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The Gospel Messenger.

MY CONVERSION IN 1883.

I AM glad to write about the wonderful way the Lord brought me out of darkness into the light of the glorious gospel. I hope it may help some one, teach some one, warn some one. I should like to think I had helped if but one.

The long and terrible suffering I myself went through for it, needs not to be, for it is only a step to Jesus. He has said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." I wish I had known this, but I had been brought up in High Church Romish ritual, false doctrine, confession to priests, keeping all the fasts and attending Mass. I believed it all, for it was all real to me then. I was very earnest, believing it was God's way of salvation, and I tried very hard to do right.

But my religion did not bring me much happiness. Often I was very much afraid I should not hold out to the end and might never grow good enough for heaven. Some days it was all disappointment, when I felt I had not been good. When I thought I had been, I was happier, because I expected then that God looked on me in love. But, of course, this did not last. I soon had to go again to the priest for confession, and was very careful to do whatever he

gave me to do for penance. I quite believed I was forgiven after the priest had pronounced the absolution, with his hands crossed on my head.

I went on thus year after year, till, in 1882, I believe it was, when the Lord opened my eyes to see my condition was a lost one. I remember it was a very cold winter, with sharp frost and snow. A poor wretched woman came to the door with holders and toasting forks to sell. She said her husband was ill and they had no fire. Her story made my heart ache, I wondered if it could be true, so I promised to call and see them. I did so, and found it quite true. The old man was very ill and had no fire or food. I said I would try and see their clergyman, and get him to help them. It was Sunday morning and they were quite near the church. The clergyman was a stranger to me. I had never been inside the church or into that part of Oxford before. As soon as I got inside I could see it was a very different church to any I had been used to go to, and when I heard the clergyman preaching *free* salvation I held my breath in wonder.

I thought, could this be a Church of England, as the clergyman went on to tell the people that all those who were not saved might come to Christ, just as they were. If they had come into church that morning with all their sins on them, they might go out at that same door washed white in the blood of the Lamb, forgiven all sin, pardoned, set free, so that as God looked on them, through Jesus, He saw no stain of sin on them, because Jesus had died for

them—instead of them. He was saying to every anxious soul, to every troubled heart, “Come unto me, and I will give you rest,” and “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” The teacher begged them to take the Lord at His word, and accept at once there and then free and full forgiveness. He told them God would give them His Holy Spirit, power to live a new life, a life of faith, a holy life, a happy life.

Oh, I ought to have been glad and thankful, but I was not. I was very angry, and so sorry for all those poor things who were, as I thought, being so deceived; and as I looked from one to another, they seemed to be drinking it all in and believing it. This made me more angry, for I was saying to myself, How dare he tell them they may take God’s forgiveness in a moment of time like that. Afterwards he prayed, using his own words, not out of the Prayer-book, which I thought was very wrong in church.

When the people went out I stayed to speak to him. I am ashamed to think of what I said to him. I told him what I thought, also that he did not get such teaching out of the Word of God. He was very gentle and patient, and, touching my shoulder, he asked me to come with him to the vestry and he would prove to me, out of God’s Word, that what he had said was quite true. He found several scriptures and read the verses out. I told him that was not what they meant. I turned to go out, making up my mind that never, no never, would I go into that church again.

Then I remembered the poor old man and woman I had come to see him about. I am sure I did not deserve that he should trouble himself about anything I wanted him to do, but he very kindly promised to go and see them and do all he could for them, which he did.

I went back to my work, trying to forget what I had heard, but I could not. His words would keep coming back to me. One moment they made me feel angry, another moment I was full of pity for the poor things who believed it, another wishing it were true. I thought it would be so easy just to accept pardon like that, and to go to bed with nothing between my soul and God; so easy to tell it all out to Jesus, instead of having to write every sin in a book, as I had to do, and then get into bed worried in case I had forgotten any, or had made light of them, believing as I did, and as I had been taught to believe, that *only* what I wrote down and confessed at my next confession would be forgiven, that every sin forgotten or missed out would come against me in the last great and awful day.

When the next Sunday came, I thought I must go, just once more, to hear what that man would dare to say. That day I did not feel angry, but wretched, I cried all the way home, and far into the night. Next day I wrote to my priest, who answered by return saying I was very wrong to go into such a church, the teaching was all a mistake, and I must never think of doing so again.

But I got more and more unhappy. I tried staying

away, but, alas! I felt no better, so I went again, and the more I went the more sure I became that it was Bible teaching, and that all I had been taught all through my life was wrong, and would never bring me safety, peace, happiness, or real forgiveness.

Then the devil said: "Ah! how do you know this is right either? Perhaps in a few years you will feel all slipping away under your feet, just as you do now about the ritual. This new religion is no better, and will not give you rest of soul any more than the other."

Oh, I was worried. I could not sleep or eat, and my work was such a trouble, and all went wrong, for I could not give my mind to it. Every time I heard that clergyman I became more and more sure all he said was true—it was God's Word—also that it was for me; but I seemed to have no faith, no power to grasp it—I could not receive, or make it mine. All my friends were Ritualists, so I could get no help or even sympathy from them. No one understood me, neither did I understand myself, except that I was wretched.

The clergyman was all that was kind, and good, and patient, always saying, "No priest is necessary; take God at His word." Then he tried telling me what God's Word said of those who would not believe. At last I said to him, "If you heard to-morrow that I died to-night you would say I was lost—that I had died unforgiven?"

He replied, "You will not die to-night." I said, "How do *you* know that? Are we not likely to die any

time?" He took his Bible and read God's promise: "A bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench" (Matt. xii. 20). Again, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6).

He then gave me a little book called "Let go the Twig." I wished him good-night, and left, But poor me, I was just worn out. My body was tired for want of food and sleep, and tired of praying, my heart sick with disappointment, my brain tired with thinking. I felt no one knew what I was really suffering, and no one cared.

Whenever I tell of my conversion I leave this one evening out, it was too sad, too dreadful. I cannot even now talk about it, but I will write it, as it may have weight with some who are being taught the ritual faith.

That night as I tried to get home, the words of the priest came back to me over and over again: "By the power committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy offences, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and now I realised that, after all, they had not been put away, not absolved, but they all returned on my head with crushing power.

I got as far as the bridge, and I leant against it to rest, feeling I could walk no further. In a moment, like a flash of lightning, the devil put before me this awful thought, "You will worry yourself to death or lose your reason. Just one leap over the bridge, one short struggle, and you will be at rest then." I turned and looked into the black water, but just at

that instant I remembered the dear babies at home who would be wanting their food, and no one could fill my place to them, they would be crying for their nurse, they would care—and a great love for my darlings filled me. It was a call to duty, and I started again and got back to my children—their love saved me just then.

