Mighty Belshazzar saw them; his *countenance* was changed, his *thoughts* troubled him, the joints of his *loins* were loosed, his *knees* smote one against another. God knows how to abase man in the height of his pride and wickedness. The King of Babylon trembled like an aspen leaf in view of that small sign of the presence and intervention of the almighty and invisible God (v. 5, 6).

Recovering himself, he cries aloud for the wise men of his kingdom, promising rich rewards to whomsoever could read and interpret the mysterious words upon the wall. But all of them were completely at fault, and astonishment filled the vast assembly (vers. 7-9).

At this critical moment, the queen, having heard of the king's words, came into the banquet house and said, "O king, live for ever : let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed : *there is a man* in thy kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods . . . forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar ; *now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation*" (vers. 10-12).

All this is given on the inspired page of Scripture that men may profit thereby. It is a striking foreshadowing of what is revealed in the gospel, and has a present application of the deepest moment for every one who reads these lines.

In Christendom the holy things of God, as already remarked, have been dragged down more or less to the level of man's carnal ways and pleasures, regardless of the infinite holiness of His nature and claims. The covetous pursuits and worship of those things which enrich—gold, silver, brass, iron, wood, stone, &c. (ver. 4), abound on all hands. And God has spoken. To Belshazzar and his lords and ladies He spoke in

judgment. The hour of its execution had come. To us He speaks in wondrous love and grace, whilst forewarning, too, of judgment for all who neglect or despise the great salvation which grace brings. Has His Holy Word arrested you? Have you been brought to tremble in heart in the light of the presence of the invisible God?

May be you have had qualms of conscience, being rebuked as you have heard or read the pleadings of His love and grace, and the warnings of coming judgment. And what have you done? Probably turned, like Belshazzar, to the wise of this world—to some noted professor of theology, or science, or otherwise. God says He has made foolish the wisdom of this world (Isa. xlv. 25). "The natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God: for they are *foolishness unto him*: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). The most profound thinker, the most learned theologian, the most successful scientist is utterly at fault, apart from the teaching of the Spirit of God. To all such you will most surely turn in vain. Not one can make known to you that which will give peace to your heart and rest to your conscience.

But is there no resource? Is there no one to whom you may turn? Thank God, there is. We have the key in the words of the queen, "There is a man." She pointed Belshazzar and his lords and ladies to Daniel, the faithful prophet of God. And it is our privilege and joy, dear reader, to point you

to a greater than he. "There is a Man." Yes, truly a Man after God's own heart; a Man who glorified Him; a Man who went into death that He might display grace through righteousness; a Man who, having borne the judgment of sin on Calvary's cross, and accomplished the mighty work of redemption, His precious blood being shed, rose triumphant over all the enemy's power, and sat down as victor at the right hand of God. His name is Jesus; He is God's own Son. Now let *Jesus* be called, and He will show thee the interpretation. The words of the queen concerning Daniel can be employed of Jesus in the very highest sense. An excellent spirit, perfect knowledge, unsearchable understanding, are to be found in Him. He can interpret all the dreams and visions of the human mind, He can show the meaning of all the hard sentences of Scripture, He can dissolve all the doubts of the human heart. All these are found in the same Jesus. Now let Jesus be called (vers. 11, 12).

Then was Daniel brought in before the king. Twice he said, "I have heard of thee," and he promised him rich rewards if he could read and make known to him the writing on the wall. Daniel, faithful man of God, refused his favours, and bore faithful testimony before all. He vindicated God, and rebuked Belshazzar, showing him he had not sinned ignorantly, but had *lifted himself up against* the Lord of heaven, and *not glorified God* (vers. 13-23).

"Then was the part of the hand sent from him,

and this writing was written: *Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*" These words signify, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." In that night the king was slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom.

What does Jesus, the Son of God, say to us? Though guilty, like Belshazzar, or otherwise, whatever the character of our sin may be, who amongst us has glorified God? Not one. We deserve, then, the judgment of God. Do *you* own this in heart before Him? It is the only way to escape it. There is boundless grace for the self-judged. This is the fruit of the work of Jesus, and His blessed testimony to all. Our days are numbered. Each one of us, weighed by the balances of God, is found wanting. At any moment the door of grace may be closed, and the execution of judgment ensue. But so long as Jesus sits at God's right hand, there is pardon and salvation for all. "There is a Man," through and in whom alone what your soul needs is to be found. "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). What think ye of Christ? Believe on Him, in repentance towards God, and He will make clear to you what may appear to be hard sentences, and dissolve every doubt that you have harboured in your heart.

Judgment, richly deserved, overtook Belshazzar,

but judgment, though equally deserved by you, will never overtake you if you believe on the Son of God, for this blessed Man bore the judgment on the cross. He it is who has said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him who sent me, hath everlasting life, and *shall not come into condemnation* (or *judgment*), but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). Precious indeed are the glad tidings of God's grace! But no one knows how long grace may reign. Hence the importance of the present moment, and of present decision. Delays are dangerous. Death is busy on all hands. The Lord Himself may come at any moment for His own.

Hesitate, then, no longer. All here is vanity; leave it sooner or later you must. If you leave it to come into the judgment of God you had better never have been born. But by faith in the Man, who is greater than Daniel, who is still seated as Saviour at the right hand of God, His great salvation will become yours. In the knowledge of pardon, peace with God, and reconciliation to Him, abiding joy and happiness will be your present blessed portion, the sting of death (if it come) will be gone, and eternal glory is yours at His coming again. And to follow and serve Him till He come will be your soul's daily delight. "*There is a Man.*" It is *Jesus*.

A STRANGE THING.

IT was a serious charge that God made two thousand years ago against Ephraim. "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing" (Hosea viii. 12). But is it not a fact that what was laid then at Ephraim's door lies at the door of many to-day?

Said a sceptic the other day to a Christian, "The Bible is a strange book."

"Yes," was the reply, "it is a wonderful book."

"It has some strange characters amongst its saints," continued the sceptic, "such as David and Solomon. If such men lived in our day we should say they deserved to be sent to prison for life."

"Worse than that," replied the Christian, "if they got what they deserved they would be sent to hell for ever."

Oh, beloved friend, could you but see the object God had in writing His "great things," no longer would you deem them strange, but acknowledge His mercy to poor sinners, bringing salvation to the very worst, and making men, who are only fit for hell, to be fit for heaven (Col. i. 12). God never meant to manifest how good and great men should be, but how good and great He is, and this has been shown in the gift of His own Son (John iv. 9, 10).

We can only learn the "great things" of God's law as we see them told out in Jesus. He said, when

coming into the world, "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. xl. 7, 8). The apostle says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved)" (Eph. ii. 4, 5). It is an easy matter to love those that love us, but how hard to love those who we know are our deadliest foes. Yet, this is what we are by nature and practice, enemies to God, and so energised by Satan, that whilst travelling the broad road to hell we lifted up our puny arm of rebellion against Him.

But in spite of it, such was His great love, He gave His Son to die for us; yea, it produced a great mystery — Christ and the Church (Eph. v.). Our nearness and dearness as believers to Christ are expressed in the words of the hymn—

"We two are so joined,
He'll not be in glory
And leave me behind."

How important then to take heed to the apostle's question, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

To neglect these great things found in God's law, and made known to us so blessedly in God's great love, is but to court His great wrath. One of the two you must have—one has been expressed, the other is coming. God's great love has brought salvation with it. God's great wrath is bringing damnation with it. Then decide which you will have, salvation or damnation.

W. N.

“DIFFERENT WAYS OF GETTING THERE.”

“**W**E are both aiming for the same place, but have different ways of getting there,” were the words spoken by an elderly Jew, with whom I once had a conversation.

One Friday evening, having a little business to transact, I directed my steps to his residence, not remembering for the moment that the Jewish Sabbath commenced at the going down of the sun. We sat talking over the business, and settled all except the payment of some money. Upon my mentioning this matter, he said, “I cannot take that now, because it is the Sabbath. I am getting old, and I want to be as good as I can.”

I apologised for my forgetfulness, and feeling what a solemn thing it was for him to be going on in the path he was treading, I said a few words in testimony for Jesus, which led to the remark, “We are both aiming for the same place, but have different ways of getting there.”

The words of Jesus came very forcibly to my mind, and I repeated them distinctly to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John xiv. 6). I left him with this message from God’s Word. Whether it ever found an entrance into his heart, eternity alone will reveal. “For there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.”

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear :
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.”

Let me ask you, reader, have you come to Jesus, or have you been trying your way ; seeking by your own efforts to do something to commend yourself to God ? With the new year you turned over a new leaf, and you resolved with true earnestness to live a better life. Would to God that souls were as much in earnest in coming to the Saviour as they are in their efforts to do something—to merit the favour of God.

Let me tell you, in the language of God’s Word, “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” If by your doing you could have merited the favour of God, and I speak reverently, there would never have been the necessity for the death of Jesus. Man has been tested and tried, and he has failed ; hence the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again.”

Let me take you back in memory to Calvary’s cross. Look at that scene—Jesus, the Son of God, hangs between two malefactors. The wish of the people has been carried out, and there Jesus suffers ; there, in the untold agony of His soul, during those hours of darkness, He drinks the bitter cup of judgment ; there He is heard to say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?”

When on the Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Elias, He spoke of His decease which He should

accomplish at Jerusalem. Then Peter said unto Him, “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias” (Matt. xvii. 4). There came a voice out of the cloud, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. xvii. 5). God, as it were, could not look on and see Him put on an equality with Moses and Elias.

But, oh, what a different scene at Calvary, when He cried out, and there was no answer. No, God must forsake Him; there as the sin-bearer, as the sinner’s substitute, He was forsaken.

“Alone He bare the cross,
Alone its grief sustained,
His was the shame and loss
And He the victory gained.”

He was forsaken that you, poor sinner, might never be, if you believe in Jesus. He bore the judgment of a righteous God against sin; and He has finished the work. Oh that you may know “he bore my sins on his own body on the tree.” Then you will be able to say—

“Payment God will not twice demand:
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand
And then again at mine.”

The day of grace will soon close; Jesus is coming. He is offering you eternal life. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John v. 24).

THE WORST OF ALL DISEASES.

“Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk ?”—MARK ii. 9.

THERE was a time when the Son of God was here on earth, when there was no need of such abodes of suffering as infirmaries, hospitals, and asylums. He was “JEHOVAH, THE LORD THAT HEALETH THEE.” The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf were made to hear, the dead were raised to life. They brought to Him from all the country round the diseased and afflicted and the suffering. He healed them all. There went virtue out of Him ; as many as touched Him were made perfectly whole.

The Lord was at Capernaum : the news was noised abroad, and many gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them ; and He preached the Word unto them. They brought to Him a poor incurable sufferer, sick of the palsy, borne of four. It was the sick one’s extremity, but it was also faith’s opportunity, and it would not be put off. If those who brought him could not get in at the door, they would through the roof, and they did, and let down the bed on which the sick of the palsy lay before Jesus while He was preaching.

But this poor afflicted one had a worse disease than palsy, and it was to save from this disease that

the blessed Saviour came, though He cured the palsy too. So we read, "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto him, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.'" Oh, blessed words to a sin-sick soul!

"The worst of all diseases
Is light compared with sin ;
On every part it seizes,
But rages most within :
'Tis palsy, dropsy, fever,
And madness—all combined,
And none but a believer
A full relief can find."

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and they reasoned thus in their hearts: "Why doth this Man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" But Jesus is God—God the Son—the Son of God—God manifest in flesh—God over all, blessed for ever—one with the Father in deity and divine glory. In Him those whose eyes were open beheld "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Oh, we love to bear testimony and to confess this! Every saved one, every believer rejoices to do so. The divine glory of His person gives its value to His God-glorifying, sin-atoning, sin-purging work. How that glory shone forth here! He knew the unbelieving reasoning they had in their hearts; they had no need to utter it; He read their hearts, He knew their thoughts. Who but God could do this? Man only knows what is uttered or spoken; God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart.

When Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so

reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, "Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk?" Ah, dear reader, in this question all the blessed truth of forgiveness is wrapped up. In one sense there was no difference, one was as easy as the other. He only, who had divine power to effect the one, had divine right to effect the other. But in another sense (oh! ponder this) it was far harder, infinitely so, for the blessed Saviour to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," than to say, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." The healing could be effected by His word only; but if the forgiveness of a sinner's sins were to be brought about, that blessed Saviour must take that sinner's place. He must be made sin, be forsaken of God, suffer the awful judgment and wrath of God against sin, and thus make purgation of sins by His atoning death and bloodshedding. This He has done, and God has raised Him from the dead. On the ground of having this before Him, He could say to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

Blessed, precious Saviour, it was that sinners might have full, free pardon brought to them that Thou didst come from heaven. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." "God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Dear reader, how about *your* sins? Have you been born again? Have you ever been awakened to the fact that *you* have this terrible, this worst of all diseases? Oh that the reading of these plain, simple words might awaken you! If unforgiven, you are far from God, and where He is you cannot come. Not only can you never be with Him, but you will be in eternal misery, in outer darkness, in the lake of fire. "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Oh, believe God's Word and come to Jesus the Saviour now! He will in no wise cast out.

W. F.

THE LAST GREAT ASSIZE.

(Read Rev. xx. 11-15.)

TIME has reached its closing scenes; mercy's door is for ever shut; the day of God's grace has run out. Yonder behold that great white throne, in all its dazzling brilliancy, suspended in mid-air. The Judge comes forth to take His seat, and from His presence "the earth and the heaven flee away, and there is found no place for them."

2 Peter iii. 10 then comes to pass. "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." The earth passes away because it has

been made foul by man's iniquity; the heaven passes away having been contaminated by the sins of the fallen angels, for He who sits on yonder throne is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Mark well that the Judge is none other than the Person of God's own beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (John v. 22).

Note well what the apostle John witnessed: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. xx. 12-14).

Do you inquire, who are the dead spoken of there? I reply, they are those who have already passed away, Christ rejecters, those who are now passing away, Christ rejecters, and those who shall yet pass away, Christ rejecters. Be warned, my dear unsaved reader, for you must be one of that number, if you pass from time into eternity a Christ rejecter—awful thought, but true, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it, and it shall surely come to pass.

But how are death and hell (hades) cast into the lake of fire? What does it mean? It means this, death delivers up the body, and hades delivers up the soul and spirit. Body, soul, and spirit are reunited, making the complete man, who stands to be judged

by the righteous Judge, and then is consigned for ever to the lake of fire.

“I saw a great white throne,” the throne is great, for it is God’s final judgment of the last great day. It is white, for white is the emblem of impartial righteousness, divine and inflexible justice, that shall be administered by Him who, refused as a Saviour, is of necessity the righteous and holy Judge. See the prisoner at the bar; he stands defenceless and self-condemned. We ask the question, What crime is he guilty of? He is guilty not only of being a wilful sinner, but also of the most awful crime that it is possible for man to commit, that of rejecting the Son of God. Man’s crowning sin is that of unbelief. That is a cardinal vice, which, if continued in, will for ever shut heaven’s door against you, my unsaved reader (John iii. 18).

As long as you remain a stranger to God’s saving grace, you are in great danger of being cut off in your sins, and then for ever will be landed in that place of unutterable gloom and despair, where hope and mercy can never come. How awful to contemplate the doom of the Christ rejecter. What anguish will seize hold upon the soul of that one who stands at the bar, as the awful sentence of “eternal damnation” is passed upon him. Oh, my unsaved reader, I lovingly warn you, “Flee from the wrath to come,” ere it be too late.

I beseech you, without delay, flee to the only ark of refuge from the coming storm. Flee to Christ, “for there is none other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12).

As you read this paper, on the authority of God's Word, you can have the blessed assurance of sins forgiven; at this very moment you can become a happy possessor of eternal life, through accepting, by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour (Acts xiii. ; John v. 24).