Late that night when I was ready for bed I read my little book “Let go the Twig.” This is it:—

“I wish I could relate to you, as it was once told to me, an account of a lady in Scotland, and of the way in which her doubts and anguish were removed. It was during a revival, in which several known to this lady had been brought to Christ. Among the rest, a particular friend of hers had been converted. Feeling some measure of concern herself, she went to a servant of Christ who was labouring in the place, and told him she was unhappy. He replied that he was glad to hear it. Astonished at this, and somewhat offended also, she told the minister what efforts she had made to obtain salvation; how she had read and prayed, but still seemed as far from peace as ever. He told her that it was not by anything she could do, but by what Christ had long since done and finished on the cross, that she was to be saved. All seemed dark and mysterious to her, and she left; resolving, however, to call on her friend, who had recently been converted. She did so, and asked her what she had done to obtain the peace of which she spoke. ‘Done! I have done nothing! It is by what Christ has done that I have found peace with God.’ The lady replied that this was what the minister had just been telling her, but that she could not understand it.

“She went home with her distress greatly increased; and shutting herself up in her room, she fell on her knees, resolving that she would never rise till her soul found rest and peace. How long her agony continued I could not say;

but nature became quite exhausted, and she sank to slumber. While thus asleep, she dreamed that she was falling over a frightful precipice, but caught hold of a single twig, which overhung the abyss beneath. By this she hung, crying aloud for help, when a voice from below, which she knew to be the voice of Jesus, bade her let go the twig, and He would receive and save her. 'Lord, save me!' she cried; but the voice again answered, 'Let go the twig.' She felt as though she dare not leave hold, but continued crying, 'Lord, save me!' At last, the One below, whose voice she heard, but whom she did not see, said, in the most tender, solemn tones, '*I cannot save you, unless you let go the twig.*' Self-desperate, she let it go, fell into the arms of Jesus, and the joy of finding herself there awoke her. The lesson taught her by her dream was not lost upon her. She perceived that Jesus was worthy of all her trust, and that not only did she need no twig of self-dependence, but that it was holding to the twig that kept her away from Christ. She let all go, and found Jesus all-sufficient."

This narrative brought light and comfort to my soul. I got into bed and went to sleep. The first thought on waking was, "Oh, I am glad I let go that twig last night," and began praising God. Then I remembered it was a book I had read, and perhaps, after all, I had not let go. Then I said, "Well, if I did not, I will now," and I got out of bed and down on my knees. Soon my joy was as great as my misery before, but I was quite sure all was forgiven. I knew I was washed in the blood of Jesus. He was dear and precious to me then, and He has been dear and precious to me ever since, and, what is more, I *know* I am dear to Him.

I have had many dark days since then, but never

had a doubt as to my safety or pardon. I know I am His for ever and for ever, and I want to be His, given up to Him with every power of mind and body. Yes, all I have, and all I am, and all He can make of me—I am His for life, or death, or service. I want just to live for His glory.

I hope every one who reads this will breathe a prayer that He who in mercy brought me out of such darkness into His glorious light will use me to guide some others into the path of peace, for this is my heart's desire.

E. F.

HAVE YOU THANKED HIM?

“**D**O you ever read your Bible?”

“Oh, yes, every day I have my chapter, and I always go to church.”

“Did you ever read John iii.?”

“Oh, very often, that is a favourite chapter of mine.”

“Could you tell me what verse 16 says?”

“I think I can: ‘God so loved the world.’”

“That includes you then, does it not?”

“Of course it does—‘that he gave his only begotten Son.’”

“God gave His Son?”

“Yes.”

“All right, go on.”

“‘That whosoever believeth in him.’”

“What do you understand by whosoever?”

"Why, I suppose it just means anybody, everybody."

"Exactly, that is just what it means. Well, what else?"

"'Believeth in him.'"

"Then it does not say, 'Whosoever reads a chapter every day?'"

"No, sir."

"Whosoever goes to church?"

"No."

"Whosoever says their prayers?"

"No, it says, 'Whosoever believeth in him.'"

"What else?"

"'Should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"

"Now, that verse says, 'God so loved the world.' You are neither angel nor devil, but part of that world, so that you are the object of God's love. And to give expression to His love, 'he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Now, do you really believe that?"

"Oh, yes, I do believe that with all my heart."

"You believe that God loved you?"

"Yes, I do."

"And gave His Son?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have got nothing to do but to believe, and you shall never perish, but have everlasting life?"

"Yes, I suppose so, sir."

"Well now, be honest, did you ever thank Him for it?"

“Oh, yes, I thank God every day.”

“I do not doubt you do. You thank God for rest, and food, and raiment, and shelter, and health, and strength, and all these temporal blessings.”

“Yes, I do that every day.”

“Quite so, you thank God for His mercies and gifts, but did you ever get away into some quiet spot and go down upon your knees and thank God for ‘his unspeakable gift’? (2 Cor. ix. 15). No one will thank a person for a gift if they have not taken it. And surely if any one offers you a gift, it is the least you can do to take it, and thank the giver for it, unless you mean to insult him. You really believe that God gave His Son, and yet you have never thanked Him for His gift?”

“Well, really, sir, I must confess I never saw the thing that way before. I have, indeed, thanked God for His temporal gifts, but, I feel ashamed to say it, never for His unspeakable gift.”

“Then you have never taken the gift, and therefore are not saved, or you would have thanked Him—you could not help it. Oh, to think of God’s wondrous love-gift to this poor guilty, sin-stricken world, and you have heard it, and know it, and yet, as one of that world, you have never taken that gift, and thanked the Giver. All the while you have been rejecting the gift, you have been nearing hell, deluded by Satan with the thought that you must pray, and go to church, and such like things, ere you could get saved. You have got very near to hell, just on the brink, another step or two and then it could have

been said of you as it is said of the rich man in Luke xvi., he died ; he was buried ; he lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment. Oh, what a mercy you are not over that precipice, and God still holds out His gift.

“He asks no tears, no prayers, no church-going. No. He asks nothing ; He offers something—His Son. ‘He gave His Son.’ Nineteen hundred years ago the *sin* question was opened up and settled on the cross (Heb. ix. 26). Now the *Son* question is opened up, and whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Will you take God’s Son as God’s gift to you ? He talks to you to-day, not about your sins, but about His Son. ‘He gave his Son.’ Jesus died for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18). His blood meets our sins. God has raised Christ. He looks at Christ. Will you ? He is satisfied with Christ and His work. Will you be ? He speaks of Christ and offers you Christ ? Will you accept Him ?

“The gift of God is 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.’ Again, ‘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. 11-13).”

“Well, sir, I never saw the thing like that before, and I do believe that God gave His Son for me, and I think I can go and thank God for His gift.”

“Then what about your sins now ?”

“They are all gone.”

“ How do you know that ? ”

“ Because Christ atoned for them when He died. He bore my sins in His own body on the tree.”

“ And He had them on the cross ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ And He is not now on the cross, nor in the grave, but on the throne, and the sins are—— ? ”

“ All gone.”

“ And the proof is—— ? ”

“ He is up there without them, thank God.”

The Lord grant that this paper may just meet the need of the reader, if still unsaved, showing him the love of God, the finished work of Christ, and the way to make eternal life his own.

W. E.

“ I MADE A GREAT SIN.”

“ **T**HE Lord will never forgive me, He never can ; I have cast Him out, and I am sure He will cast me out. He never can forgive me, I am sure ! ” The speaker was a middle-aged lady of foreign birth, who had just heard me preach the gospel in a large hall in the North of England, some years ago.

The subject before us that evening had been the Paschal lamb of Exodus xii. The question had been raised whether the blood on the lintel and the lamb roast with fire were, or were not, to be rightly viewed as figures of Christ and His atoning work.

In order to prove the object of the Spirit of God, in thus telling us of Israel's redemption by blood, I had unfolded in detail the fourfold testimony to Christ, as the Paschal Lamb, which the New Testament gives us.

The first witness was John the Baptist, of whom it is written, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John i. 29, 30). If, in the type of Exodus xii., a lamb were necessary, here, indeed, was manifestly seen the anti-type, the Lamb of God come into this world to take away the sin thereof. The Baptist marked out Jesus in this way as God's Lamb.

The second witness was the apostle John, who, called by the Lord from his usual avocation as a fisherman, had followed Him in His pathway, and at length saw Him die. He it is who says, "Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A BONE OF HIM SHALL NOT BE BROKEN" (John xix. 32-36).

The quotation here of Exodus xii. 46, "neither shall ye break a bone thereof," indisputably shows that the type found its full answer in Jesus, when hanging on the cross. His bones were not broken. As to this, another witness, David, had given confirmatory prophetic testimony when he wrote, "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken" (Ps. xxxiv. 20). But, though His bones were not broken, out of His pierced side came blood and water—the blood that makes atonement God-ward, the water that carries the sense of purification and cleansing man-ward.

A third witness we found in the apostle Paul, who wrote so emphatically, "FOR EVEN CHRIST OUR PASSOVER IS SACRIFICED FOR US" (1 Cor. v. 7). This unmistakably identifies the Passover lamb with the Person of the Lord Jesus, so that whatever lesson the type might carry the full answer thereto is found in Christ.

Yet another witness we found in the person of Simon Peter, fisherman and apostle, who, after years of company with Christ, later wrote to his brethren, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers: but with the precious blood of Christ, as of A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH AND WITHOUT SPOT: who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith

and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. i. 18-21). No language could more clearly identify the type of Exodus xii. with Christ as being the antitype. Redemption, not by silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, was Peter's point, and that blood flowing from a "lamb without blemish and without spot," the very language used of the pass-over lamb in Exodus xii.

It having been made abundantly plain that Exodus xii. was a striking figure of the Person and death of Christ in one aspect, we looked at the salient points of the chapter, and saw that, because of sin, the sentence of death lay on the firstborn, and the only way to avert death was to have the witness of death having been already undergone by a substitute—viz., the blood of the lamb—sprinkled upon the lintel and upon the two side posts of the door of the house in which the firstborn was. That done, God could say, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exod. xii. 13).

We further saw that it was not enough that the blood of the lamb should be shed. Though that had taken place, if the blood were still in the bason, and not on the lintel, there was no salvation. It was an absolute necessity that there should be the implicit obedience of faith to God's injunction. His orders were—"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the

lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when *he seeth* the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your house to smite you" (Exod. xii. 22, 23).

The difference between the blood in the bason and the blood on the lintel is vital. Many people to-day are content to leave the blood in the bason, as it were: that is, they believe that Jesus has died, and died for sinners, but they have never reached the point that He is interested in them personally, and has died for them. They have never reached Him, had faith in Him, and known Him, consequently they have not used the bunch of hyssop, and sprinkled the blood, so to say, on the lintel and side posts of their own hearts. The traditional faith of Christendom in the fact of the death of Christ, which they quite concur in, does not mean salvation; there must be the *individual appropriation of His death*. Now the use of the bunch of hyssop (typical of faith, repentance, and self-judgment) secures that. Unless the blood be *sprinkled*, salvation is not assured, but the moment the soul, in faith, appropriates Christ's death God delights to save. "When *I see* the blood I WILL PASS OVER YOU," is His word to the anxious soul. Peace has been made by the blood of Christ, and is enjoyed by the soul that rests simply on Him and on what He has accomplished in His atoning death.

The meeting closed. A long after-meeting, in which numbers of anxious souls were dealt with, had also come to a conclusion when, as finally the latest stayers were passing out, I accosted a lady whose face I noticed was very troubled. She had heard the exposition of Exodus xii., and been deeply affected by it.

“Well, is it all right with you, and have you peace with God?” I asked her.

“No, it is not all right with me,” she immediately answered, with a foreign accent; and added, “Oh, sir, may I have a private conversation with you?”

“You are a foreigner,” I rejoined. “Have you understood the preaching of the Word of the Lord to-night?”

“Oh yes, fully. I am French, but I have been several years in England, and have understood you perfectly. Will you speak with me privately?”

We got together alone, and then it was she immediately burst into tears, and used the language heading this paper. To her impassioned and repeated assertions that the Lord had cast her out and would never forgive her, I replied that it was very unlike Him to treat any troubled soul, like her, in that way, and inquired why He should thus deal with her.

“It is because of what I have been, and what I have done,” she replied. “I made a great sin, and He cannot forgive me. I will explain it to you. I was brought up in France. Part of my family were brought up as Roman Catholics, I and others were brought up as Protestants. I found no rest or joy in

either religion or the world, and some years ago I changed my faith and cast Him out, and I became a Roman Catholic."

"And did you find happiness and peace in that change of religion?"

"Oh, no; oh, no. I found only deeper misery, but I feel I have so sinned thereby He will never forgive me; He must cast me out."

"Let us hear what He says," I rejoined, and quietly read to her, "'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . . All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. . . . And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day' (John vi. 35-40). Now, listen to Him. That is what He says: He came down to do His Father's will, 'and him that cometh to me I will *in no wise cast out.*'"

"But I do believe that He is the Son of God," said she through her tears.

"You do truly believe Him to be such?"

"Yes, indeed, I do believe that Jesus is the Son of God."

"I am glad to hear that," I replied, "for it is God's will that '*every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.*' You

may be certain He won't cast you out if you believe Him to be God's Son."

"But I do believe He is the Son of God," was her fervent reply, as she still wept bitterly.

"Good," I rejoined. "Now, let us see how, in His lifetime, He treated a weeping woman like you." We turned and read together the tale of the sinner at the feet of Jesus recorded in Luke vii. As we read it she exclaimed, "That is just like me." I pointed out to her that all she did was to come to Jesus and listen to His words, while she never spoke a single word, nor did she even pray that we know of. She was silent in her tears and heard His precious words spoken to her, and what He said to her was this, "Thy sins are forgiven . . . Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace" (Luke vii. 48-50). The reading of these words brought divine light, comfort, pardon, and peace to the soul of my listener. With a clasp of her hands she said, "Thank God, He will not cast me out. He receives me, He forgives, He saves me."