Now, whilst the Spirit of God is pleading with you, I beseech you, close in with God's offer of mercy, love, and grace. Set to your seal that God is true. Christ Jesus has finished the mighty work of redemption, He has satisfied the righteous claims of a holy God against sin and the sinner, so that all that is necessary for you to do is, take your true place as a lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner, and accept the lost sinner's Saviour, thereon you shall be eternally saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

How gladly does the Holy Spirit say: "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" (Rom. x. 9, 10). If, however, you reject the only Saviour (Acts iv. 12), you must be among that number of whom it is written, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 15). Make this an impossibility by a simple act of faith.

"Trust in the blood, all-atoning,
Of Jesus the 'mighty to save.'"

"DOING THE BEST I CAN."

SALVATION is not a question of a beautiful outwardly blameless life, nor of doing the best you can, but of faith in that which alone can fit you for the presence of God, viz., the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an immense point to get the sense deeply in your soul that atonement *is* accomplished. There is no uncertainty about it. When Israel broke the law and lay exposed to its curse, "Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; *peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin" (Exod. xxxii. 31). That was all Moses could say in the day of law.

We live in the day of grace. There is an excess of grace, I might say, for we read, "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 to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 6-8). A righteous man is a man that pays twenty shillings in the pound, and expects everybody else to do the same. Very well, he is righteous, but usually he is not a very lovable character.

What do you understand by a good man? A man like John Howard who went and lived in prison to see how the prisoners fared. We are told that

“*Peradventure* for a good man some would even dare to die.” But even that only means perhaps. What does the apostle say then? “But God *commendeth* his own love toward us, in that, *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us” (ver. 8). That is God, my reader. That is God’s nature unfolded. That is God’s love in activity. That is God’s way of reaching man. And that is what the apostle means when he says elsewhere, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved)” (Ephes. ii. 4, 5).

When does God begin with man? When his case is hopeless. Rejoice, my self-judged penitent reader, that your case is hopeless. You are the very one God loves to meet. I remember travelling to the North of Scotland some years ago, and at Bannockburn a lady entered the carriage I was in. I gave her a little gospel book, and as she read it I saw tears come rolling down her cheeks. Presently I turned round and made some remarks about the joy of possessing Christ and the knowledge of present salvation. Soon I found out that she was a very wretched sinner and very anxious to be saved. Then the truth came out that she had been in this state for twenty long years.

“I have been doing the best I can, and am only a miserable failure,” was her confession, as down came the tears faster than ever.

“You have made plenty of good resolves in these

twenty years, and broken them too?" I said inquiringly.

"Yes, I have been trying, and resolving to be better, but all in vain, I always break down. My resolves seem to have been merely made to be broken. My case is so bad, I think I am past all hope, and now I am in despair. It is all over with me now," and she fairly collapsed in agony of soul.

"I have some good news for you," said I at this juncture.

"What is that?" she eagerly asked.

"You were never nearer salvation all the days of your life than you are now," I replied, "for you have lost all confidence in yourself and your own doings."

"But I never felt so bad, or so weak. I can do nothing but sin," was her sad response.

"That is the ground of my assertion as to good news. Hopeless as to yourself you are just ready to let another do His part.

"Now tell me, are you willing to let Jesus save you? Are you prepared to give up all your own doings, strivings, and reformations, and as a poor lost sinner let the Saviour save you?"

"Yes, indeed, if Jesus will have me." I put the simple gospel of Romans v. 6-8 before her, and she received it like a thirsty man does water, or a hungry man bread. She received Jesus simply as her Saviour, then and there, and when she got out on the Perth platform, really a new creature in Christ Jesus, who now was all her hope and all her salvation, I wish you had seen her face. It was shining with the

enjoyed knowledge of God's salvation. That is the way the mercy of the Lord meets really anxious souls.

Reader, if you have been thinking you must do something to obtain salvation, give up the idea on the spot. If you are going to get blessing you will have to go straight to God with an honest confession of what your real state is. When did the prodigal get right? When he said, "Father, I have sinned." I quite admit there was a work of grace in his soul before, and I think he was full of amazement when he saw the father running towards him, with outstretched arms, but when did he get relief? When he said, "Father, I have sinned." What is the next word? The father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet" (Luke xv. 22), and he passed into the house fit for it. Then he enjoyed the feast which love had spread for him. So is it with us. Love provides a full salvation in Christ Jesus and His finished work. Faith appropriates what love provides. The heart then enjoys this blessed revelation of God. As a consequence the walk manifests the effect of grace upon the soul. Devotedness to Christ and all His interests mark the newly-saved one.

Reader, are you one of these highly blessed souls who simply believe in Jesus unto eternal life?

FAITH AND SIGHT.

IN these days of genius and knowledge, when learning, art, science, and music lend their varied and potent influences to elevate men's minds, and minister to the ever-increasing needs of the human heart, it is well to remember that we are not indebted to the twentieth century for an explanation of the reason why, and the manner how, man has ever sought to make himself happy apart from God.

In Genesis iv. 16, we read that "*Cain went out from the presence of the Lord,*" and we have abundant proof to-day that his posterity have *never got back*. From verse 16 to 22 Cain's posterity is given, Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methusael, Lamech, Jubal, and Tubal Cain, whose names would signify a mixture of religion, art, science, wealth, and beauty, all that could commend itself to the fallen heart of man who had departed from God. It might sound well to have your children named Methusael (man of God), or Lamech (strong young man); Adah (beauty) may beget Jubal, and he be the source of the sweet inspiring strains of the harp and the organ; but after all *God was shut out*, and man left to himself must, sooner or later, find himself the subject of God's holy judgment. However fair and imposing all might appear in man's estimation, God has recorded for our admonition His solemn verdict and judgment of man's condition in Genesis vi. 5, "And God saw that the

wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. vii. 23).

Dear reader, do you not see, all around you, the elements of Genesis iv. at work to-day? Plenty of religious profession, the name of Christ stamped on every form and phase of benevolence and philanthropy. Professed ministers of the gospel presiding and officiating at the "world's fairs," its exhibitions; its religious and social entertainments. Plenty of music, too, soothing with its bewitching strains the consciences of men and women. Operas and musical dramas are plentifully prepared to meet the fastidious and refined tastes of high-class critics; the cantata and the oratorio suit the moral and religious community; art, science, and philosophy unfurl their banners to the sober student and the diligent scholar; while honour, wealth, and fame spread their treasures at the feet of their willing worshippers. Thus it was in Lamech's day, thus it is to-day; the natural heart of man remains unchanged; it must of necessity have an object, and if God is shut out, then that object must be found "under the sun" (Eccles. ii. 11).

Where are you, beloved reader? Are you follow-

ing "in the way of Cain"? Mark the end of such (Jude 11, 14, 15).

"The fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 31). All that is fair and beautiful, all that delights the eye and captivates the senses will presently be swept away with the besom of God's holy judgment. Escape to the "Haven of refuge" while yet the door stands open to receive you. In Genesis v., faith's line is recorded, running parallel with that of Cain. Seth (appointed), Enos (a fallen man), Cainan (possession), Mahalaleel (praise of God), Jared (descent), and Enoch who walked with God and was translated. In Hebrews ix. 27, we read, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment": but the one who bows to God's appointment, and takes a fallen man's place (Enos), grasps the fact that Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many, and enters righteously into possession (Cainan) (Rom. viii. 1, 17, 38, 39; John x. 28), and thus being morally fitted for the praise and worship of God (Mahalaleel), he treads the path of faith—a downward one, as far as the world is concerned (Jared), but the prospect immediately before his soul, translation (Enoch), the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 16-18).

Dear reader, on which line are *you* travelling? In faith's narrow path that ends in glory, or in the broad highway of sight and sense, that leads to the pit of everlasting woe? You *must* have to do with God; the question of your sins *must* be raised—why not at this moment, when the stream of grace is flowing so

freely? The dark cloud of judgment is fast encircling this fair universe; beware lest you share its doom. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23); have you owned this in reference to *yourself before God*? If so, the remaining part of the verse is your rightful possession—and having received "the gift of God" in simple faith, you are fitted, through the work of Christ on the cross, to render acceptable praise and worship to the Father (John iv. 23, 24).

But you are passing through an enemy's land, where all is against you, and in measure as you walk by faith, it will be a path of suffering. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and this was fully illustrated in the Lord Jesus Christ, who "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Phil. ii. 8, 9). Dear fellow-believer, you and I are destined to *share His glory* by-and-by: shall we not count it a marvellous privilege to have fellowship with Him *now*, in His rejection, in the scene of his deep dishonour?

What has God given us for our comfort in the long hour of Jesus' absence? The hope of His speedy RETURN (1 Thess. iv. 16-18). Does this minister comfort to *you*, dear reader? Does it flood your soul with joy—the prospect of seeing HIS FACE? If not, something must be wrong. See to it, for God's way to comfort suffering saints is to tell them that Christ is coming *quickly*.

Is there a Christless professor reading this paper?

Friend, remember that if judgment linger long, it will surely come. The one who waits on yonder throne, whose long-suffering is SALVATION, who speaks in accents of grace, now, will presently take up His great power and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Poor trembling sinner, where will you stand when He comes to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of His Son? (2 Thess. i. 8, 9). What will your covering of fig leaves avail you in that day, when, condemned and speechless, you will be cast out into outer darkness? (Matt. xxii. 11-13). Oh, friend, let the amazing love of Christ, so fully expressed on Calvary, subdue your rebel heart, and free you forever from Satan's iron fetters, for still—

“Mercy's blood-stained lintel,
Thy door of hope may be.
O, sinner, Jesus waits for Thee.”

Now a word to pleasure's votaries, frittering away the precious moments in quest of that which will *never* satisfy. Remember Lamech's two wives—Adah and Zillah (“beauty and shadow”). He could boast of beauty, the harp and the organ could discourse their sweet strains to delight his heart and gladden his ear, but a dark shadow hung across his path. What was it? GOD SHUT OUT. Unsaved one, you are chasing a phantom, a shadow, which will elude your grasp, leaving your poor heart unsatisfied and disappointed. True lasting joy is alone to be found in *Christ*, and it may be yours this

moment, if you will only stoop low enough to receive Him. Make haste, like Zaccheus, and come down and receive HIM joyfully. Let *Him* once more be the guest of one that is a sinner (Luke xix. 5-7).

G. F. E.

“A FRIEND LOVETH AT ALL TIMES.”

A TOUCHING incident is related of a dying artilleryman who had been mortally wounded at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. He lay in sore distress bleeding to death, when, at the close of the battle, an officer passed by, and looking at him said in sympathetic accents, “My poor fellow, your dearest friend could do nothing for you now!”

“I—think—He—could,” was the faint reply of the dying man. And who was this Friend who could still do something? Whose was the hand that could ease the pain? Whose the arm that was able at such a moment to support the sufferer? Whose the love that was even then strong and fadeless? What Friend could that be? He was known to the dying gunner. The life-link that had been formed by grace in days of strength was more precious now than ever.

What no other friend could do this Friend could, and far, far more. How well for the soldier to prove His pity then!

This Friend is our Lord Jesus Christ, and well it is to know His *friendship*.

Does the word sound irreverent? Is it possible that He who is made known to us as Creator, Redeemer, Son of God, Son of man, should permit such as we are to claim His friendship? He does! and no phase of His grace is sweeter. He condescends to feel and to do as only a friend can. He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He sympathises and He succours the tempted.

Ah! they called Him “the Friend of publicans and sinners,” and there must have been good cause for this reproach. He must have evidenced some special solicitude for the lost. He must have gone out of the way in order to tell such of the grace and love of God for guilty men. He must, somehow, have passed by the self-righteous and the Pharisee in order to show the unrighteous that God was a God of mercy. He was truly the Friend, but not the associate of such, for He was “separate from sinners.” There was no moral link between Him and such, but there was the deepest pity. He cared for them, He died for the ungodly. He proved His true friendship to the very utmost.

Further, He regarded His disciples in this blessed light. To them He said in Luke xii. 4, 5, “And I say unto you, my friends”—He addressed them thus kindly—“be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

He takes them into His confidence in the communication of this solemn and memorable truth.

So in John xv. 15, “. . . I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

Such a relation was the ground of His unfolding “all things” to them. Such is friendship! How different from slavery! How tenderly to be enjoyed and maintained!

Well, now, the burthen of what I write is that you, dear reader, should learn first, His *friendship* to you as a sinner—how that He has in infinite grace come near to you, and, in order to save you, has given His life a ransom for you (more He could not have done), so that you, by faith in Him, should be pardoned and blessed; and then, second, that you should set your heart on acquiring daily a deepening sense of His abiding *friendship* for you as one of “His own.”

Other arms must break. His are everlasting in love and power. Oh! it is wisdom to know Him. It is not only to know Him as a Saviour from wrath and hell—that is blessed indeed—but it is to have a Friend who loveth at all times, as great in power as in love and care. This is one of the finest phases of God’s revelation to man. How good it is to be able to say:—

“ I’ve found a Friend, oh, such a Friend !
 He loved me ere I knew Him ;
 He drew me with the cords of love,
 And thus He bound me to Him.”

JUDGMENT: WILL IT BE ETERNAL?

IT is said that one of the most remarkable sermons ever preached was that by the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, entitled "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." Edwards was not what is called an emotional preacher. His sermons are not of that kind. He is spoken of as having the greatest mind that America ever produced. It was all laid at the feet of Christ.

It was the beginning of a great awakening in New Hampshire. People were so convicted of sin and the need of a "deliverer from the wrath to come," that the majority who had been hitherto careless wept aloud, and many were so terrified that they clung to the pillars of the meeting room.

The after-results proved it to be of God. Many were truly converted, and brought forth fruits meet for repentance. We leave those who may say that it was all emotion. If so, it was emotion resulting from the conviction of God's Spirit.

When the three thousand, in the day of Pentecost, were moved in a similar way by one sermon, they cried out in terror, "Men and brethren, WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

It is told in Gibson's history of the state of the Scotch settlement in Antrim and Down two hundred years ago, that the greatest awakening ever known (except perhaps that of 1859) was produced through an earnest young man preaching the terrors of the

law. It was what impressed him, and God saw fit to use it to drive sinners to Christ, who is a Saviour from coming wrath. "We shall be saved from wrath through him." The law is not the gospel we well know, but the use of it in the hand of God's Spirit is a preparation for the gospel. Thereby the ground is ploughed up, and made ready for the seed of the gospel, which brings the comforts of God's love, exercised in righteousness, to meet the need of the awakened and terror-stricken soul. Without conviction of sin there can be no true conversion to God.

The law was made to be a terror to evil-doers. It is not the law written either on stone or paper, but the execution of its terrible sentence against those who come short of it or break it.

If that terror were removed, the land would soon be filled with open violence and corruption, in low places as well as high places. All kinds of evil would prevail on a much larger scale than at present. Lawlessness was what brought the flood on the world of the ungodly.

So far from the dread thought of eternal punishment turning men against believing the gospel, as has been asserted, it has been a terror to evil-doers, and has helped to restrain men. Besides, it has driven not a few (myself amongst that number) to seek a Saviour-God, so as to escape His just and holy judgment. Eternal judgment was the greatest possible weapon in the hand of God's Spirit with me, compelling me to turn to Christ for the salvation that I found in Him.

The element of sin's judgment is largely left out of the preaching to-day. People say that it is not the gospel. Many preachers are getting to a large extent (secretly perhaps) filled with the spirit of the age, which is the "larger hope"—the ultimate salvation of all men. Such passages are not preached from now as, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord"; "Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ"; "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14, 15).

Many other scriptures might be quoted in this line. Without judgment on evil-doers it would be utterly impossible to maintain righteous government. The sword was put by God directly in the hands of man, and all right government proceeded from Him. Man may abuse it, as he has abused everything, but that does not alter the fact that men are God's ministers to execute vengeance on evil-doers. (See Rom. xiii. 1-4.)

God shall yet judge the secrets of men's hearts, that is, He will expose them to themselves, which exposure will utterly condemn them, and justify God in dealing with them for their sinful ways. "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first (the man of special privilege),

and also of the Gentile," the man now also highly privileged (Rom. ii. 9).