The storm was over, joy filled her heart, and tears of thankfulness rolled apace down her cheeks. A few other servants of the Lord near by now joined us, and asking her whether we should give Him thanks for her salvation, she said, "Oh, do," and dropped on her knees. Her heart, however, was so full that ere any one could break the silence, she burst out in a rapture of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for His mercy to her soul, in a fashion I have rarely heard before or since. It was touching indeed to hear her thank the Lord for His mercies to her guilty

soul. She had sinned greatly, but greater than her sin was the grace that met and saved her.

I have often seen her since, still rejoicing in the Lord.

Reader, have you yet tasted the grace of this precious Saviour? If not, do not delay. Begin the New Year with Christ. Trust His precious blood shed on the cross. For you He died. Fall down before Him now, as He again speaks to you of redeeming grace. Believe in and bless Him. The gift of eternal life He makes yours the moment you trust in Him. Hencéforth confess Him boldly, and seek to live for Him who died for you.

W. T. P. W.

PRISONER AND PRISON-KEEPER.

READERS of the *Gospel Messenger* know what the word PRISONER means. All at least have heard of, and some perhaps have seen, a prisoner.

You have read in God's Word of Joseph, once a prisoner for two years in Egypt; of Samson, with both eyes out, grinding in the Philistine prison of Gaza, bound with fetters of brass; of Daniel also, in Babylon, cast into a den of lions. These were men's prisoners, whom God took care of. Then there is Paul the aged, who called himself "the prisoner of Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 1).

You will find the PRISON-KEEPER in Hebrews ii.

15, and in Isaiah xiv. He is a terrible jailer, a hard taskmaster, a merciless tyrant. "He opened not the house of his prisoners" (Isa. xiv. 17). He keeps his captives all their lifetime subject to bondage, and then in death locks up and seals fast the fate of his dupes. He leads his prisoners by a CHAIN called SIN. How dreadful a chain! How its ponderous links weigh down the soul. Reader, are you still bound by the devil's chain? Do you love the bondage of Satan?

Tickets were being given out one day, in a certain town, bearing the words, "Admit one to the pit." My unsaved friend, if hard bound by Satan's lacerating chain, you will not need a ticket for the eternal pit of woe, you already possess one.

But you love your sins. They do not always come out at once into the broad light of day; but remember, every dark sin only makes the devil's tight and heavy fetter tighter and heavier, till one day you must writhe in anguish. Of relief in hell there is none.

But of PRISONERS, there are more classes than one, and their chains differ. For some the links are of artistic workmanship, beautifully made and of fine material, carefully gilded. Satan's slaves do not mind these chains, they do not find the fetter galling; their eyes are pleased by pictures, their minds gratified by the novel and the play, their ears are spell-bound by the concert; they would not part with these things at any price. The little spare time they have got they seek to fill with mirth, pleasure, and folly.

With eagerness they swallow the devil-provided

pleasure, and time glides along merrily. Their feet trip lightly, quickly, surely, down time's stream. Where to? The PRISON-HOUSE.

Lord Chesterfield, once a leader of fashion, said, "I have seen all the silly round of pleasure, I have enjoyed all the pleasures of this world. . . . I have seen all the coarse pulleys that move the gaudy machine. I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration to the astonishment and admiration of the ignorant audience. I look on all that is past as one of those romantic dreams which opium occasions, and I do by no means wish to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."

Dream. Yes, friend, in Satan's fetter you dream of peace. You seek peace with yourself, and have got peace with your master. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21). Satan, the strong man who has you in his firm grasp, wields the power of death, and in that awful prison-house, his captives await certain judgment. "There the prisoners rest together" (Job iii. 18). "The small and the great are there" (Job xxiv. 20). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). "After this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). Well may you tremble as you think of death and the cold dark grave.

Is there no relief? Yes, there is. You remember the story of Richard the Lion-hearted. Returning from the Crusades, covered with victories, he fell into the hands of an enemy, who shut him up in the dungeon

of his stronghold, all unknown to any friend. There he remained, until his favourite minstrel, who had wandered from country to country in search of his master, playing Richard's favourite airs, obtained access to the castle. Whilst playing, an answering note came from within. The glad minstrel thus knew of the king's confinement there, but the latter was not set free until a large sum of money had been paid as his ransom.

So there is One who has heard the "groaning of the prisoner, and can loose those appointed to death" (Ps. cii. 20). "The Lord looseth the prisoners" (Ps. cxlvi. 7). He comes to thee with the story of His love. Is there any response?

He has been into the prison-house; has bound the strong man, your master. "He is mighty to save" (Isa. lxiii. 1). He has through death "destroyed him that had the power of death," having borne God's judgment which you deserve: He is risen from the grave, victorious over the enemy's power, and is now God's glory-crowned One (Heb. ii. 9).

Precious, peerless Saviour! He can save you. Will you not come to Him, turning your back on Satan's service? Change masters now, once and for ever. Yours will be the eternal gain, and the Saviour's the eternal praise.

" Proclaiming release to the captive,
 Poor slaves of the tyrant set free,
 The power of Satan was broken
 When Jesus expired on the tree."

A STATELY HYPOCRITE.

WALKING along the road near the estate offices of the Duke of Buccleuch, in the south of Scotland, the writer's attention was arrested by the trunk of a stately tree, lying in a wood close to the roadside, which, with many of its fellows, had fallen before a destructive gale.

The tree, when growing, was one of the finest in the forest, and, as far as eye could discern, was one of the soundest and most valuable. Perhaps the reader is like that tree—a fine specimen of humanity, as men say, and more—an imposing spectacle of self-righteousness; one who would not be absent from church on Sunday; perhaps a Sunday school teacher, or a member of some Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A., active in all kinds of philanthropy, and a great temperance advocate besides.

Like the tree, you may be much admired by many who know you, and spoken of by them as a "good Christian"; but, my friend, mere outward goodness will not do for God, nor will it serve you when the testing time comes, and come it will, whether you want it or not, as it did with the outwardly noble but hypocritical tree. For with all its show it was rotten at the heart, and when the testing gale came it was exposed. It was this exposure that particularly struck the writer—the inward rottenness all shown up, and the outward glory laid so low.

Reader, has all your goodness been the fruit of a fallen, corrupt nature, which we all inherit? Or have you been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23)? The Lord Jesus told Nicodemus, who evidently was a good man outwardly, and even a teacher of religion, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John iii. 3), for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (ver. 6). It may be immoral flesh, or it may be religious flesh, but flesh it is and ever will be.

So, if you have not been born again, you are like that tree—corrupt and spiritually rotten to the heart's core, as the unerring Word of God testifies. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9). Dare my reader gainsay what God has said? We would plead with you to get this question of your true state in God's sight faced up now. Own before Him, as self-righteous Job did, that you are "vile," and like Isaiah, that you are "undone," and He will meet you as He met them, with a full and present forgiveness of all your sins, on the ground of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ which has met all God's righteous claims against the sinner.

If you set aside the work of God's Son, and try to work out a righteousness of your own, the day is coming when the storm of divine judgment will overtake you, and your hypocrisy will be exposed. All

will be shown up at the great white throne, to your dismay, and from that never-to-be-forgotten tribunal you will be consigned to the lake of fire for ever and ever (Rev. xx. 11-15).

Do not let God's day of salvation pass. The door of mercy is still open, and Jesus is saying, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, *he shall be saved*" (John x. 9). Rely no longer on your own righteousness, which in God's estimation is but "filthy rags." Own yourself a lost sinner before God. If you take any other ground, you shut yourself hopelessly out from every blessing the Saviour has purchased by His atoning death. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. iii. 20). "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).

J. M.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

EPH. iii. 19.

GREAT was indeed the love of Christ
 To leave His throne on high,
 To come to seek and save the lost
 And in their place to die.

Oh! who can tell what grief was His
 When hanging on the tree;
 He bore the smiting and the stripes
 That we might healed be.

His life He spent in doing good,
And healing the oppressed ;
He bade the weary come to Him
That He might give them rest.

The gospel to the poor He preached,
The multitude He fed ;
He comforted the sorrowing,
To life He raised the dead.

He cleansed the lepers, healed the sick,
Gave eyesight to the blind ;
His ceaseless acts of power and grace
How sweet to call to mind.

He is the same, though now in heaven,
And waiteth to receive,
And give eternal life to all
Who in His name believe.

Oh ! come to Him, His outstretched arms
Are open to embrace
All those who in His blessed name
Their confidence will place.

His people's great High Priest in heaven
At God's right hand on high ;
He lives to intercede for those
For whom He came to die.

We wait to see Him " face to face,"
What wondrous bliss 'twill be
With Christ, the Well-beloved of God,
To spend eternity !

THE SPRINKLED BLOOD AND
THE WRITTEN WORD.

“**Y**OU know I am not so *very* ill! It’s only this cough and the weakness. The doctor says he is sure he will be able to raise me up again when the fine weather comes.”

Alas! the doctor was telling those around her a different tale, for consumption had almost done its cruel work. “There is no hope whatever, she may linger on a few weeks longer, but she may die at any moment,” was his real verdict.

This was the first time I had been able to see Mrs —, and now, when at last I had gained admittance to her sick-room, I found, to my disappointment, that two visitors were there already. We talked on about her illness, and I was feeling how the precious opportunity of speaking to her about eternal things was slipping away, when she said wearily, “How I wish I could be well wrapped up and taken to a warmer climate till the next two spring months are over! You know they say I *ought* to be resigned to die; that I *ought* to be resigned to leave my husband and children; but oh, I am *not* resigned; I want to live; I *cannot* leave them!”

Her voice had deepened into a wail pitiful to hear, but before I could steady mine to tell her of the One who would make Himself more to her than all she was leaving, one of the ladies who was present

said, "When Mrs — gets low about herself like this, she gets low about spiritual things too."

"Then you *are* a Christian?" I said, looking at her inquiringly.

A deep, painful flush suffused the invalid's face, and with great effort she said: "This is how it has been with me. Some years ago I was in great trouble about my soul; I knew I was not prepared to die, and I could not rest about it. Then I went to some revival meetings; they saw I was in great trouble, and wanted me to go up to the penitent form. I did not go, but somehow they got the impression that I was converted, and after that I went to class; but oh, I was never changed at all! No one ever explained things to me, and I have gone on all this time, oh, so unhappy and miserable, and even yet I *cannot* feel saved."

"But," I said, "it is useless your trying to *feel* saved unless you *are* saved. The great question is, Is the blood sprinkled? You will remember before the Lord passed through the land of Egypt, He told the Israelites to kill a lamb and to strike the side-posts and lintel with its blood, and He said, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you.' Now it would be of no avail for an Israelite to try to make himself *believe* that his first-born would escape if he had *not* sprinkled the blood, and it is equally useless for you to try to *feel* saved if you have not come to Christ as a poor lost sinner, and have not trusted in Him as your own personal Saviour."

I also gave her an illustration which I had been

reading. It was of a supposed visit to the houses of two Israelites in Egypt on the Passover night. The blood was sprinkled on the side-posts and lintels of both. In the first house all were in doubt and fear. The blood was sprinkled certainly, but the most they could do was to *hope* their first-born would escape. In the second house all were in perfect peace, for *had not God said*, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you"?

In which of these two houses was the first-born the safer? "Oh, the one in the house where they were at peace," many would say. But no, both were equally safe, because both were under the shelter of the blood. But in the case of a house where the blood was *not* sprinkled, however happy and secure they might *feel*, judgment would inevitably fall.

I often saw Mrs ——— after this, and in about a week after my first visit I was struck on entering her room with the restful happy expression of her really beautiful face.

"I feel so happy!" she said, "I know I am saved now."

I asked her if she had found peace through a verse of Scripture. "No; it was through a dream. I dreamt I was going along a weary, long road, till at last I came to a dark tunnel through which I was obliged to pass. As I stood trembling, fearing to enter it, I looked in and at the far end I saw a bright shining figure beckoning me on, and then I awoke."

“But, Mrs —, there is nothing in that to rest on for your soul’s salvation. It is Christ’s work alone which saves the soul.”

“I *am* trusting to Christ’s work,” she replied, “but that dream seemed to give me courage, and to tell me that Jesus died for *me*, and that God had accepted *me*.”

I left, feeling satisfied that she was born of God. But as she had taken the dream as her ground of assurance, instead of resting solely on God’s Word for it, it was not surprising that in a few days she should be harassed with doubts as to whether she was really saved or not.

I urged her to look away from herself to the never-changing Word of God, which declares that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. i. 5), and which would be as a rock under her feet.

I told her of a young lady who was always wishing for something more than the Word of God to rest upon. “If I had only some little token,” she said, “just an inward whisper that Jesus died for *me*, I should be satisfied.” A friend replied, “Well, suppose that some day you had this inward whisper, you would be very happy because it had assured you that Jesus had died for you, but in a few days the thought might arise, I wonder if that was *God’s* whisper? it may have been *Satan’s*! Where then would be your peace and joy? Gone! because they were not based on the Word of God alone.”

“The Lord Jesus Christ,” wrote a well-known

servant of God, "has shed His precious blood as a perfect atonement for sin, and God's testimony assures the believing sinner that everything is settled on his behalf—settled not by *his* estimate of the blood, but by the blood itself which God values so highly, that because of it, without a single jot or tittle added thereto, He can righteously forgive all sin, and accept the sinner as perfectly righteous in Christ. Either Christ's atoning sacrifice is sufficient or it is not. If it is sufficient, why those doubts and fears? The words of our lips profess that the work is finished; but the doubts and fears of the heart declare that it is not. Every one who doubts his full and everlasting forgiveness, denies, so far as he is concerned, the completeness of the sacrifice of Christ."

But to return to Mrs ——, she had many visitors, who much hindered her by pointing her to other means of gaining the peace which could only be hers by simple trust in Christ and in His precious blood, and thus for several weeks her mind was distracted and self-occupied, but at last she looked away from all to that blessed One alone, and peace and rest then flowed into her soul.