If we, who by grace have had our eyes opened to the whole counsel of God, keep back this part of it, are we faithful to our trust? Is it kind of us to do so? Is it true love not to warn men of danger, and such danger as eternal fire? Is true love not rather shown in urging men, like the angels did Lot, to escape for very life? Had not Paul done this before he said, "I am pure from the blood of all men"?

Look at the Master Himself, who spake as never man spake because His heart was full of love for the sinner; He said to some, "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. xxiii. 33). And he declared to others, who boasted of their superior light and privilege, "Ye shall receive GREATER damnation."

The heart of Paul reflected that of his blessed Master more than most, if we are to judge from the love expressed not in words only, but in deeds of far-reaching service and suffering: yet he vindicated God in His judgment of those who preached, "Let us do evil that good may come; whose damnation is just."

Peter also, in denouncing the false teachers of Christendom, uses very scathing terms in his second epistle, "Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. ii. 3). Striking and forcible language. This was charity, but it was not false charity.

Even in the house of Cornelius, the God-fearing Gentile, to whom he was sent with words of salva-

tion (not with the gospel of judgment, remember), Peter spoke of Christ as being ready to judge (not to save here) the living and the dead (Acts x. 42).

Paul also speaks of Christ as the Judge of the living and the dead at His appearing and at His kingdom (2 Tim. iv. 1). So this habitable earth of living beings will yet be judged. When the Church is taken to heaven, and the Holy Ghost—the hindering power to the open manifestation of Antichrist—has gone also, Antichrist will make his appearance, leading men to deny the Father and the Son, thus throwing off all profession of Christianity. Out of heaven the Lord will come, as a warrior, followed by the armies of heaven, to destroy Antichrist and all his confederated dupes, in company with the Beast, whose image Antichrist set up in place of God, commanding men to worship it. That will be the awful consummation of man's boasted progress and enlightenment. (See 2 Thess. i. 7, 10; ii. 3, 12; Jude 14, 16; Rev. xix. 11, 12.)

The wicked dead will be raised out of their graves after the millennium has passed, and stand before the great white throne, on which Christ as man shall sit as judge. All judgment is committed to Him as man, "that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. . . . All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." (See John v. 20, 29.)

This judgment of the great white throne will be

like an assize, where all is minutely examined from evidence. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 11, 12).

All who are not found amongst those who were raised to life are not found in the book of life, hence they are in the book of the dead, small and great. Their course on earth had been like that of one whom Paul so graphically describes, "She that liveth in pleasure is DEAD WHILE SHE LIVES," or like those who had the name or profession of being in the book of the living, but were utterly dead toward God. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. iii. 1).

They are judged according to their works. Their works to all appearances may have been what men would approve, and call works of charity and philanthropy. Nevertheless they are dead works, which find no acceptance or favour with the Holy Judge. He will then say, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I never knew you." But these dead workers will in utter astonishment say, "Have we not done many wonderful works in thy name?" They were works of iniquity. Hence the sentence, "Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There

shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." That will be the sentence from the lips of the One who was love incarnate. It will be charity, but not false charity. (See Luke xiii. 25-28.)

If the angels were so very urgent in commanding Lot to escape for his life, ought we not to be much more urgent now with men who have got an immortal existence? The judgment we urge men to flee from is eternal, whereas Sodom's was temporal. Even John the Baptist said, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

The solemn thing in eternity about "THE WRATH TO COME" is that, while it shall be always present, as fire shut up in men's bones, it will always in one sense be to come. Present, yet ever ahead of those who are confined in such a sea of trouble.

"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth (is fixed) on him" (John iii. 36). Mark well these solemn words, "SHALL NOT SEE LIFE." It is a complete contradiction of the "larger hope"—or shall we say, "larger delusion"? If that were all it were bad enough to miss or lose what is wrapped up in that one word LIFE. It is not said, "Shall not see immortality": for all are immortal, as our Lord said, "All live unto God." "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." So a man might kill your body and leave your soul still alive; that is the clear sense of our Lord's words. It shows that though death may overtake the body, by the sword or pestilence, yet the inner life, which is truly the

man, lives. "The spirit returns to God who gave it." Angels are immortal, but they are never said to enter into eternal life.

What, then, is eternal life, in its scriptural sense, if it be not immortal existence? "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "He that hath the Son hath life." "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Such is our Lord's definition of how we enter into life, and how we possess life, and what constitutes life.

Life is a scene of eternal glory connected with the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, of which all true believers may have now the light and present joy, but into which we shall be brought more fully when Jesus comes for us, and gives us by His almighty power bodies of glory like His own. Outside of this all is spiritual death. "To be carnally minded is death," not necessarily the death of the body, but a state where the love of God is not known, and into which the light of Christ does not enter. Hence, all are "dead in trespasses and in sins" until made to live, like the Ephesians, by the quickening power of God's Holy Spirit.

By the Holy Spirit's power we are led to feel our need of Christ, and to appropriate His death. Eating and drinking conveys the thought of appropriating to ourselves that which is death to all that we were in the flesh before God, and we enter into the love of God in Christ, by which we become alive in Christ.

The love of God enjoyed in Christ is the life of our

souls now, and will be for ever and ever. Even now that life is ours. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life : and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life " (John v. 24).

Besides not seeing life, which is the death-blow of universalism, there is what is the death-blow of those who believe in the utter destruction of the soul, "The wrath of God abideth on him." Where would be the force of such language if spirit, soul, and body were made a complete end of, as the body is often put out of being now by cremation? It would have no meaning, but in our judgment would be the purest nonsense.

Why speak figuratively about burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire if there was no term of suffering after the pronouncement of judgment on the wicked? Fire unquenchable represents the anguish and sorrow that will then fill the minds of those who had lived in sin, and lust, and cruelty, and all kinds of wickedness, as well as in the open defiance of a God of love and mercy. Many have filled a suicide's grave because of having tasted a little of it on earth. Altamont, the clever, ingenious infidel, when dying said, "If you only knew half the mountain that is on me you would struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames."

God save you from it, my reader. Blessed be God that in love He gave His own Son to die for us. He drank the bitter cup of wrath. He was made a curse

for us. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Let Calvary's rich display of Divine love melt your heart. Bow before and adore God, that He in love put His own Son on the cross that you might never endure the vengeance of hell fire. Say in truth, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Mighty Deliverer from the wrath to come.

P. W.

"RIGHTEOUS DICK."

"**R**IGHTEOUS DICK," so called among his comrades, was one of a gang of navvies engaged on an arduous scheme of work in a certain district in England. Many are the lives laid down, and numerous the hardships faced by these brave toilers, working oft-times many feet below the surface of the earth.

But God has His servants everywhere, and those there are who delight to carry to these poor men the precious name of Jesus and the good news of His salvation. So it happened one day that Dick found himself listening to the 'old, old story, listening as the missionary told of the lost eternity which awaits those who reject Jesus, but of the glorious future in the Father's house for those who own their sins to Him and trust only in His finished work at Calvary.

But Dick could not see all this—he liked his own way best ; so, addressing himself to those present, he said : " I believe in heaven, and I believe in hell, but I've never done any one any harm, and I've as much right to heaven as any one else."

" Ah," said the missionary, " then you're one of those self-righteous sort that think they are good enough for God ; remember, Dick, God says, ' There is none righteous, no, not one ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one ' (Rom. iii. 10-12). If any one of you men," he went on, " were drowning at sea, or if a piece of this rock were to fall upon you, there is not one among you but would call out, ' Lord, save me. ' "

There was a pause, then turning to Dick, one of the number questioned : " There, righteous Dick, how do you like that ? " But Dick was silent.

Reader, pause one moment. Have you ever cried, " Lord, save me " ? You may be apparently in safety as you read these lines, but you cannot be sure, your life is not your own—another moment and you may be gone—where ? Where will you spend eternity ? Do not, like Dick, think you are good enough for God, but rather believe what He has to say about you : " All have sinned and come short of the glory of God " (Rom. iii. 23). Own yourself a poor lost sinner, and look to Jesus, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In Matt. xiv. we read of one who cried, " Lord, save me," and we also read that "*immediately* Jesus stretched forth his hand and caught him." And He will hear your cry

and save you too, for He says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

But to continue our story; it was only three weeks after the day when Dick stood listening to the message of salvation, when a piece of that rock did fall upon one of the gang of workers, and that one was Dick. Badly hurt, and in much pain, he was carried away to the hospital, and as he went one of his comrades whispered in his ear, "Would you like the missionary now, Dick?"

"No," he said, "I don't want the missionary, *I want that Christ he told us about.*"

Ah, what a welcome message was that which reached God's servant ere long—telling as it did of a soul in need of a Saviour. Quickly he hurried to the sufferer's bedside, and there heard the words from Dick's own lips: "I want that Christ you told us of."

"But," said the missionary, "you may get well again; what then, Dick?"

"Sir," he answered, "*I'll have Him, living or dying.*"

So once again the story of Jesus and His love was told; how He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and as Dick listened this time, he there and then accepted this Saviour as his own. And soon the missionary left him, a saved man, rejoicing in the knowledge that all his sins were gone.

After many weeks he was again able to return to work, and there among his old companions he testified boldly of Christ, telling them all of the joy and

peace which now were his. For many a day they scoffed and laughed, and sought in every way to draw him back to his old habits again, but all in vain. And as time went on, and Dick grew to know and love his Saviour better, his heart was so filled with joy and praise, and his face so bright and smiling, that his comrades no longer called him “Righteous Dick,” but re-christened him “Happy Dick.” So Happy Dick lives on, happy indeed in the service of his new-found Master, and used of Him in bringing others to His feet.

Reader, have you found the Saviour? He suffered much that you might do so. He stood alone amidst persecution, mockery, and violence; Jesus, the Son of God, endured the cross, despising the shame, and they persecuted Him without a cause (John xv. 25). And now He speaks in love from heaven—“If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink” (John vii. 37). Will you not come? You have a soul which shall be either saved or lost throughout eternity—which shall it be? May you be led to say, like Dick, “I’ll have Him, living or dying.”

“The Prince of Glory left His throne,
The sinner’s friend to be;
His holy brow with thorns was crown’d,
He died on Calvary:
He suffered thus for thee.

Why not receive Him?
Why not believe Him?
While He is calling to-day.
I will receive Him,
I will believe Him,
While He is calling, I’ll trust Him to-day.”

AN ARROW FOR THE KING'S CONSCIENCE.

(2 Samuel xii.)

THE high priest was one that went to God on man's behalf. A prophet is one that comes to man on God's behalf. It is thus that Nathan is seen in 2 Samuel xii. as coming from God with a message for the King, with an arrow for his conscience wrapped up in a little story about a pet lamb.

David had been guilty of a great sin. Men make light of sin, but God cannot—He hates it, and exposes it; and yet He freely forgives, on the ground of Christ's perfect sacrifice, when the cry of the contrite heart enters His ear. "I have sinned against the Lord" (ver. 13). "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light" (Job xxxiii. 27, 28).

"Who is a pardoning God like Thee,
Or who has grace so rich and free?"

The Lord Jesus was a prophet. He is called the "Great Prophet," one that could reveal the secret things of God, and read the secret thoughts of men's hearts. Like Nathan, He spake to the people in parables; that is to say, He presented the truth in simple language, and often in figurative form, so as to carry

conviction to the consciences, and bind up the broken hearts of sinners. We have an instance of this in Luke vii., where the Lord is seen proclaiming the pardoning love of God to Simon the Pharisee in the following words:—"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both" (vers. 41, 42).

A woman was there whose heart had already been wounded. She had wept at His feet in her sins, and now she welcomes His gracious words, "Thy sins are forgiven, go in peace." Now compare what Jesus said to Simon with what Nathan says to David in the chapter before us. "There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up, and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him" (vers. 1-4).

The recital of this at once roused the indignation of the king. A man who could so bemean himself as to deprive another of the object of his affections, in order to gratify his own selfishness, deserved to die. And if so, what did that man deserve who had

not only sinned thus against man, but against a holy and gracious God. David said, "As the Lord liveth the man that hath done this thing shall surely die" (ver. 5). Nathan seizes the opportunity, and says to David, "*Thou art the man*" (ver. 7). The parable did its work, and with the arrow of conviction piercing his conscience, the king confesses, "I have sinned against the Lord" (ver. 13).

God's object is ever to win the heart, but it must be wounded before it can be healed; for "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." God now uses Nathan in healing the broken heart by saying, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die" (ver. 13). David's sin was forgiven, the woman in the seventh of Luke was forgiven, tens of thousands from that day till now have been forgiven, the writer is forgiven; let me ask you, dear reader, are *you* forgiven? If not, "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

" Oh, would ye know my Saviour,
 Ye travellers to the tomb?
 He takes the sting of death away,
 And chases all its gloom.
 Then come, believe, while yet you may,
 The message sent from heaven,
 How God can say in righteousness,
 'Your sins are all forgiven.'"

GOD'S MEMORY.

“**G**OD will never forgive me, I am sure He cannot; it is perfectly impossible; He never can pardon me,” and thus saying the speaker, a young lady, dropped into a chair, and buried her face in her hands, sobbing convulsively.

She was a stranger to me, and, on entering my consulting room, she had at once said, “I am not a patient, doctor, but I came with the hope that you might help me with my difficulties.”

I saw it was a case of soul trouble, and when she was a little calmed, inquired the cause of her distress.

“Oh, I have turned my back on God. Seven years ago I came under religious influence, and I determined to turn over a new leaf, and lead a new life. I had been very careless and worldly before, but somehow I became awakened, attended religious meetings, and made a profession of Christ, though I do not think I was ever really converted. Under the advice of friends I was baptized, and joined the Church, but within a few weeks it was apparent to me that all was unreal and hollow, and my profession a mere sham. I found that I still loved the world, and not Christ. I therefore, after a few weeks of unreal profession, flung it all overboard, turned my back on God, went back into the world, and for over six years I have been worse and more careless than ever I was before.”

“And of course you have been correspondingly miserable,” said I.

“Miserable is no word for it,” she said, “I have been utterly wretched. My sin has been awful, and it is impossible that God can ever forgive such a sinner as I have been,” and her tears flowed faster than ever.

“And what brought you here to see me, a stranger?” said I.

“Oh, a friend got me to come and hear you speak last Tuesday evening, in the —— Hall. God touched me then really. I came in from the country this afternoon to meet a sister coming here by train, but I was so wretched that I let her find her way to my house, and I came to you, to see if you could help me. But I believe it is all in vain, for how could God forgive one who has been such a sinner as I have?”

I let her talk on for a while, and then said, “You have a very wrong impression of God; let me read you a little from His Word.” So turning to the Scriptures I read, “Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; *I remember thee*, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase” (Jer. ii. 1-3). “

“Do you know how long it was after Israel came out of Egypt, and went after the Lord in the wilderness, that this striking message was sent to them?”

“I have no idea,” she replied.

“Well,” I continued, “it was fully seven hundred years. You notice God never forgets any little bit of affection on the part of any souls to Himself. Spite of all the sin and wickedness of Israel, during the intervening seven hundred years, between the Exodus and the moment when Jeremiah carried this message, an interval marked by sin, worldliness, self-will, and even idolatry, how noticeable to hear God say, ‘I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.’”

“Yes, that is wonderful indeed,” she ejaculated, “but I have been worse than Israel.”

“Be it so,” I added, “but the God who remembered Israel’s early affection, I am persuaded, remembers yours, if seven years ago there was any work of grace in your heart, and what He did to Israel He is just as ready to do to you, *i.e.*, to bless and pardon you on the confession of your sin. Observe what He says to Israel, ‘Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, than can hold no water’ (Jer. ii. 11-13).

“Is not that rather like your history? You turned from God, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

“Yes, that is me exactly. Oh, what shall I do?”

“Listen,” I added. ‘Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts’ (Jer. ii. 19).”

“Oh, how true that is of me,” she quietly replied; “but what can I do?”

“Do not try to reform; read another verse of our chapter. ‘For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, said the Lord God’ (ver. 22). All your own efforts will bring you no comfort; you must learn what God is in His grace and goodness. What that grace is we shall learn if we look at chapter iii., where God sends another message to His backsliding people. There God says to His servant: ‘Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity*, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord. *Turn, O backsliding children*, saith the Lord’ (vers. 12-14).

“All Israel had to do was to turn to the Lord and acknowledge their iniquity, and your path must be just the same. It is a good day when that takes place in your soul, which I believe is now taking

place, and you are found weeping before God in the sense of your sins. Let us read on, 'A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God' (ver. 21).

"You see you have forgotten the Lord, but He has not forgotten you, and what you heard at my lips on Tuesday, I believe was His message to you."

"Yes, indeed it was, and that is why I am here to-day," she added, with fresh tears.

"Now, then," I said, "listen to His gracious voice of tender goodness to you. What He said to Israel was, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.' The effect on them of the precious recall that He gave them was very blessed. Their answer was, '*Behold, we come unto thee*; for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel' (vers. 22, 23). It will be good for you if you do what they did, *i.e.*, simply return to the Lord. He will heal your backsliding, and you will taste what salvation is, and say, 'Truly, in the Lord my God is salvation.'"

She paused a moment or two, and then quietly said, "I see it, I see it. Yes, He can forgive, spite of all I have done, and forgive even me. I will trust Him; I *do* trust Him," and her tears now flowed faster than ever.

I then added, "Now, that is Old Testament Scrip-

ture. Let us come to the New for a moment, and hear what the Lord says there. We read, '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). When we have sinned we have to come to Him, against whom we have sinned, make a clean breast of everything, confess all, and immediately forgiveness is ours. That is the way of God's grace—grace that reigns in righteousness now, since Christ has borne the sins which we confess; and not only borne them, but atoned for them, and blotted them out for ever.

"It is on that ground that He could say, and did say, to a weeping sinner like you, the precious words we read in Luke vii. There a sinner stood at His feet behind Him weeping. Simon the Pharisee thought and said, 'This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for *she is a sinner*' (ver. 39). He thought Jesus did not know all about her. He did, and He knew all about Simon, and He knows all about you also. Then it is that the Lord says, 'There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most' (vers. 41-43).

"That reveals the character of God in grace. He is the creditor; you and I are the two debtors.

Which is your debt, the fifty or the five hundred? Whichever you lay claim to I will take the other."

"Oh, my sins are the five hundred," she immediately exclaimed. "There never was a sinner like me."

"Well," I said, "I am glad to hear you say that. Can you pay? Can you put away your sins?"

"Oh, no, no! impossible."

"Well, notice, 'When they had nothing to pay, he *frankly* forgave them both.' Which of us do you think this afternoon is forgiven?"

"Both!" she exclaimed in astonishment.

"Yes," I added, "it is true. I know I am forgiven, and that poor sinner spoken of in that chapter knew she was forgiven. Are you aware how she knew she was forgiven?"

"I think I am forgiven, but I do not *feel* it," she ejaculated.

"Very likely, but the point is how did that woman know she was forgiven?"

"He told her, did He not?" she said.

"Yes; let us read it. 'And he turned to the woman . . . and he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven . . . thy faith have saved thee; go in peace.' The way she knew she was forgiven was because he told her. Those twelve words—'Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace,' filled up the whole horizon of her soul. If she looked backwards she was told her sins were forgiven. If she looked forward she was told her faith had saved her, and as for the present, she was told

to go in peace ; for if the past is pardoned, and salvation the possession in the future, well may peace fill the soul for the present."

"Thank God, thank God, I believe it, I see it. I do not know that I *feel* as I should like to, but I *trust* Him, I *believe* Him."

"Shall we give God thanks for your salvation ?" I asked.

"Oh, do," was the fervent reply. We bowed in prayer and praise before the Lord, and when I had done, such a burst of thanksgiving as that dear pardoned sinner poured out to the Lord I have never heard in all my life. It might have touched a heart of stone. I confess my heart was touched. When she rose from her knees, her first word was, "You will come and preach in my village, will you not, sir?" Sweet evidence of grace this. A new-born soul enjoying the favour of God always seeks to share the heavenly joy with others ; in fact it is the mark of the life of God in the soul.

She had the wish of her soul gratified, for a few evenings later I had the privilege of addressing a company of immortal souls, whom she had gathered together in a schoolroom, in the village where she resided. What the result will be "that day" will declare, but they listened earnestly to the word of life then preached.

Reader, have you this life ? Have you tasted the joy of God's pardoning grace, and are you seeking to share it with your neighbours ?

“NOT GRIEVED FOR THE AFFLICTION
OF JOSEPH.”

THE prophet Amos pronounces woe to them that are at ease in Zion, but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph (chap. vi. 1-6). This history repeats itself. The world loves ease, but is not grieved in spirit for *the affliction of Jesus*. Amos describes Israel's state and conduct, which sets forth graphically man's course to-day without Christ.

Seven things are said of them :—

Ye that put far away the evil day,
And cause the seat of violence to come near ;
That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves
upon their couches,
And eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves
out of the midst of the stall ;
They chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to
themselves instruments of musick, like David ;
That drink wine in bowls,
And anoint themselves with the chief ointments, but
they are not grieved for *the affliction of Joseph*.

These seven things, which characterise the world in general, may be summed up under the following heads :—Closing our eyes to the threatened judgment of God ; the promotion of violence ; ease and laziness ; luxury and feasting ; indulgence in music ; drinking ; and perfumery. All who indulge in these things are following what the apostle calls “the course of this

world" (Eph. ii. 2). Christ the Son of man, who had not where to lay His head in this world (Matt. viii. 20), is forgotten. Though His name is professed by many, His claims are ignored, and there is no grief for the afflictions and sorrows of the Son of the Blessed. Men have committed a breach upon Him. The world spat in His face and crucified Him. And tens of thousands celebrate His birth with feasting, completely oblivious that they form part of that world which has yet to answer for the awful deed before God, of plotting for His death.

If you, dear reader, desire to be shut out from the glory of God, and the company of Christ, the sure way is to follow the course of Israel as described by Amos. Close your ears and heart to the gospel, put off the day of the reckoning of your soul with God, continue to do violence to your conscience in refusing to bow to the will of God, pursue a course of ease and laziness, luxury and feasting, indulge in music and the drama, sing and make merry, and drink and adorn—and Scripture is plain what your portion will be. This is what the "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" call enjoying life! What is it actually but sporting in the valley of the shadow of death, and on the brink of eternal judgment? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. x. 31). The heart of God is grieved at the affliction of Jesus at the hand of man. Is it all nothing to you? Have you never paused before the language of the prophet in relation to Jerusalem, true in the highest sense of the Lord Jesus Christ? "Is

it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me,” &c. (Lam. i. 12).

Maybe you exclaim, What would you have me to do? Have you to do? Blessed be His name, there is nothing to do. When men afflicted and crucified Christ, God overruled their wickedness and forsook His Son. On the cross He hath made Him to be sin (2 Cor. v. 21). The judgment we so richly deserve for our worldliness, wickedness, and forgetfulness, &c., of Him, was in infinite grace borne by Him once for all. No sorrow was like to His, no affliction equal to His. Christ, the Holy One and the just, the spotless Lamb of God, passed under the rod of divine judgment upon Calvary, wrought the mighty work of redemption, finished the work, and bowed His blessed head in death. His precious blood was shed, He was buried, He rose, He showed Himself, He ascended, He sat down upon God's throne, He is crowned at His right hand. In Him is set forth in glory all your perishing soul needs. Repent ye, and believe the glad tidings concerning God's Son.

Judgment is coming shortly, swiftly, and surely upon the world of the ungodly, living as they list in worldliness, pleasure, and forgetfulness of God, ungrieved by the affliction of a greater than Joseph.

But if instead of vainly seeking to stay off the evil day, and continuing your downward course of sin, you stand in the path this day, and, accepting God's verdict about the world as His verdict about you, as a

poor, guilty, lost one, you believe His testimony concerning His Son, His everlasting Word declares that your sins and iniquities He "*will remember no more*" (Heb. viii. 12). The woe of His judgment, as pronounced upon all who are at ease like those in Zion, shall never come upon you.

Does God mean what He says? He does. It is not a question of what men think or say. The thoughts and sayings of the natural man are always more or less in divergence from or opposed to the thoughts of God. Man thinks more lightly of his case than God does. Man slurs over sin—God never does. Man has his own code of what is right and what is wrong, but it is in disagreement with God's code. Be wise, then, while you may. Cease to reason, cease to procrastinate, acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace (Job xxii. 21).

Satan, fearful of losing you, will do his utmost to persuade you that you can enjoy the world and be all right with God at last. He dubs its pleasures and follies innocent, and if you are foolish enough to believe his lie, and remain his dupe, you will most surely rue it, and that eternally. Wake up, then, now! Face realities. Christ is the only Saviour. He only can deliver you from the thralldom of Satan, sin, and the world. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36). He is the great Emancipator of Satan's slaves. He paid the whole price of your emancipation in His own precious blood. Blessed, thrice blessed indeed, is the man who believes in Him! Light is streaming from

the glory where He sits, the triumphant Saviour, the only accepted Man on God's high throne. Grace abounds from thence, and superabounds. God's righteousness is towards all, and hence towards you. Love is waiting to give you a worthy reception, to reconcile and save. The heart of the blessed God is open, His everlasting arms are outstretched. Can you remain any longer away from His fond embrace? Come, then, come as you are, come now. “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37). And God will accept and grace you in Him.

The world's judgment is lowering. “Behold, the judge standeth before the door” (Jas. v. 9). But till grace ceases, and judgment comes, the Judge is *the Saviour of sinners*. The greater than Joseph, once afflicted by men, and for sin on Calvary by God, is now presented to you. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts xvi. 31). Believing on Him you will see the world in its true colours, you will see it in the light of God, instead of being colour-blind through the deception of Satan, and you will receive power from God by His Spirit to refuse it, and gladly flee its guilty charms. What a Saviour Jesus is! Is He yours?

“The sinner who believes is free,
 Can say ‘The Saviour died for me:’
 Can point to the atoning blood,
 And say ‘This made my peace with God.’”

ANSWERED PRAYER.

“ I SOON found out after I came to live with you, miss, that though you were such a loving family, there was not a bit of *godliness* amongst you, and then I began to look to the Lord for you, and asked Him that some of you might be saved, and very soon I saw He was beginning to work.”

The speaker was a quiet-looking man of middle age, who, some time previous to this, had come to live with Mrs E——, the widowed mistress of the house, in the capacity of shepherd.

How much that family owed to that simple Christian man! His prayers were as a hidden spring of blessing to them, for God gave an abundant answer.

Soon after Robert the shepherd had entered Mrs E——’s service, her only daughter began to be troubled by the thought pressing on her that she was not right with God, and therefore not prepared to die; and oh! what should it profit her if she should gain the whole world and lose her own soul?

With no other thought but that salvation must be *deserved* and worked for, she spent many weary months in trying by every means she could think of to get peace with God. The utter failure of these efforts proved to her that she could do nothing whatever towards saving her soul, but she was learning from Scripture what greatly surprised her—that God,

in virtue of Christ's atoning death on the cross for sinners, was offering full forgiveness of sins to every one who turns to Him, without work or merit on his or her part, for Christ "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). As a sinner all she had to do was to believe and accept what He had thus purchased for her at such infinite cost. This at last she did, simply trusting the Lord as her Saviour, and resting on God's word, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*" (1 Tim. ii. 5), and that "his blood *cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John i. 7). Then knowing on the authority of God's word that she was saved, and saved for ever (John x. 28), her heart overflowed with joy and thankfulness.

When she tried to show her eldest brother *his* need of the Saviour, he exclaimed, "Why, what do you mean? What am I doing that is wrong? If *I* am not going the right way, it will be a bad look-out for a good many. I don't see what more God can require of me."

After some time he was induced by great persuasion to read the Word of God for himself. As he read chapter after chapter, light from its inspired pages broke in upon his dark soul. "The Spirit began to strive with me," he said, "and I saw that I was lost, and a *great* sinner. I saw, too, that my being such a pattern to other young men, and my going to church and taking the sacrament regularly, were things altogether apart from the question of my soul's salvation, for I saw that Jesus Christ had

come into the world to die and make atonement to God *for me as a sinner.*" Then afterwards the verse, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," brought him into full peace with God.

A few months previously this brother had written to an aunt and uncle concerning his sister, saying, "Something very strange has come over ——. She takes not the slightest interest in anything, and says she cannot do so until she knows she is *saved!* I have asked her why she does not consult you and uncle about it, but she says *neither of you are Christians,* and therefore you cannot help her."

On reading the letter his aunt burst into tears, exclaiming, "She says I am *not a Christian!*" If her niece had said this of her uncle she would not have been surprised, for *he* had never made any profession of religion, but it seemed almost incredible that it could have been said of herself, and she was deeply hurt.

Though outwardly commendable, her husband fully realised that he was "not a Christian," and he was one of the first to seek and find the Saviour. With herself it was more difficult. Kind-hearted and generous, she had been pronounced "a most estimable woman," as indeed she was. It was hard to find that this weighed nothing in the matter of her soul's salvation, for even "our righteousness" before conversion (*i.e.*, turning to God) "are as filthy rags" in His sight (Isa. lxiv. 6). She had to learn that she could not stand before Him on any other ground but that of the *atoning death of Christ*, and that her only

claim to this mercy was that she was *a sinner*. It was a humiliating experience to her, as it is more or less to every one; but its lesson was now learned, and as she was sitting alone one day, feeling "weary and worn and sad," the words of the Lord Jesus came forcibly to her remembrance, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

"But if I do come, He will not receive me," she said half aloud.

Again the Lord's words came to her mind in greater power.

"Lord, I *do* come," was her glad response. She then found in Him a resting-place, and He then made her glad.

In the meantime Mrs E——'s six remaining sons had been either written to, or spoken with, on the subject of their souls' salvation, and each, one after the other, though with widely differing experiences in their steps from indifference to conviction, and then conversion, confessed Christ as their Saviour.

Mrs E—— herself had known all that was going on in her family, having read the letters sent home by her sons, but she had given no clue as to its effect on her own mind, until one day she said, as if involuntarily, "My children are all saved, and I am left out." They gladly showed her how they had been saved, by taking their place before God as sinners, and then trusting in Christ as their Saviour. A few days after she said, with a very happy face, "Oh!

how simple it is, just *taking* what has been done for me."

Early next morning Mrs E—— drove to a neighbouring village, where her mother and two unmarried sisters resided. The early visit and the expression on her face showed that something more than common had taken place, and her sisters closely followed her into the room where their mother, a fine old lady of nearly ninety, was sitting; but had a thunderbolt fallen at their feet they could hardly have been more surprised than when their elder sister, the moment she was seated, turned to their mother and said—

"Mother, are you *saved*?"

"Ye—es, my dear, I *hope* so," stammered the old lady.

"Then how is it you never told *me*?" demanded her daughter in a tone of mingled rebuke and astonishment.

Conscience-stricken, her mother made no reply. It may be she had never been able "to read her title clear." In her youth she had been a member of a Bible class, held by the wife of the well-known Mr Fletcher of Madeley, and doubtless the good seed then sown had taken root in her heart, but there had been but little in her life to help, and much to hinder, its growth. Anyhow, no one had ever heard her speak a word for Christ, though her meek and quiet spirit and blameless life would have given weight to her words if she had.

But how any one could know Christ as their own Saviour without trying to bring those around them to

Him, or warning them of their awful danger in neglecting God's salvation, was now beyond Mrs E——'s comprehension.

As her mother still sat in troubled silence, she turned to her indignant sisters.

"A——, are *you* saved?"

"I am quite as good as *you*," was the sharp retort.

"Are *you* saved, J——?"

"I am quite as religious as *you*."

Both answers told their own tale, but their sister's question had brought conviction to them that they were not right with God, and soon their hearts' cry was, "What must I do to be saved?" A—— was the first to find peace. J——, the younger sister, passed through deeper waters. "What shall I do, oh! what *shall* I do?" she almost groaned out in the realisation of her own helplessness and sinfulness.