It was now evident to all but herself that the end was very near; but, buoyed up with the feeling of hopefulness peculiar to the disease, and with the doctor's constant assurance that he would raise her up again, she was even yet having articles of dress made to wear when she should get about once more. Her friends decided to break the sad truth to her.

It was a very painful scene, but in that hour of her sore need God revealed to His poor child His own exceeding love and sustaining power. "Oh, auntie," she said to a relative who was with her a few hours after, "when they told me I was dying it was terrible; but oh, I *did* cry to God to help me, and oh, auntie, He *did* help me, and now I am quite happy and quite ready to go." And then, as another morning dawned, she passed away to be for ever with the Saviour in whose love she had but so lately trusted.

Reader, you may know all about the simple truths of the gospel—that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and that His precious blood can cleanse the vilest and fit him for the brightest glory, but such knowledge is only the greater condemnation to you if you have not come to Christ, and have not appropriated for yourself this great salvation.

"Let one in his innocence glory,
Another in works he has done;
Thy blood is my claim and my title,
Beside it, O Lord, I have none."

F. A.

ARE YOU READY TO MEET GOD?

YES, meet God, you must. A thousand reasons crowd upon you why you should dread it; a thousand sins cry out for His wrath. A life of long neglect, of selfish unbelief, of Christian profession, perhaps; yet meet God you must.

Reader, unsaved reader, you are unhappy. You live from day to day in a false show of indifference, thrown over and around you by the father of lies; but when you suffer the reality of meeting God to confront you, you are miserable. You know that He can see underneath all outward appearance, down into the depth of a heart that would, if it could, shut Him out. Even now its secret, sinful desires and lusts are under His eye, and the thought of this is insufferable torment to you. What will you do in a coming day, when all will be dragged into the light: thoughts of sin, words of sin, acts of sin, to be dealt with in unsullied light? You shrink, you recoil, you are afraid of it. Men may think well of you; in their eyes you are, maybe, all that could be desired, but it is with GOD you have to do. "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos iv. 12).

Will the flimsy covering of a Christless religion shelter you? Will the garb of a Christless morality fit you for the presence of God? NEVER. The pitiless storm of His judgment will rend your gaily coloured "rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6), and leave you in a plight from which there can be no recovery. "And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair" (Jer. iv. 30). Does the thought of it harass your soul? Is the need of a Saviour pressed upon you? Listen. God has sent His Son into this world. Himself sinless, He has wrapped

around Him all the guilt of the sinner's condition. The storm of God's judgment has discharged itself upon Him on the cross, when Jesus in deepest love and pity sustained the believing sinner's guilt, removed his transgressions as far as the east is from the west, to be remembered no more; closed his sinful condition in death, and made an end of his sins before God for ever. God, therefore, can righteously come out now, and clothe the needy soul who believes on Jesus, in a robe of divine righteousness.

In all your need, therefore, trust in Christ, now raised from the dead, and this very moment God will regard you, a trusting soul, as wrapped round with all the perfection of Him who undertook for you. Thus, and thus only, can you be fitted for the presence of God. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30).

And then you can give "thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). You will be ready to meet God in the unstained light and the unfading glory of His presence.

Will you read Isaiah lxi. 10 and Luke xv. 22?

"Death and the curse were in the cup—
 O Christ! 'twas full for Thee;
 But Thou hast drained the last dark drop—
 'Tis empty now for me.
 That bitter cup—love drank it up;
 Now blessing's draught for me."

"ALL MEN EVERYWHERE."

"God now commandeth *all men everywhere* to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—ACTS xvii. 30, 31.

GOD commands men. Man dearly loves to command his fellow, and often does; but that is a state of things that has come in through his departure from God. At the outset, a creature in whom God could find delight, having failed in his responsibility, he became self-willed, and whilst walking himself in disobedience to God, delights only too often in commanding, or even tyrannising over, his fellow. It is a principle one perceives at work even in the nursery, the school, and in the great political arena of the world. And this state of things went so far, that when God came into His own world in the person of His Son, man utterly refused His authority and spat in Christ's face. Man refused God's command, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Now God winked at this time of ignorance, till man's guilt was thus fully consummated. Then the Holy Ghost, through His chosen vessel, the Apostle Paul, called upon all men to repent. Nothing can be clearer than this important scripture, God commandeth repentance. Mark it well, dear reader, *God—God Himself—commands repentance.* The One who has all authority and power has caused

His command to be expressed. Terrible indeed will be the consequence of all disobedience.

And when does He command? *Now*. Tens of thousands have perished through delay. Procrastination is the thief of Souls. To-morrow is in the mist of uncertainty. God commands men to repent *now*. The time of probation is over. If you do not repent *now*, to-morrow you may be reaping the fruit of your folly in endless misery, instead of the fruits of repentance in endless joy. God always means precisely what He says. Hence, the moment to repent is *an ever-present now*. The next moment death may overtake you, and there is no repentance in the grave. Have you repented?

May be you think in your deceitful heart that this command only refers to those whom you would look upon as *wicked* people. You yourself may be a respectable, moral, and religious person, and therefore think that it cannot possibly refer to you. But what saith the Scripture? "God commandeth *all men*." Not *some* men, but *all*. *There is no exception*. All means *all*. It is impossible for you or for any one to escape its force. All includes all, and excludes none—no, not one. The command is for *all*, and hence, unmistakably, it refers to *you*. You are commanded. Have you obeyed? Are you still running the awful risks of disobedience?

But may be you still seek to escape the sharp edge of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, saying in your heart—Yes; but does that mean all men in the world? May it not apply to all in a

certain sphere, or of a certain nation? Or may it not apply to the inhabitants of Athens who heard it declared? Again the Scripture meets you, saying, "*All men everywhere.*" It is impossible to get out of it. Everywhere includes every country under the sun. *All men everywhere* includes all men in all places. It matters not what your name, or character, or dwelling-place, or nationality may be, *all everywhere* includes you. *God now commands all men everywhere.*

And what does He command? *To repent.* Again we appeal to you. Have you obeyed? Have you repented? How dare you disobey? Again your treacherous and deceitful heart may essay to wriggle out of it, saying, But what is meant by repentance? I have always sought to lead a good life, and to do my duty, and serve God. Well, that is *not* repentance. That is *all yourself*, as people so often express themselves, "doing the best" you can. Repentance is quite another thing. Repentance is the judgment of yourself, not self-justification. Repentance is learning you are good for nothing in the presence of God, and giving up all thought of being better. If your natural course of life, however moral or religious, would suit God, there were no occasion for Him to command you to repent; and as we have seen, He commands all. Perhaps you think as you read this—Well, I must turn over a new leaf, I must set to work to lead a better life altogether than I have done. Ah, again you miss the mark. That is not repentance. That is *reformation*. Repentance

and reformation are diametrically opposite. God commandeth all men everywhere, not to reform, but *to repent*.