"Aunt J——," said her niece, to whom these words were addressed, "Christ died for *you*, a sinner."

"Christ died for *me*, a sinner," she repeated, as if trying to grasp the meaning of the words; and as she went about her household duties, the words continually fell from her lips, "Christ died for me, a sinner, *for me*," and then she simply believed and rested on the precious truth she was stating, and consequently peace and joy filled her heart.

Others of the family died, neglecting or rejecting God's salvation, which alone could have delivered them from a lost eternity.

One of these was a cousin, nursed on her death-bed by Mrs E——'s sister, A——, who tried to rouse

her from her false peace by showing her that she too was a lost sinner, and as such must come to Christ for salvation, but the dying woman coldly resented any such thought. "I have no need of what you are saying," she said; "I was made a 'member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' in my baptism, and nothing more is required"; and grounded and built up in this delusion, she died.

It seems strange in these days of free access to the Word of God, that any should be found blinded by teaching so utterly opposed to it. But though the Bible may be in every house, yet too often its life-giving words are unread, with the awful consequences that souls pass into eternity as ignorant, of the full free salvation Christ died to bring to them, as if they had lived in a heathen land.

Robert had been greatly cheered and encouraged by God's manifest answers to his prayers, but still there was often a cloud in his own spiritual life. He was what is called a "doubting Christian," and could tell of "fearful dark times" when "the enemy well-nigh got the mastery," and when, if it had not been (as he thought) for his own agonised wrestlings with God in prayer, his soul would have been lost. He knew Christ as the Saviour who had *died* for him, but not also as the One who "ever *liveth* to make intercession" for him (Heb. vii. 25). Miss E—— often spoke to him of the eternal security of every believer in Christ. "Nay, nay, miss," he would say sternly, "you are all wrong *there*."

“But I *know* it deep down in my own soul, and, better still, Christ says, ‘I give unto them eternal life; and they shall *never* perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand’” (John x. 28).

“It is eternal life *while you keep it*,” argued Robert.

Years afterwards when they met again she found Robert’s views unchanged, for he had never studied the Scripture on the subject; but one evening she placed his own family Bible in his hand, and pointing to Romans viii. 38, 39, said, “Read that, Robert.” And while he slowly read through the verses, she raised her heart to God in earnest prayer that He would enable him to bow to the precious truth they contained. As he reached the end, a look of glad surprise overspread his face. Springing up and holding out the Bible to her, he almost shouted in his excitement, “See that now! ‘nor things *present*, nor *things to come*, nor height nor depth, nor any creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ Well, well! Why, I always thought it was ‘shall be able to separate *our* love from God,’ and that always seemed such an easy matter. But you see it is *nothing shall be able to separate God’s love from me*. And yet the sermons and sermons I have heard, always putting it the other way about. Well, well!”

“He that believeth *not* God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God *hath given to us eternal life*, and this life is in his Son.”

“He that *hath the Son hath life*, and he that *hath*

not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, *that ye may know that ye have eternal life*" (1 John v. 10-13).

F. A.

DOLLARS AND SINS.

IT was in a railway carriage. The seats were all occupied, and we were to be there for four hours ere we reached our destination. Gradually the reserve began to break, until most in the carriage were talking either to one or another of their fellow-passengers. After a time the conversation was only between an elderly gentleman and a youth of about nineteen years.

As I sat listening my heart was suddenly drawn to the youth. He was that kind of fellow that makes a dash in the world, as men say. There he was in all the bombast of youth, flourishing his cigar for the view of all present, and emitting great volumes of smoke as though he were some mighty being. The words of King David came to my mind, "God is not in all his thoughts." How true! If God had been dead, that youth could hardly have cared less. But God is not dead. Jesus is not dead. That lowly Man who trod this earth for none other object than the will of God and the eternal blessing of man, is now seated at the right hand of God, "crowned with glory and honour." More than that, God has decreed

that every knee *shall* bow to that blessed Jesus. Bowed either by divine love, or divine justice, bow you *must*.

Reader, are you an infidel, sceptic, atheist, materialist, or some loud professor? Well, such things may swell the *bubble* of your name in this world, but—that bubble *must* burst—meet God *you must*—bow to Jesus and confess Him Lord *you shall*. Deny it if you will. God says it. It is unalterably true, and woe be to those who continue to forget God.

Speeding on our journey the Spirit of God caused a desire in my heart to speak to that young man. What to say and when to say it I wondered. The only words I could think to say were, “your sins.”

There were now about ten minutes left and our journey was completed.

Toward the end of the conversation this young man said that ere long he would be in America, and that “dollars” were his *only* object. How he obtained them he cared not. At the sacrifice of everything he was after his “dollars.”

Now came my long-awaited-for moment, when I said, “Dollars are not everything; you have a life to live beyond the grave; you must give an account to God of how you have spent your life. *Meet God you must*, and *your sins* are on you.”

“Ah,” said he, “I’m going to make a success of life.”

Said I, “Yes, but you have to die, and beware of the crash the other side of the grave.”

We said no more, and in two minutes or so we parted. Eternity will reveal the effect of those few words upon him.

What about yourself, reader? Are you not sinning against God, and after that (almighty?) dollar, perhaps, like thousands more? Beware! God is not mocked. You must meet Him against whom you have sinned. Spurn not His offers of mercy. He loves you too much to let you go unwarned. Turn to Jesus. His mighty heart of divine love waits to make that love dear to your heart, to give you heaven as your home, and bring you into relationship with God as your Father.

Is there anything like God's salvation, I ask you? How solemn if you refuse it, for God says, "How shall we escape if we neglect *so great salvation.*" "For if ye believe not ye shall die in *your sins.*" Reader, if you cling to your sins, beware of the crash the other side of the grave.

H. C. S.

IN A MOMENT.

"**J**UST in a moment, and he was gone," were the words uttered in awestruck tones, in describing the fearfully sudden death of a neighbour of mine, who had been in my house only three days before, to speak about a matter of business. And now he was gone for ever—gone to meet God, to render his account to One inflexibly

righteous. I do not pretend to say how he will meet Him, whether in his sins or justified from his sins; "As the tree falls so it must lie." We must leave that soul with Him who judges righteously. He is dead. "Gone in a moment." There we must leave him. But we who are alive, what about us?

How true is the Word of God! We read in the book of Job xxi. 13, "*In a moment* they go down to the grave." But is this the end? However much you might wish it, it is not the end. You remember the words "after death the judgment." God will not forego His holy *claim* over you, He is God and you are His creature. Nor can He be *indifferent* to your soul's danger because He is Love itself.

Death is the wages of sin; so that if you were to be called away "in a moment," it is because of sin, and "death by sin"; but after the death of the body there follows the judgment of the soul, and if you die in your sins, there follows the "second death," which is to be eternally banished from the presence of God, in that place where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. And are you running this awful risk every moment you live? Are you (perhaps without meaning to do so) playing the hypocrite, hoping that *professing* you are all right will make you all right? You may deceive yourself, but you cannot deceive God. The word of God to you is, "the joy of the hypocrite is but for *a moment*" (Job xxvi. 5). Now is your little moment of pleasure; endless woe will surely follow if the great sin-question remains unsettled.

It is settled on God's side, was settled over eighteen hundred years ago, when His beloved Son said on the cross, "It is finished." Have you ever come to a settlement with God about your sins? I had to make monthly settlements with the neighbour whose end I have related above. If I did not settle regularly could I complain if supplies were stopped? Payment must be made or trouble followed. Is man's righteousness more than God's? Does God keep no account? "His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings" (Job xxxiv. 21). Now, dear friend, with all your "goings" before the eye of God, would you be perfectly happy about being summoned into His holy presence "just in a moment"? Or, would that solemn scripture fit your case which says, "How are they brought into desolation *as in a moment*, they are utterly consumed with terrors, as a dream when one awaketh" (Ps. lxxiii. 19). Your sins are against you in God's holy books. They must be settled or you run the risk of the doom of Sodom, "that was overthrown as in a moment" (Lam. iv. 6). Only yours will be an eternal overthrow.

Oh, dear friend, what will the *next* moment bring you? The *present* moment is a moment of grace; the next may be a moment of judgment. This is not written to terrify you, but we are not ignorant of Satan's devices, or of the awful deceitfulness of your heart; it is Satan's game to cheat you, and it is natural for your heart to believe his lie. Awake! "repent, and believe the gospel." The Lord Jesus may come any moment, and you will be left behind

for judgment. For we read, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." When will you rise, dear friend? Will it be in the resurrection of the just or in the resurrection of the unjust? Now is the moment for you to avail yourself of that blessed One who died, He, the Just One, for you, the unjust one, that He might bring you to God. Remember, all has been done. But have you "obeyed the gospel"? In obeying the gospel there will be repentance. Repentance is seeing and owning that you are a guilty sinner in God's sight. Repentance will not save you, but you cannot be saved without it. In bowing to Christ, in obeying the gospel, you repent. Bow to Jesus, get into His blessed presence alone.

Remember, the holy angels are not ashamed to bow before Him day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy." He is worthy, and He is worthy of your heart's fullest confidence. What a friend you have in Him. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend's." Will you turn your back on Him? He would fain be your friend for eternity.

Seeing you may die in a moment, why not settle this matter in *a moment*, and let it be this moment? God says, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Do not fear, you can turn to God in a moment, and be saved in a moment. The thief on the cross was saved in a moment, Saul of Tarsus was saved in a moment, the Philippian jailer was saved

in a moment. They err who say you cannot be saved now, and in a moment, and know it. "Let God be true and every man a liar." I repeat, all the work of redemption has been done, done by the Son of God, but what have you done to get the benefit of that work? You may reply, "I will do my best—an angel from heaven can do no more." But you must know, my friend, that not even an angel from heaven could finish what the Son of God has fulfilled—he would not attempt it, he would not dishonour God or His holy Son by so doing. You can do nothing, and yet you can believe the gospel; you can repent and believe the gospel; you can obey the gospel, or you can disobey the gospel and be lost for ever.

Should God cut you off "just in a moment," if your friends had to say about you, "Just in a moment and he was gone," would it be to the place of torment, or to be among the harpers harping with their harps?

J. N.

FRAGMENT.—What a wonderful thing that the believer stands before God in association with the Man that is alive from the dead. Just before His death, He said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). He was the unique, solitary corn of wheat, the only sinless Man that ever was in this world. He went unto death, met all God's claims, and annulled Satan's power. He who was the Son of the living God, by undergoing death, abolished it.

W. T. P. W.

THE GIANT'S CONVERSION.

“**T**HERE'S no sin I have not committed, except murder!” The speaker was a man of colossal dimensions, standing over six feet six inches high and of proportionate bulk. From his huge size he often got the name of “The Giant.”

The words were spoken in no tone of bravado, but rather to show the exceeding greatness of God's mercy, which could bring such a man as he had been to look up to Him without a fear. That he did not think lightly of his past sinful life was proved by his words—almost the last I remember from him—“I would be willing to have my arms or legs chopped off *if I could lose the remembrance of the wicked things I have done.* I know they are all washed out in the blood of Christ, and that God has said, ‘Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more,’ and I have no fears, but it's *the remembrance of them!*”

Of highly respectable family and connections, and of good education, he had been sent from home by his father when he was eighteen, on account of his bad conduct. He then sailed for Australia, where for twenty-two years he lived a life of unrestrained wickedness.

“When I got back to England,” he said, “I found that eight of my family had died very suddenly,

three of them had dropped down dead, and I trembled, thinking my turn may come next."

He had returned almost penniless, but his father's death having left him in comfortable circumstances, he determined to have what he called a "hut" built on the outskirts of one of the Yorkshire dales. "I always had a hut at the diggings," he said. A prettier room than the sitting-room of his "hut," with its conservatory filled with choice ferns and flowers, and its large bay window overlooking the beautiful country round, it would be hard to find. In this out-of-the-way spot he settled down.

Possessed of a violent, ungoverned temper, and of physical strength in keeping with his giant-like proportions, his frequent mad drinking bouts made him for years a terror to the people of the quiet dale, who always ran into their houses if they saw him coming.

But the time came when in God's mercy the thought of death, and of "after death the judgment," began to weigh heavily upon him, and he made some great changes in his life, gave up his drinking habits, got married, and attended church and chapel. But none of these reforms brought any rest to his conscience, and as time went on his past sins rose up in still blacker array before him. His distress was increased by finding he was powerless to bring his hitherto uncontrolled temper into subjection, and that in spite of his efforts he was really more quarrelsome than ever.

He seems to have been in heathen darkness as to the gospel—God's good news "that Christ Jesus

came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. ii. 10), and that His blood "*cleanseth from all sin*" (1 John i. 7). How fully this would have met his need! How perfectly it meets the case of *every* sinner, not only of the grossly evil and profligate character, but that of the refined, amiable, and respectable sinner also, for in God's sight both are on the same platform—"sinner" the name of both equally. The *humbling* bit to human pride is what God says, "There is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22, 23).

His distress of soul soon got noised about, and a Christian gentleman hearing of it went to see him. And now he hoped to find out how he could get rid of the heavy load of his sins. During a walk he unburdened his mind and told of his unavailing efforts.

"Ah! I see where you stand," said his visitor, when he had finished. "You must *go to God* about it."

The much-looked-for advice was not what he expected it would be. As yet it conveyed no meaning whatever to him, and he was both disappointed and angry.

"I was very near hurling him into the beck when he said it," he exclaimed afterwards. No doubt he thought he should have been told what more he could *do*, what greater efforts and more earnest resolves he could make, but his friend had sought to turn his eyes away from all this to the God "with whom we have to do," who has so graciously said,

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. i. 18). But *how* can God be *just* in doing this? some one may ask. *Because* “Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. v. 6). “He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God” (1 Pet. iii. 18). *Therefore* God can be “just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 26).

The vicar also called to see him, and advised a more regular attendance at church and closer attention to certain prayers in the church service, as that which would in time give his mind relief and enable him to exercise more self-control; but this was too much for one already irritated by his fruitless efforts in this direction.

“Man,” he roared, “haven’t I been doing it for the last two years, and what better am I for it?”

But the time soon came when the teacher and the taught exchanged places, the latter putting before the kind-hearted but unconverted vicar *God's* plan of salvation, as opposed to man’s own efforts and religious observances, but it is to be feared the vicar never understood the finished work of Christ, as years after, when the “giant” was thought to be at the point of death, he was praying at his bedside that “he might die *in peace*.” The sick man, suddenly recovering from his half-unconscious state, heard the words, and they thoroughly roused him up. “Die *in peace!* man. Why, *that* was settled years ago.”

That a man is not saved by his own efforts, religious observances, or good works, is shown by *every*

scripture where the gospel is set forth. "For *by grace* (the free favour of God) 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). "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3).

Good works are the fruit and proof of true conversion to God, and are like the fruit on a tree, which does not *make* the tree alive, but shows that it *is* alive. The apostle Paul, in writing to Titus, said, "I will that thou affirm constantly that they which have believed God might be careful to maintain good works" (Titus iii. 8).

Months passed, and our poor friend was still in the same sad plight, haunted with the stinging remembrances of the past, and with the dread of death and of God's judgment in the near future. But one winter's night (a night ever memorable afterwards, of which he always promptly gave the hour and full date, as that in which he had "passed from death unto life") he was sitting brooding over the fire. It may be in his heart he was "going to God about it," crying to Him in his helpless distress. His wife, who had not yet got peace either, was reading a book which had been sent to them, called "Grace and Truth," when she suddenly exclaimed, "Why, Ted, this must be what *you* want." He read the passage pointed out. "Ah! that's it," he cried, jumping up in the greatest excitement and delight.

"Don't *you* see it, woman?" he shouted, as he saw

her astonished look. "Why, it's as plain as a pike-staff. *Don't you see it?*"

At last his mind had been turned to the atoning death of Christ. He saw that it was for *him*, a sinner, and that in virtue of it his sins were gone from the sight of God, borne by Christ on the cross. "His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). No wonder it made him a happy, rejoicing man, and that henceforth his chief subject of conversation was God's wonderful salvation for the sinner who turns to Him.

I am not able to say with certainty the words in "Grace and Truth" which brought him into the knowledge and joy of salvation, but I am told the scripture he specially rested on was the verse he afterwards placed over his mantel-shelf—"He that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). In a well-thumbed part of his old book, I find the following passages marked with black pencil. Probably it was one of these that his wife pointed out to him which brought him to see God's rich provision for him in the gospel.

"My salvation depends solely on the work and person of Jesus Christ, our Lord."

"The *knowledge* that I am saved depends solely on the word of God."

"He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son; and this is the record that God

hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 10-12).

"A man *is saved* the moment he accepts Christ, on account of Christ having died in his place. He *knows* that he is saved when he believes the record God gave of His Son."

"In a word then, what shall I do? Take the lost sinner's place and *claim* the lost sinner's Saviour."

"He is a real Saviour for real sinners."

"My only qualification for such a Saviour is that I am such a sinner."

"And now I believe my sins are not on me, not because I *feel* them gone, for I do not, but because God *says* they were laid on Christ" (Isa. liii. 6).

For many years our friend visited his neighbours and the farms in the out-lying districts with gospel periodicals and books, telling them in plain, unvarnished words their fate for eternity if they refused God's offered mercy. But to the last he retained many of his rough ways and expressions which, though wonderfully modified, must often have proved a stumbling-block to those he tried to bring to the Saviour, so there was but little known fruit from his labours. "It only took effect on two or three," he said. "One was a man I used to go to see over in the dale there, who was very ill. Every time I went I took a fresh gospel verse to read to him, but nothing I ever said or read made the least impression on him. One evening, however, I went

again, for I heard that he was worse. The snow lay thick on the ground, up to my knees in places.

“After I started I began to think what I should read to him, and then it struck me that I had never once asked God what I should give him, and I stopped and said, ‘Lord, if Thou art sending me to this man, give me a verse for him,’ and then this came to my mind—‘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.’ Now this was one I had never used before, and I did not know where to find it. I had my Bible in my pocket, but the Bible Concordance was at home, and I always used it when I wanted to find anything. ‘What a fool I shall look,’ I said to myself, ‘when I tell him I’ve a message from God to him and can’t find it,’ and I turned back for the Concordance. ‘But, no,’ I thought, ‘if God is sending me I shall find it,’ and I went on. Still the thought of what a fool I should look made me turn back three times for that Concordance. At last I got so excited that the sweat poured off me, and I knelt down in the snow and prayed, ‘Now, Lord, let this be a token. If Thou art sending me with a message to this man, let me find it when I get there.’ When I got to the house, I said to him, ‘I’ve a message from God for you.’

“I sat down and began turning over the pages of my Bible. I was terribly excited, and the sweat rained off me. At last I saw it there in the Acts (Acts xiii. 39). I jumped up and read it out to him, ‘Be it

known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things.' 'There, *that's God's message to you.* Good night.' I never saw him again, for he died next morning, but before he died he gathered them all round him and said, 'Now, remember, *I'm saved,*' and I believe he was," and the big man's face twitched, and his eyes filled with tears.

Have *you* received this message as from God, dear reader? offering you "forgiveness of sins" and "justification from all things." If not, oh! think of the awful eternity which lies before you "where (as our Lord Himself says) their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 44). Could you plead that you had been deceived and lulled into a false security by the teaching of man, while all the time you had the Word of God within your reach? *There* God offers you a full, free, and eternal salvation on the ground of Christ's atoning death and bloodshedding, but He shows also that an eternity of endless woe awaits you if you refuse it. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3).

"Rock of Ages! hid in Thee,
I am now from judgment free,
Thou hast borne the cross and shame;
Thine the judgment, mine the blame.
Rock of Ages! hid in Thee,
Judgment hath no fears for me."

HARVEST PASSING: SUMMER ENDING.

THE shades of night were falling; a harvest moon shone calmly over the southern horizon, while a somewhat ominous thickness, portending a possible storm, hung away in the east, as I listened to the glad sounds which proclaimed the harvest home.

A long and lovely summer, ending with some days of exceptional heat and beauty, were being numbered with the past, and a harvest of grain, which, though a week of trying weather had done it some injury, was now being safely garnered, through the goodness of a faithful Creator, spoke to me of the closing of another season of temporal mercy.

My thoughts turned to the word of the prophet: "The harvest is past: the summer is ended." They came with fresh power to my memory; they suited the occasion, and suggested much more to me than the mere events which I heard and saw around me.

The flight of time is bound to raise, ever and anon, serious questions in the mind of every one. We cannot observe the lapse of seasons, or of years, without a variety of thoughts, whether of joy or else of sorrow, of hope or of fears. It is well, now and then, to pause and reflect; to take thought; to stop amid the busy course of life and consider.

The past is gone for ever! The future is unknown! The present calls for action! The harvest of 1908 is past, its summer is ended. The toil of the husband-

man has met its reward ; the sun has passed its solstice. The long dark months of winter spread themselves out before us. Never can this harvest be reaped, nor this summer gladden again. Both are passed for ever ! And we pass on too. The wheels of our little life revolve and carry us on to the end !

What did the prophet add to the words already quoted ? Solemn words, indeed, they were :—
“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved !”

“NOT SAVED !”

We read of some who were—“*Not condemned !*”

The difference is infinite. The former class had expected a human deliverance during their summer time and it had not come. The other class had availed themselves of the golden opportunity which God had granted them. They had not allowed their harvest to pass nor their summer to end without obtaining, through faith in the Son of God, deliverance from “wrath to come,” and, along with it, eternal life.

They were saved !

“*Saved*” or “*not saved.*” How infinite the difference ! To which of these classes, dear reader, do you belong ?

Your harvest is not yet past ; it is quickly passing ! Your summer is not yet ended ; it may end very soon ! Oh, the golden opportunity that lies at your very hand ! Mark, when past, it returns never more !

“Behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Now, will you not pause and consider ?

You intend to do so one day ; but remember that days and months and years have heard that resolution already, and they have fled !

How long ?

Ah, reader, you may not have another year. This may be your very last !

Perhaps not another month ! “ Boast not thyself of to-morrow. ” We would persuade you to turn to the Lord now, the living, loving Saviour, who still pleads with you, but who will soon rise up and shut to the door, and that dread event means that harvest is past, summer ended, and that all who refused to enter are shut out for ever.

“ *And we are not saved,* ” must be their wail for eternity.

J. W. S.

A KIMBERLEY FARMER'S DOOM.

THE STROKE OF GOD (Job xxxvi. 18).

“ **T**HE just shall live by faith,” but man, as a race, soon lost the knowledge of God. “ His eternal power and Godhead,” revealed in nature, were caricatured in emblems of man’s debased imagination. He lived, therefore, in darkness of unrighteousness. Light, as that of the sun, compared with the twinkling of a far distant star, now shines, for the Light of the World has been here. God’s Son has shed the full-orbed radiance from the

glowing heart of God; veiled indeed as it was in human form, yet unmistakable. God's Man took His place on earth, and as the perfect law-keeper and sanctified One walked this scene, which sin had destroyed, receiving for His life of piety and good works God's highest approbation and man's hatred, which culminated at the cross of Calvary. But when Satan and man conspired to put to death the sinless One, they but fulfilled what God in His fore-knowledge and counsel had ordained; for the rejected and scorned Man, crucified between two malefactors, was the One who said—"Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." The divinely appointed sacrifice met the divinely righteous claims of God, and made propitiation for sin, by which man is redeemed and reconciled to God.

God speaks in many ways to all men—in the animate and inanimate creation, the sidereal expanse, in voice of thunder, in fruitful seasons, in dreams upon his bed, by the mouth of His servants and in the lives of His dear children. The still small voice of the Spirit reaches men at any time and in any place. Seldom does God, however, in these days of grace and forbearance, speak out of the clouds, and use the might of heaven to confound and silence for ever the boasting and impious, and thus add one more testimony to the massing evidence of His existence; nevertheless God does so speak at times, and the awful incident which we now relate bears strong witness to the fact.

An impious farmer, living in the neighbourhood of Kimberley (S.A.), was so enraged at the destruction of his crops during a terrible storm, that he went out of his house, and pointing his gun to the heavens, declared with an oath that he would shoot the God of the thunder. He fired. The report rang out loud and clear, followed by a deep roll of thunder. The ball was lost in the immensity, but the answering shot was the shaft of the Almighty, for the lightning found its mark in the body of the blasphemous farmer. The shocked friends of the dead man buried his charred remains quickly, but, as if to mark the incident as more than what a caviller might term a coincidence, no sooner was the earth thrown over the coffin than another blinding flash came, and the newly filled grave had its contents wrested from it, and the dead body was thrown out on the veld. With trembling hands the terror-stricken men once more buried the corpse, this time without coffin, but again the lightning flashed, and the grave was robbed of its due. No longer could the terrified men stand the terrible strain, but fled as from the presence of divine wrath. Needless to say, the farmer's body was left unburied, and the jackals left but the bones to whiten on the veld.

Judgment is God's strange work—Grace His delight. Reader, you may not be like the impious farmer who was cut off in this terrible manner, but you are under like condemnation if you have not accepted God's offer of salvation. To slight God's offer is to slight God's Son. All have sinned and

come short of the glory of God. The wrath of God abides on him who believeth not. You must meet God in the privacy of your own soul and cast yourself on the finished work of Christ and receive the blessing of salvation, or meet God in the searchlight and glare surrounding the Great White Throne, when heaven and earth have passed away and God's strange work has to be done. Surely, friend, you will "kiss the Son lest he be angry," or rather, as your heart is awakened to the beauty and love of Christ, you will claim Him as your precious Saviour, your Lord, your All.

D. M. D.

"BRING THE YOUNG MAN."

(Read 2 Sam. xiii. 28-39, xiv.)

IN God's gospel love and righteousness travel side by side. God's love has not travelled one solitary inch beyond His righteousness, for His righteousness keeps pace with His love. He has given His Son, and so demonstrated His love. "The Father sent the Son to be *the Saviour* of the world" (1 John iv. 14). How could He be the Saviour? Only by death, *i.e.*, by maintaining righteousness, by maintaining the claims of God's throne.

In the scripture before us there are two things—the king's heart and the king's throne, *i.e.*, his nature

and his position. David's love outran his righteousness, for Absalom's sin was not judged, hence in chapter xv. we see the throne upset, and Absalom on it, while sin, guilt, and wickedness are rampant, because righteousness had not been established.

Never forget that "the throne is established by righteousness" (Prov. xvi. 12). Let men say what they like, and they are preaching in this day that there is no judgment of sin—remember this, God's throne is settled and established in righteousness. The name of Him who sits on that throne is Love, and to-day He is revealing His love, while His righteousness is also established. We are saved, not at the expense of righteousness, nor by the glossing over of our sin, therefore a sinner should not minimise his sin. Bring it out and confess it, or God will bring it out and judge it, and you also. "Be sure your sin will find you out." You may make light of it, but God will bring it out, if not now, when it is too late to get it pardoned. When death has hurled you into a fearful eternity it will come out. You had better get down before God and own your true state just now.

God's gospel shows what grace is, and that grace is reigning through righteousness. That gospel maintains God's character, and unfolds His heart, so that the vilest sinner can be brought into eternal glory, through the death and resurrection of the Son of God. It tells of grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life. It records the blotting out of man's sin through the sacrifice of a sinless, spotless,

holy, perfect Man, who went into death, bearing sin, and the sinner's judgment, to display the love of God, thus turning rebels into children, sinners into saints, and filling the realms of glory by-and-bye with an innumerable company of the redeemed, who will say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." The very vilest and worst of Adam's race are brought to God, to glory, and to heavenly peace, rest, and joy, in association with a risen and triumphant Saviour, who has demonstrated all that was in God's heart, when the guilt of man had been only too plainly made known.

The story before us illustrates the gospel in a contrastive way. Amnon's sin no one can condone, but Absalom's action was unwarrantable. He did not draw the sword himself, but said to his servants, "Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant" (xiii. 28). Absalom instigated murder and at once knew that his life was forfeited. Yours is forfeited likewise, not for his sin, but God charges you with sin, and "the wages of sin is death," hence the sword is hanging over your head, and you cannot tell when it will fall, and death sweep you into eternity. Forget not that your life is forfeited. The wise woman of Tekoah knew it well as she said: "We must needs die." Death lies before you, and after death the judgment.

But man has, thank God, a conscience, and it, as Shakespeare said, "doth make cowards of us

all." Hence we read in this thirteenth of 2nd Samuel:—

"But Absalom *fled*" (ver. 34). "But Absalom *fled*, and went to Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur" (ver. 37). He thought his old grandfather (see 2 Sam. iii. 3) would shelter him, and to him he went. If Joab had not gone down he would never have come back, for he knew he would be laid hold of by the executors of judgment. Doubtless he thought, "David is my father, but he is the king, and if the throne be established in righteousness, I know very well my life is forfeited, for I am guilty of murder." "So Absalom *fled*, and went to Geshur, and was there three years" (ver. 38). Now Geshur means expulsion. Man's sin and man's conscience always put him in the right place—that of expulsion.

Three years rolled by, and then we further read:—

"And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom" (ver. 39). He had a father's heart, but he could not forget that he sat on a throne. His soul longed to go forth unto Absalom. Why then did he not? He must have said to himself, "Although I am his father, he is a murderer; but I am on the throne, and I am bound to maintain the character of the throne, and if he is brought to me I must condemn him. God's word (Exod. xxi. 12; Deut. xi. 11-13) commands me to take his life." David was in a great dilemma. Love said, "Go to him"; while righteousness said, "If you fetch him you must judge him."

Then we read:—"Now Joab the son of Zeruah

perceived that the king's heart was towards Absalom” (chap. xiv. 1). Have you ever perceived that God's heart is towards you? Such is the case. It is a great thing to have right perceptions of God's love. “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him” (1 John iv. 9). God saw we were dead, and sent His Son that we might live through Him. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John iv. 10). Christ has presented a sacrifice that blots out sins. Thereby we learn God. “Hereby *perceive* we love, because he laid down his life for us” (1 John iii. 16). It is not merely that there is the love, and that it is manifested, but we are to *perceive* it, just as Joab perceived the heart of the king was towards Absalom.

God loved the world, creatures that did to His Son what Absalom did to Amnon—murdered Him. The world said, “Away with him.” What did God do? He was on the throne, and there was a sword connected with His throne. He let it lie in the scabbard, and He took His Son out of death, put Him into glory, and then sent His Spirit down to tell men of pardon through that Son of peace, forgiveness, and eternal life. God is love, and He has acted in righteousness.

The world cast His Son out, but God is sending out the testimony of pardon, peace, and forgiveness, on the ground of what His Son wrought. Jesus

seized the occasion, when man nailed Him to the tree, to do that wonderful work, the atonement, when He restored that which He took not away, and drank the bitter cup due to sinners; the cup we deserved, He drained to the very dregs. He rose from the dead, ascended to glory, and then sent down the Holy Ghost, and to-day He is bringing tidings of God's love to men and women, and offering them a present and eternal salvation.

Joab did not think much about Absalom's sin, and he had no real care for King David's character or throne. He was a wilful man without conscience, and died hanging on to the horns of the altar. Here he looks very nice. "And Joab sent to Tekoah and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead: and come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth" (xiv. 2, 3). She comes to the king with an interesting story about two sons, one of whom killed the other.

"And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth" (ver. 7).

They were quite right, according to Deut. xix.

11-13. To do away with capital punishment is going against God's Word. God's Word has made it plain.

But why did not Absalom go to one of the cities of refuge? He knew better than to go there. You see him flying, conscience making him a coward. “Where are you going, Absalom? To a city of refuge?” “No, if I run there they will drag me out. God's Word says that the man that kills with hatred shall be dragged out and die.” He goes rather to Geshur—expulsion. His sin expelled him, and at Geshur he would have stayed to the day of his death, but for the action of Joab, which was totally wrong.