Now, the moment you discern you are a good-for-nothing, hopeless one, judging yourself before God in His holiness, that you deserve nought but judgment at His hands, you will discern nought but grace in His heart towards you. And by faith in Him, whom He in love gave to die for all, you will be justified in His sight. With repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, *heaven is sure*. No soul ever missed it who is characterised by that. A nominal, national, head belief, as one said, is utterly valueless, but repentance towards God puts me right as to myself before Him, and faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ gives me a sure title to glory *in Him*.

And why does God command all men everywhere to repent? Because, says the apostle, "he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world (this habitable earth) in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." God has no pleasure in judging men; but for His own glory He must judge those who fail to repent. The desire of His heart is that all should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. But if men persist in doing their own will, and neglect the command of God to repent, how is it possible to escape the consequence of their folly and disobedience?

Men act on all sides as if they were their own

master, instead of God's responsible creatures. Dear reader, look this serious matter in the face, we pray you. Repent, and believe the gospel of God. The One whom God has raised from the dead, and by whom He will surely execute the threatened judgment, is a Saviour to-day. Seated at the right hand of God in glory, triumphant and crowned in His presence, He is ready to pardon and save any and every poor sinner who in true self-judgment bows to and believes on Him. Mercy now rejoices against judgment, and grace, without limit and free, flows through righteousness, bringing a present and everlasting salvation to every one everywhere who believeth in Jesus.

No longer, then, pursue your pathway of indifference and carelessness, but bow now in the light of God's presence in true repentance, true self-judgment, and as and where you are believe on the glorious name of His Son. The Spirit of God has remained here in grace, convincing sinners to that end. Resist His strivings, and you will reap the fruit of your sins in everlasting despair; but "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). For all who believe on Him there is no judgment; it is passed and gone for ever. It fell on Christ at Calvary, and from then till now God has waited in grace, proclaiming full, free, and eternal pardon to all. Happy indeed is every one who receives it. May your soul be sure of it now.

STEPS UPWARD.

ON arriving at my quarters in W—— one day, I found a note had been left wishing me to go at once to the hospital and see E. L. I had known him for many years, he being a native of my own village. He had lived a loose and ungodly life, but would always take a tract from me and others. I had often given him that precious little Gospel Messenger, *God's Glad Tidings*. I finished my rounds, and then hurried to the hospital, looking to the Lord for a word for this poor sinner.

There he lay, apparently very near the end, and without Christ. How deeply solemn! I sat down by his side, and while asking a few questions as to his sickness, a clergyman of W—— came up to the bed. After speaking to E. L., he turned to me and asked who I was. I told him I was a friend who had come to see E. L., and that I should be very glad to take back word to B. that he was safe for glory. He turned to the dying man, who was earnestly looking at him, and said, "Ah, well, if he lives well, and takes steps upward, he will be all right for that," and passed on. I turned to E. L. and tried to show him that it was impossible for a sinner in his sins either to live well or take steps upward, and that all his steps had hitherto been downward, down toward the lake of fire. I said the Lord Jesus had taken the downward steps "to Calvary's depths of woe," and that all his own working and

trying were of no avail, for it was "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5), and that God was not exacting anything from the poor sinner; but was a Giver, bestowing eternal life on all who would accept it.

I pointed out that the Lord Jesus came not to call the good ones, but sinners to repentance—that God did not ask him to *do* anything, but simply to believe what He says about His Blessed Son, how that He, the Just One, took the place of the unjust ones. He went down to death, and has now risen, having finished the great work of redemption to God's thorough satisfaction, having met every claim of a righteous and holy God, and is now set down in the presence of God, having worked out a salvation for the vilest sinner out of hell, even for dear E.

He listened, and I believe drank the blessed news in, saying, "Oh, I wish I could feel it." I told him God asked him not to *feel*, but to *believe* it. I left him with that precious word, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). I never saw him again, but hope to meet him in the glory. A Christian lady visited him a few days afterwards, and told me she believed he was resting on Christ.

Perhaps you, my dear reader, have been trying to do something to be saved—to "live well," to work out your salvation. God says, "Without

shedding of blood is no remission." "All your righteousnesses" (your best doings) "are as filthy rags." The first step is down—down at Jesus' feet, taking your place as a poor sinner, and resting in that work which He accomplished when He said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost.

Dear reader, what a delusion of the devil's to tell a poor, lost, ruined, dead sinner to "live well, and "take steps upward." The "living well" and "taking steps upward" all begin at Calvary's cross, for "we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works," and it is "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). May God in His grace give any poor, working sinner who may read these lines to cast all his or her deadly doings down, down at Jesus' feet, stand in Him—in Him alone, gloriously complete.

People of old asked the question, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John vi. 28, 29).

"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 ?"

GOD'S LOVE.

"But God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—ROM. v. 8-10.

A BOLD infidel once interrupted a faithful servant of the Lord, as he was addressing a large open-air assemblage, with the impious and startling assertion,

"I will prove to you, that Jesus Christ, whom you preach, told a lie."

Alas, what will the temerity of the alienated mind and heart of man not dare to utter. A dead silence pervaded the audience, and all seemed riveted to the spot where they stood.

The modest but confident reply was, "If you can prove it, I will believe it."

The suspense was extreme. Every ear was on the stretch. No one moved.

"Well," rejoined the atheist, "Jesus said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' and is it not greater love for a man to lay down his life for his enemies?"

The crowd held its breath, and perfect stillness reigned. All eyes were turned to the preacher.

"Ah yes," calmly answered the Lord's servant, "but it does not say, greater love hath no *God* than this. It says greater love hath no *man*. Man's love

never went further, and it never will; but I am authorised to proclaim to you, and to all who hear me, that 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet *sinner*s, Christ died for us'—nay more, *enemies*, 'for when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.' From what you have said, my friend, it is evident you are God's enemy; still He commends His love even to you, and if you only knew it, the very breath you spend in blaspheming Him you owe to that love. How base your ingratitude."

A sigh of relief passed over the company, and not a whisper more was heard from the poor, crestfallen, infidel. One would fain hope that the telling utterances from the speaker's lips made him ashamed, and led him to the feet of Jesus; but anyhow they went home to many hearts in the crowd.

One was heard to say to his neighbour, "It cuts deep." Another, "Does God really love me?" A third, "That is surely good news." Tears were seen to roll down many a cheek. It was a solemn time. Not a few had reason to praise God for that day's open-air preaching. That striking episode the Lord used for blessing, and graciously overruled it to render the word spoken exceptionally effective, and once more to demonstrate that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to any one that believeth, let the scoffer say what he will.

Now, my reader, that you may the better apprehend this very remarkable verse, I will put three questions, and, first let me ask,

WHOSE LOVE DOES GOD COMMEND?

Is it your love? No, that would be a poor thing indeed. It is God's love. "For God commendeth his own love." Not our love to God, but God's love to us. And what is that? You could not put into words even your mother's love, how much less can any human language tell the infinite love of God? It is beyond description. It defies formulation. Where was a fitting expression of that love to be found? All the angels in heaven could not have furnished it. No archangel could have been a sufficient representative of God's love. His Son—His only begotten and well-beloved Son—alone was adequate to reveal it. He alone knew it and He alone could tell it.