The king heard the woman's story. He was very tender-hearted, but not righteous, and he had no right to say to the woman, “There shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth” (ver. 11). “And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house; and the king and his throne be guiltless” (ver. 9). She knew that the throne should be maintained. And God's throne of inviolate holiness and justice must be maintained, and if you are going to be pardoned it must be on the ground that the throne is maintained. Jesus, the holy, righteous One, suffered, “the just for the unjust.” God is now “just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,” on the ground that the judgment due to the sinner has been meted to Christ. That is the very marrow of the gospel. My best Friend is now on the throne; the One who fills it is the blessed holy Man who died for me on Calvary's tree, bearing sins,

wiping them out, and if He had not done it He could not be where He is now. Has He taken sins into heaven with Him? No, there are no sins in heaven. Christ bore them on the cross, and He has not put them back on me. On the cross he was the victim, and by the blood-shedding of the victim sin is put away. Now He is the triumphant Victor, He is gone on high, and there He sits, the glory-crowned Saviour, at God's right hand. Sin is put away, righteousness is established, love has been unfolded, the devil has been defeated, and the sinner is saved that believes in Jesus.

“And the king said, Whosoever saith aught unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more” (ver. 10). Then the woman, as it were, says, If my son is not to be judged, what about yours? What is good for my son is good for yours. “The king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not *fetch home again* his banished” (ver. 13). The devil was at the bottom of this kind of talk, for Joab was a splendid tool. The woman sees she has impressed the king, and continues, “For *we must needs die*, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he *devise means*, that his banished be not expelled from him” (ver. 14). There is no time to be lost, is what that means—let there be no delay. You do not like the thought of dying. You say, I am young. You have no lease of life. That fell archer Death, how his weapons are cutting men down to day! Morning light may find

that that old archer has sped an arrow, and the target is your heart. You had better turn to the Lord now. You are meaning some day to be Christ's—let it be now.

"Yet doth he devise means." I have told you God's means; they are the death and resurrection of His own Son for sin-defiled man, upon whom death has a claim, and on whom the sword of judgment must sooner or later fall. These are God's means—righteous, holy, God-glorifying means. Holiness is maintained, sin is judged, His throne is established, righteousness has all its claims met in the death of a holy substitute, and the devil himself dare not say there is anything unrighteous or unjust. Take care lest you suffer for your own sins in an eternity of woe. Sin and God never meet except for judgment, and there are two places where sin gets its deserts, one is the cross, where Christ redeems, cleanses, and brings the sinner to God on righteous grounds, and the other is the great white throne, where the sinner stands in his sins. Thence he and they are cast together into the lake of fire. God save you now.

If you were to cry for mercy in that day the very Son of God would have to say, "I died for you, I called, I besought you to come to me, but you despised me when you might have been saved." You will never seek mercy in a day of judgment. It is mercy now without judgment; then it will be judgment without mercy. It is mercy now based on righteousness, in which God's character is maintained, His

love displayed, and the worst sinner brought to God. In David's means love out-ran righteousness; God's means are righteousness and love keeping side by side, and these are the two pillars on which the whole structure of Christianity reposes.

"And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, *bring the young man Absalom* again" (ver. 21).

What an awful mistake! "So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem" (ver. 23).

Joab and Absalom were hail-fellow-well-met. Absalom might have said, "If I go to Jerusalem, I shall be judged for my guilt." "No," replied Joab, "the king is going to pass it over; he will not say a word about it. There is no danger, he will not judge your sin." Fatal mistake. That is what men are telling sinners now. Do not listen to the Joabs of this day. If you do not turn to God in a day when grace is reigning through righteousness, you may depend upon it you will never get to know Him, nor can you be saved when righteousness absolutely reigns and grace is silent.

The time will come when God will recall His ambassadors—withdraw His advances. When the Church is taken up, and the Holy Ghost and the evangelists taken out of the way, what will be left? Plenty of preachers, but not a bit of gospel. God's salvation is missed for ever.

Joab brought Absalom up. There are many brought to Jerusalem—they are brought to the meeting, to

church, to chapel. It will not do; Jerusalem is not Jesus. Absalom did not see the king. He was morally as badly off in Jerusalem as in Geshur. "So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face" (ver. 28). How different David's acting and God's. If God calls you He does it righteously. The Lord is now on the throne of grace, and He holds out the sceptre of mercy to the worst sinner earth can furnish, and if you draw near to Him you immediately get a kiss, like the prodigal of Luke xv., and are welcomed home. That is God's gospel.

Two years rolled by. Absalom got hardened in his sin, because when a man trifles with divine things the devil hardens him. "After all," he says, "there is nothing gained by my coming to Jerusalem," and he gets bolder in sin. "Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come" (ver. 29). Then he set Joab's barley field a-fire. If you miss God's gospel now you will be a deeper sinner before the week is out than ever before; Satan will give you a push in the wrong direction.

Thereafter Joab came to Absalom. "And Absalom answered Joab, . . . Wherefore am I come from Geshur? It had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and *if* there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me" (ver. 32). Notice well his state. There is no repentance, no self-judgment, no sense of guilt, or the awfulness of his sin, and his end is awful. The very

man that brought him up from Geshur ran three darts through him later on. Joab brought him to his death. A false gospel will bring you to eternal damnation. Why do you not turn to the Lord? If Absalom had been wise he would have owned his sin, but he was hardened. Fancy his saying, "If there be any iniquity in me." Why did he fly? He knew his iniquity. Why did he tarry three years? For fear of judgment. And now he says, I am not at all sure if murdering my brother was a bad thing after all. How God unfolds the heart of man!

"So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom" (ver. 33). That is not the kind of kiss God gives you. David's kiss was given at the expense of righteousness, and the next thing is his throne is upset by this unrepentant man. (See 2 Sam. xv.) If what man says is true, that God does not judge sin, the very throne of God would be turned upside down. No, the cross is God's answer to all such folly. He says, I love the sinner, I have judged his sin in the Person of my sinless Son, and the person that comes to me now shall not wait two years for the kiss—he will get it at once, and have the consciousness that all is forgiven and all forgotten.

"The wanderer no more will roam,
The lost one to the fold hath come,
The prodigal is welcomed home,
O Lamb of God, through Thee!"

SAVED AND SATISFIED.

LORD Jesus, Thou hast bought me,
 I'm sheltered by Thy blood,
 From judgment and destruction ;
 I've heard the Word of God.

“ When blood upon the lintel,
 And side posts can be seen,
 The destroyer will pass over,
 All safe are those within.”

What sense of peace and safety
 Now fills my heart and mind,
 The sword that brings destruction
 No entrance here can find ;
 I'm marked as Thine for ever,
 I'm “ sanctified ” by Thee,
 Thou'st made me Thine own treasure,
 Thou'st bound my heart to Thee.

The Red Sea lay before me,
 The enemy behind,
 How to escape such peril
 Could cross no human mind ;
 But Thine arm brought salvation,
 Thou rolled'st back the sea,
 Thy people then passed over
 Delivered—saved—set free.

Free to sing songs of triumph
 On Resurrection's shore,
 To praise and bless the Saviour
 Who'll reign for evermore.

Our foes have all been vanquished,
We've nothing more to fear,
From that sad house of bondage
We're now for ever clear.

And now my heart is "satisfied,"
First, "sheltered" by the blood,
For me there's no destroyer,
So says the Word of God,
I know I have been "sanctified,"
I'm set apart by Him,
Who called me out of darkness
To ever joy in Him.

I'd now show forth His praises
To every one around,
And tell them the sweet story
How I was "lost" and "found."
My heart is fully "satisfied,"
My feet are fitly shod,
He's robed me for the presence
Of God, my Father God.

He's set a feast before me,
I'm in "His house of wine";
What wonderful "salvation,"
This Saviour-God is mine.
I have His word of promise,
He'll all my need supply
Till found with Him in glory,
I praise Him by-and-by.

SEEKING AND FINDING.

“ I WILL wait until I am confirmed, and then I will be good and lead a new life.”

It was really an earnest resolution, and I thought I should have no difficulty in keeping it. I felt sure my previous failures had been due to my not having given my mind sufficiently to the matter, and not having fixed a definite time for the fresh start. So now I fixed a time, but while waiting for it to come, I was often restless and unhappy, knowing that death might come at any moment, and I was not ready to meet God.

I attended all the classes and answered the Vicar's questions correctly, and at last the confirmation day came, and the Bishop's hand was laid upon me. I was deeply impressed with the seriousness of what I was doing, yet throughout all the preparation and the confirmation itself, there was not a word to show me that I was a poor lost sinner, needing salvation.

A few weeks after my confirmation, I accepted an invitation to a large picnic, which I thoroughly enjoyed. My serious thoughts vanished, and my good resolutions were all forgotten. The world seemed bright, and I was eager to enjoy its brightness.

Several years passed away in utter carelessness. Then once again I was stirred up to see my soul's danger. I was at a dancing party and was enjoying

it greatly, when the thought came before me, "All this pleasure will pass away and I shall go on, on to my deathbed, and shall be lost at last." I saw the gaiety around, and the dancing I loved so well, as in the light of eternity, and oh! how empty and unsatisfying it seemed. I longed to be ready for death and to be able to lead others to be so too.

These thoughts now began to be much pressed on my mind, together with the fear of what my friends would say if I "turned religious." I never settled down again, and if ever I found myself in danger of doing so, I read a chapter from Revelation, telling of God's coming judgment on the world. I also grew more and more dissatisfied with my life and its pleasures, finding nothing in them but "vanity and vexation of spirit."

But I knew not how to escape from the judgment of which I read, nor how to find rest and peace, instead of the transient pleasures of the world. I attended church and took the sacrament most regularly, and over and over again, after a sermon which spoke of death and judgment, I promised God I would strain every nerve to be good in the future. The result, however, was always the same. By the time I reached home I did not feel quite so much in earnest about it, and next day both sermon and resolution were almost forgotten.

Some time previous to this, an earnest Christian had come to live with us as shepherd. He took regularly a religious periodical which he lent me one day, saying that there was a tale in it I might like to

read. I took and read it, and learned for the first time that professing Christians are divided into two classes—Christians in reality and Christians in name only, and that “*conversion*” made the greatest difference between the two. I longed to be one of these real Christians, but I did not know what this conversion could be. I watched Robert, our shepherd, closely, and felt sure he was one. I often longed to ask him what he had done, or what process he had passed through, to become one, but I never could summon sufficient courage to do so.

A sermon in Robert’s paper told me that if a soul seeking salvation would kneel down and confess every sin he had committed, he would have peace. This I endeavoured to do, and kneeling down, I confessed every sin I could remember ; but no peace came, indeed I seemed to feel further away from it than ever.

I got an impression that if I prayed earnestly, and long enough, my soul’s need would be met. I soon had the opportunity of proving that this also was a mistake.

I was out riding one day when suddenly looking up I saw that half the sun was quite black. I trembled with fear at the sight, thinking the end of the world had come ; and hastening home, I lost not a moment in falling on my knees in my room. “O God, save me ! save me !” I cried, almost in desperation, until I was too faint to kneel or to cry longer. Then, rising from my knees, I looked from my window and saw the sun in its full bright-

ness, and all going on as usual. People were talking of the great eclipse which had taken place, and I smiled to think how foolish I had been. But I had learned that prayer, however earnest and prolonged, could not save me.

Shortly after this, a friend, whom I did not often see, came in unexpectedly to tea. I knew that she was a Christian, and I felt I must not let this opportunity pass, or I might never have another. When alone with her, bursting into tears, I said, "Oh! M——, I want to be saved! I want to be a Christian like you!"

She laid her hand upon my shoulder, and I am sure her heart was going up with thankfulness to God. I told her all that I had been doing in trying to get peace.

"And what does *God's Word* say you must do?" she asked quietly. I was silent. She asked again, "Cannot you think of any verse?"

I could only think of one, which I repeated, "What must I do to be saved? . . . Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 30, 31). "Does that say that *you* have anything to do?" she asked, to my great surprise. "Can you think of any other?"

I quoted John iii. 16, though very incorrectly—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"And does *that* say *you* have anything to do?" she again inquired.

"But I must do *my* part," I argued.

"*Your* part is to believe what God says, that Christ died for *you*, a sinner."

My own ideas seemed turned upside down. I was surprised that it had never occurred to me to look into the Bible to see what I must do. There I should have found God's wonderful salvation for the sinner set forth in plain unmistakable words—"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that *through this Man (Christ Jesus)* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and *by him* all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Even the verse I had just quoted showed that God, instead of being the hard Judge I had thought, had "*so loved the world,*" &c. But everything still seemed enveloped in mist.

I now spoke to Robert, who greatly rejoiced to hear that I thought of these things. "You must just trust in Jesus, miss," he said. So I tried to "believe" and "trust," but I had no peace, and felt more miserable than before.

I often had talks with Robert after this, but owing to his little knowledge of the Scriptures, the tendency of his conversation was to occupy me with my own feelings and strivings, instead of showing me that all I needed had already been done *for* me by Christ, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24). He also lent me old religious books which I studied hour after hour on my knees, vainly trying to work myself into the state of mind they described.

“Have you got the blessing, miss?” Robert would ask, but I could only shake my head.

“Ah well, you must just *wait* for it, it will be sure to come!” Then he tried to encourage me by saying, “I like to see souls stop a good time in pickle, for they value the truth all the more when they do get hold of it.”

So I *waited*, waited with intense longing, expecting the “blessing” would come in the form of some inward change, or that some day when I was in a prayerful mood, I should be able to grasp it by a mighty effort of faith.

I was looking for peace before I had rested on that which alone could give it—the death and blood-shedding of Christ. In other words, I was expecting my thirst to be quenched before I had put the water to my lips.

However, I gradually began to see that salvation is the result of the work of Christ alone, and that man’s efforts have no part whatever in it—that God, in virtue of Christ’s atoning death and blood-shedding on Calvary’s cross, is offering full forgiveness of sins to every one who turns to Him. All the sinner’s part is to believe and appropriate for himself what has been accomplished for him at such infinite cost. Still I could not see yet that

“All the *fitness* He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.”

This I was taught through the visit of an aunt. I had always felt much ashamed of her old-fashioned dress, and had never willingly been seen outside the

door with her, but now I resolved that I would not only go to the station, but would walk up and down the platform with her before all; *then*, I thought, *surely God will give me peace*. The resolve had scarcely been made when clearly and distinctly, as if spoken by a human voice, came before me the words

“*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thyself I cling.*”

I had fully proved that I could *do nothing*, and now at last I saw that God *required nothing* from me save that I should believe His Word, which declared that “Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*” (1 Tim. i. 15). I was a sinner and therefore He came to save *me*. Simply relying thus on this precious fact, I saw I must be saved.

But I had no joy as I had expected. Indeed, the only “inward change” was, that I felt the wickedness of my own heart in a way I had never done before. I passed about a week in a state of restless conflict. My mind seemed divided into two parts, the one crying—“I cannot be saved, or I should feel different from this.” Then the other part would insist—“I *am* saved because God’s Word says that ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*,’ and, ‘though he slay me, yet will I trust him.’”

Soon after, I read the verse, “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, *cleanseth us from all sin*” (1 John i. 7), and as its precious meaning flashed into my mind, I knew that though I was not clean

in my own sight, yet in *God's sight* the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed *me* from all sin.

And now my cup of blessing seemed to run over. I can never forget the joy I felt, as looking round on what seemed a new world, I repeated the lines which so exactly expressed what I realised.

"I stand upon a *Rock*
With *sunlight* in my soul."

I knew I was saved *for ever*, for Christ had said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28).

Reader, here is the experience of one whom God brought "out of darkness into his marvellous light." I do not ask if your experience has been the same in detail, for few in these days of clear gospel preaching can plead such ignorance of the simple terms of salvation. But have you reached the same end? Are *your feet* on the *Rock*? If not, oh! "*how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*" (Heb. ii. 3).

F. A.

CONDEMNED ALREADY.

THE court-house is crowded; the judge has closed his charge to the jury. The case has been one of murder, and with breathless interest the verdict is awaited. After some time the jurors return to their places, and the verdict—guilty—is given by the foreman. A solemn hush

falls on the crowded court as the judge pronounces the death sentence, adding, as is usually done, "Prisoner at the bar, I give you so many weeks (or days, as the case may be) to make your peace with God."

How many a trial has closed in this manner, and how little the many spectators in the various court-houses, or the readers of the daily papers, appear to realise that they too have been tried, and that their trial is over. Yes, my unsaved reader, *your trial is over*, your case has been tried at that court from the decision of which there is no appeal—the bar of God. The verdict has been announced—"guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). You have been "weighed in the balances and been found wanting" (Dan. v. 27). You are "condemned already" (John iii. 18). Sentence has been passed, the death sentence, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). "The second death the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 14, 15). You are at present, as it were, in the condemned cell, awaiting the execution of the sentence.

Clear as a clarion note rings the voice of Him who will judge the world in righteousness—"It is finished." He tells you not to make your peace with God. Nay, to the door of the condemned cell the glad tidings are brought, "It is finished." Peace has been made, made by Christ the Lord, made more than eighteen hundred years ago, made by the blood of His cross, made for *you*, an enemy. Wondrous tidings: flinging wide the prison doors, proclaiming liberty to the captives.

We were at enmity—not *God*. His heart of love yearned over those whom, in His righteousness, He banished from His presence. He spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, and He it was who made peace by the blood of His cross.

The message has gone forth. Far and wide the voices of the messengers proclaim the glad tidings. Peace has been made. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 38). In village and hamlet, in town and city, in hall and in the public streets, the good news sounds forth, "Liberty to the captives." But strange, marvellously strange, is the sight witnessed by the messengers. Instead of a rush of eager souls, anxious to avail themselves of the pardon offered, it is but the few who believe the glad tidings, and leave the condemned cell.

What strange madness possesses these deluded souls? More earnestly rise the voices of the messengers, "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" (2 Cor. v. 20). Knowing the terror of the Lord they persuade men, but oftentimes turn away weeping, on account of the folly of those who refuse the liberty proclaimed to them; some smiling, some mocking, some in anger, refuse the proffered pardon. How can such madness be explained? *They are blind*. They know not that the walls of a condemned cell surround them, they know not that the day for the

execution of their sentence is fixed—they know none of these things, for “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. iv. 4). “The gospel is hid—hid to them that are lost” (2 Cor. iv. 3).

Tinsel and gilt have been arranged so as to conceal the prison walls. Instruments of music, and objects of art and science have been provided to make the time pass pleasantly. Various pursuits and occupations are encouraged by the prince of this world to lull their souls to sleep, and blind their minds, until the stroke of righteous judgment falls, and then, *too late, they see*. The door of mercy, long open, is at last closed, the proclamation of pardon has been withdrawn, the bearers of the glad tidings have been summoned home. Too late they see it all—*too late for ever*.

Reader, you are guilty, condemned already. This world is, so to speak, the condemned cell: its god, Satan, ever seeks to blind the minds of them that believe not, to lull them to sleep with his varied opiates—pleasure, business, wealth, or even forms of religion—until the day of grace closes, and their eternal doom is fixed.

Are you willing to be thus duped? As a messenger of Him who made “peace by the blood of his cross,” I proclaim the glad tidings to you, and beseech you, ere it be too late, “be reconciled to God.” “Through this man is preached unto you the

forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 38). A Saviour's heart of love awaits your cry of need, a full free pardon awaits your confession of sin. Instead of the danger of the condemned, the doom of the lost, the lake of fire, you can have the liberty of the redeemed, and the Father's welcome to the Father's house. Haste: delay not. Your soul's salvation is at stake. Ere it be too late secure the offered pardon. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). Reader, it is worthy of your acceptance. Sinner, He came to save. Be you steeped in sin, yea, if the reader lie in the condemned cell of one of the gaols of this land, guilty of the foulest murder on record, *to you* is the word of this salvation sent, *to you* is preached the forgiveness of sins.

See that you refuse not Him that speaks. See that you neglect not His great salvation. The prison door is open. Liberty, pardon, and peace are proclaimed through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wilt thou go free? Is the pardon purchased at such infinite cost not worthy of thine acceptation? Surely it is, and He who did it is all worthy of your everlasting praise.

"I've found Him meet my every need,
That He a Saviour is indeed;
Each rising want has been supplied
Whene'er to Him I have applied;
He is of grace the treasury,
All fulness dwells in Him for me."

THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE.

COME with me to the bedside of an old man in a workhouse infirmary. The sands of life are fast running out; his earthly history is drawing to a close; the thin veil which hides from view the other world will soon be torn aside. He is a man of culture, education, and refinement. Once he was surrounded by every earthly comfort. Money, friends, a happy home, a loving wife, children's prattle, all combined to fill his cup of happiness. Time rolled on. His circumstances changed gradually, one by one his earthly joys faded away. He lost wife, children, home, money, health. One light after another was quenched, until left alone in poverty he had at last to seek the refuge of the workhouse.

A servant of the Lord visited him. "Poor man," he exclaimed.

With a bright face, he replied, "Poor? I am not poor, I possess the unsearchable riches of Christ, and *that* none can take from me!"

We will leave the workhouse and enter a hospital. A man has been brought in, knocked down by a passing train, both legs cut off at the thigh. The surgeon said, "I am sorry to tell you, my dear fellow, you have not more than fifteen minutes to live." He burst forth in song—

"Hallelujah! 'tis done,
I believe in the Son,
I am saved by the blood of the crucified One."

A few years before that man was the terror of the whole district, an adulterer, a blasphemer, a profane swearer.

Some servants of God had been preaching in a tent. The old, old story of redeeming love was told forth. On the last night of the preaching this man went to the tent. The preacher gave a soul-stirring address on those touching words, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

"If there is any salvation for such a wretch as I am, I want it," said the listener. He stayed to talk to the preacher. Before they parted, he surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ. From that moment he was a changed man. Drink, tobacco, adultery, and blasphemy were things of the past. The change was manifest to the whole district, where he had previously been a terror. Surely these are witnesses to the triumph of the grace of God.

Let your mind travel back two thousand years. It is a great public festival in Jerusalem. The city is crowded with men of every nationality. An event is taking place, the far-reaching effect of which will be felt throughout the whole universe. Amid the taunts and jeers of the populace, the Son of God is being led through the streets of the city to be crucified.

Outside the city walls three crosses are erected, and on the central one they place the Son of God, a malefactor on either side. Beneath that cross are gathered the representatives of every class—priests, scribes, and elders from the religious world, Roman soldiers, and the degraded mob, unite in mocking

and deriding the Son of God. The two malefactors also join the railing crowd and mock the holy Sufferer. The only response it draws from His lips is, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

All at once one of the malefactors rebukes his fellow, saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." Having thus condemned himself, and justified Jesus, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." What a marvellous change has been wrought in a few moments. In the One hanging beside him the thief discerns a glorious King. In vision he sees Him no longer crucified, spat upon, mocked, but coming in all the power and majesty of His kingdom. He asks for a place in that scene of glory—to be remembered then.

The Lord answers, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." That thief was taken straight from a malefactor's gibbet into the paradise of God, the first witness to the triumph of grace after redemption was accomplished.

Reader, let me ask you, in the presence of these witnesses to the triumphs of grace, are *you* one of its subjects? Do you know aught of the "grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men"? The subjects of grace can say, when all earthly comforts are gone, "Thou remainest." If death comes, it will enable you to cry, "Hallelujah," and when Christ comes in His kingdom He will bring you to share it with Him. Grace begun will end in glory.

LIVING WATER.

A FEW years ago two young Englishmen were out in South America on a hunting tour. They were in the habit of setting out very early in the mornings (as towards mid-day the heat was very great), having with them a few natives, whose duty it was to go into the dense bush and beat the game out into the more open parts, where the sportsmen were on the alert with their guns.

One fine morning they started as usual, with the prospect of a good day's sport before them. Having gone a few miles into the country, the natives turned aside into the dense part of the forest to endeavour to beat the game out; and in this way were very successful as the game came out pretty freely.

How our young friends did enjoy the sport—shooting away to their hearts' content; in fact so engrossed were they in the sport that the time was altogether forgotten. The heat becoming intense, they decided to recall the native servants, and one of them gave a loud halloo—the appointed signal for them to return. Then propping their guns against a tree they threw themselves down on the ground to await the arrival of the beaters. The heat was now so great they began to feel terribly thirsty, but they had nothing to drink. Again and again they hallooed, but to no purpose. Thoroughly exhausted,

they threw themselves down again on the ground: their thirst was terrible. Oh, what would they not have given for a drink of water! At last the natives returned. Having gone far into the bush, they had not heard the signals, but came back on account of the heat; and as soon as they saw the state of the sportsmen, one of them climbed up the tree that partly sheltered our friends from the excessive heat of the sun, and came quickly down again with some large green things, which he cut open, and there, to the delight of the thirsty men, came out cool, clear water. How eagerly they drank—how welcome was the refreshing draught!

Dear reader, *have you ever been thirsty?* Not for the same water they longed for, as “whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again” (John iv. 13), but for “Living Water”?

You may be going on with all that this world can give, you may be drinking deeply of its unsatisfying waters, but you will “thirst again.” Again I ask, are you soul-thirsty? If so, listen: “I will give *unto him that is athirst*, of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev. xxi. 6).

We read in Luke xvi. of a man who drank deeply of the pleasures of this world, and in eternity he *thirsted for a drop of water*, but oh, solemn thought, he thirsted in a place where no water is. “In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham: have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of

his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke xvi. 23, 24).

Dear thirsty soul, listen: "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. lv. 1).

J. A. D.

GOD'S LAMB.

IT is a misconception of the spirit of the gospel to say that God had to be reconciled to man. God required that there should be a propitiation; but, blessed be His name, He provided it Himself. How it must have arrested the ear of John's disciples when John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." God in His infinite grace removes the distance that sin has caused, and which Cain failed to do, though the sin-offering was at the door, or at hand. The sinner was bound to remove the distance, to make restitution for the offence he had committed, but he could not. God then repairs the distance from His own side. He thus showed how He desired to be on terms. He could not forego His holiness, but yet His love is so great that He gives His Son, and He sets Him forth as a propitiation (a mercy-seat really) through faith

in His blood. If I had incurred the penalty of death for breaking the most beautiful work my father had made, surely in righteousness I must suffer. But the father repairs the broken work through another, because of his desire that I should be on good terms with him. This in a feeble measure sets forth what God has done. Man, God's most beautiful work, has incurred death. God cannot forego His righteousness, and man cannot repair the damage he has done. God then in His grace sends His Son. It is now God's Lamb, not, as under the law, the sinner's Lamb.

J. B. S.

ETERNITY--WHERE?

THIS is a query of unspeakable importance for every soul of man. Eternity lies before us all. Of that be sure, my reader. Where will you spend it? is the question. Pause a moment, at the end of this year of grace 1908, and quietly, gravely, seriously ponder this momentous subject.

If you regard the subject as distasteful, that only proves that you are the person who of all should not fling it lightly aside. It is too serious, far too important to be thus treated. Another day may find you gone from earth into eternity. Where will you spend it? Say not that no one can tell. Such is not true. God has spoken, and the wise listen to His words. Whether you are among the wise, you

know, I do not, but I would fain lead you to be such, if unheeding folly has marked your days until now.

Whatever you may think about eternity, it is certain that you will spend it somewhere, for you are an immortal being. Man has sprung from God (Gen. ii. 7). He is His offspring. Heathen poets truly asserted it, and the Holy Spirit confirmed the truth of their statement. "Certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring," said Paul to the Athenians. "Forasmuch then as *we are the offspring of God*" (Acts xvii. 28, 29), is the clenching testimony of God's Spirit. Every being partakes of the nature of which it is begotten. Sprung from the "eternal God" (Deut. xxxiii. 27), man possesses a nature that, of necessity, corresponds in duration to its source. That source is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. lvii. 15). Consequently, eternity lies before man. Where in eternity shall he be found? is the question that sin has raised.

Had man not sinned he would have lived in the enjoyment of God on earth, and not died. But "by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Now you have to face the sin-question, and its consequences. They are very serious, affecting men both for time and eternity, since "it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). That verse relates to time and eternity. In time, death overtakes man, for he is a sinner, and "the wages of

sin is death," and cut off from earth he passes into eternity. What then?—the judgment. What does that mean? The second death. What is that? Let us hear God's answer. . .

"I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it . . . and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne (R.V.); and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death, the lake of fire (R.V.),*" (Rev. xx. 11-14). The judgment of necessity results in the second death, and that God says is the lake of fire, for we further read, "But the fearful (the timid), and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; *which is the second death*" (Rev. xxi. 8). Appalling future!

No grave person can read these words without being deeply impressed thereby. But, you ask, is that the future of all men? No, but it is that of the timid—those afraid to confess Christ—and the unbelieving. Notice, these head the list of the lost. Not the grossly immoral, or openly profane. What a warning to those who have often heard the gospel

and been afraid to confess the Saviour whom they know they should believe and acknowledge!

Dear reader, where will you spend eternity? With the pitiful company here described? God forbid! I have good news for you. Though this terrible future is the legitimate and righteous portion of a man who dies in his sins, you need not so die, and, if you are wise, you will not spend eternity after this sort. Though death and judgment be man's due, God has stepped in, *after* his sin, and *before* the final judgment thereof, stepped in marvellously, in the Person of His Son, who has, by His atoning death on the cross, opened a way of escape from judgment for every soul of man that will believe and confess Him.

Listen to this testimony: "Now once in the end of the world hath he (Christ) appeared to *put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself. And AS it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to BEAR THE SINS OF MANY" (Heb. ix. 26-28). After you and I had sinned and before the day of judgment Christ has borne the sins of many—taken the consequences, both the judgment and the death they deserved—and the one believing in Him is freed from these consequences.

Nothing could be more blessed than God's way of salvation for lost sinners. This is it: "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 own love toward us in that, while we were yet

sinner, Christ died for us. Much more, being now justified by the blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 6-9).

Wrath, God's righteous wrath against sin, is expressed in the judgment of the great white throne. Whoever believes now in Jesus "shall be saved from wrath through him." Thank God for these tidings! The eternity of Revelation xxi. 8 the believer will never know. His eternity is after a different order. Mark it well. "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we watch or sleep, we should live together with him" (1 Thess. v. 9, 10).

I once asked a dying lassie in Edinburgh, "Where will you spend eternity, Lizzie?" Her answer was lovely, as she immediately replied, "*In heaven, with Jesus!*" She had been converted two years before, had never had a doubt as to the Lord's love to her, since He had died for her, and eternity for her was to be with Him—the right Person—in His home—heaven—the right place. Happy child! She passed away rejoicing in the thought of seeing His blessed face, and being for ever *with Him*.

Again let me ask you, my friend, "Where will you spend eternity?" If you have not yet settled that question, settle it to-day. To-morrow may be all too late. Forget not that—

"Where the tree falls, there will it lie,
As a man lives so will he die,
As a man dies so must he be
All through the day of eternity."

Come to Jesus now, just as you are. Believe on Him simply, and confess Him boldly. "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 to salvation" (Rom. x. 9, 10). You get *right with God* in your heart by faith, and then *right with man* by your mouth, in an honest confession of the Lord Jesus Christ. The man who is right with God thus, in time, will spend eternity with Him and His Son, and, *vice versa*, for "He that believeth on the Son **HATH EVERLASTING LIFE**; and he that believeth not the Son *shall not see life*; but the wrath of God *abideth on him*" (John iii. 36).

May the Lord grant that the reader may assuredly find himself in the top half of this verse. It has no middle. The top half spells **ETERNITY WITH CHRIST**; the bottom half, **ETERNITY WITHOUT CHRIST**. Faith secures the top half.

To each believer would I say, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, himself shall (R. V.) make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet. v. 10, 11).