God spared not His own Son. It was a new kind of dealing altogether. It was no longer demanding, but giving. It was not investigating your heart, but making known the thoughts of His own. This is not requiring goodness from you, but when you were nothing but badness, bringing goodness to you, and finding a way to put the evil away without putting *you* away. Love such as this was never heard of till it was manifested in Christ. Loving those that loved you was understood. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was recognised. But such a thing as loving his enemies never entered man's mind. God's love is peculiar to Himself, and has its source and cause wholly in Himself, never reasoning from what we are to what He will be for us, but always

from what God is and His work on our behalf, for God's love exceeds all human thought. Thus there is no question as to the love—it is God's—vast, unspeakable, and unfathomable as we have seen. It is God's love, but let me ask

TOWARDS WHOM IS IT DIRECTED?

The good? No, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The righteous? No, "there is none righteous, no, not one." God commendeth His love toward us while we were yet *sinner, ungodly, enemies, and without strength*. It is to such the love applies, and we cannot be too decided as to this. A change in a man and then God will love him, is not the gospel, since the gospel is that God loves the sinner before he is converted.

This wondrous love, wherewith God so loved the world that He gave His Son, adapts itself to the sinner in all his varied experiences. If it is towards a poor needy sinner, this love takes the form of pity. If towards a sorrowing, suffering sinner, it takes the form of compassion. If towards a miserable sinner, it takes the form of mercy. If towards an obstinate, rebellious sinner, it takes the form of longsuffering. In all these ways God commends His love to sinners, yea, to His very enemies. It is indeed a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and sinners, too, like Saul of Tarsus, who calls himself the chief. Hence, no matter

who or what you may have been, dear reader, if you only take your true place as lost, undone, and good for nothing, all the blessed consequences of what that love of God has provided are made good to you on believing. Why not now?"

Just a third question as to this love,

HOW WAS IT SHOWN?

The answer is, "Christ died for us." But why has it to be demonstrated thus? Because God's love is a holy love. It is a righteous love. "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Hence "Christ died for us." How simple, and yet how profound. Perfect love to the sinner: unmeasured judgment against his sin. God is glorified in all that He is in His nature as to it. The Son of man must be lifted up, no less than the Son of God given in fathomless love. We must be before God according to the truth of what He is and according to the truth of what we are. Christ's death is the divine answer to this in all its length and breadth. It is impossible to exhaust what is included in the familiar expression, "Christ died for us." It means not only that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree, but that He perfectly glorified God in all that He is, and that we, consequently, have full and free access to Him, all being the fruit of His own love, for "hereby we have known love, because that he has laid down his life for us." What a gospel! God revealed in love, His claims fully met, sins

completely borne, salvation to the vilest offered, perfect access procured, the conscience purged, and acceptance given according to all the value of the death of Christ.

Are you, my reader, going to miss all this vast blessing? Surely not. We affectionately urge you to possess it while now within your reach. God is beseeching you by us. Delay not, we implore you, a moment longer. Be ye reconciled to God. He waits to be gracious. He is ready to receive you. He longs to welcome you to His heart. Take Him at His word. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, saved at once, and saved for ever.

W. S.

"MY BELOVED SON."

(Read Matthew iii. 16, 17, iv. 1-11, 23-25; Mark i. 12, 13; Luke iv. 1-15.)

GOD has been pleased to give us a threefold account of the temptation of the Lord Jesus. In each gospel some point that is very noticeable, but which the other evangelists do not record, stands out. Matthew gives you the historical sequence of the temptation, while Luke gives you the moral order of events.

When we think Who it was who was tempted, it well becomes us, with unshod feet, to look on, and with circumcised ear to listen to what God says to us. We have the history here of a Man, a true, real Man,

vigorously assaulted by the foe of God, as it says: “Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered” (Luke iv. 2). He was forty days and forty nights without food, and then, as you might expect, He was hungry. Then the tempter came, man’s tempter, your tempter, my tempter, in that day the tempter of the Lord Jesus. I do not doubt Satan came thinking that he would do with this Man as he had done with the first man he tempted, that is, upset Him to His ruin.

We all know that the first man was absolutely conquered, and it is a great thing for you and me to see that we belonged to a conquered stock, a conquered race, a stock that has been overcome by the power of the tempter. The first man, I repeat, was absolutely conquered and ruined by the tempter. Here is another Man, the second Man, the last Adam. Why the last? There is no other to come. There are only the first and the last. The first was the parent of the fallen family to which you and I by nature belong. The second Man, the Lord out of heaven, the last Adam here comes before us in all the blessed moral perfection that was His, as a dependent and obedient Man; and God permits us to see the victory of Christ, and the downright and complete rout of the devil in the wilderness.

This is grand tidings for men and women like you and me, who belong to the first man, children of that Adam who was unable to cope with a foe like Satan. We are permitted to see Jesus, before He comes out

into this world to begin His lovely ministry, defeat the enemy absolutely. This is indeed a blessed sight for us, but that is the way the Spirit of God introduces the Lord here, ere He commences His public ministry. Satan, who had ruined the first man and reduced the earth to misery through sin, to start with, and then brought in corruption and violence, here assumes to put his hand on this blessed, holy Man, but it was only to be defeated absolutely. And mind you the devil tempted Christ just like he tempts you and me. That is, he took Him up on the very point where he thought He was weakest. If Jesus were an hungered—and there was nothing wrong in His being hungry—the question is raised of how to get Himself bread to meet His hunger. But you will see that He defeats the devil by obedience to, and dependence on God. And there is no other way of victory for you or for me, but by being in the same path as the Lord Jesus.

But, first of all, see how the Lord is introduced here. He comes out into notice after His baptism by John the Baptist. Observe what takes place as He is baptized. The Gospel of Luke adds this particular, that He was praying (chap. iii. 21). He was a dependent Man. When baptized He comes up out of the water and the heavens are opened. There are four occasions where you find them opened in the New Testament. They are opened here for God to look down to earth to see a Man in whom He could completely delight. Next they are opened when Stephen looks up and sees that same Man

glorified in heaven (Acts vii. 56). The next time is when Peter saw them opened and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, and received up again into heaven. He saw all sorts of four-footed beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air in it (Acts x. 11, 12). What is the meaning of that? Nothing goes into heaven but what comes out of it. How then am I to get there? That is a serious question. If there be not the work of God in my soul and yours, let us not dream of heaven. That is the lesson I get in Acts x.

And where is the last time the heavens are opened? They have not been opened as yet, but they are going to be opened for the fourth time (see Rev. xix. 11-21), for this blessed Man to come out and take possession of all things, to which He has right and title on the ground of what He was personally as the Creator, and also as Son of man, on the ground of redemption; for He has earned all, as Man, by going into death. He is going in this way to take His world-kingdoms, which the devil proposed in the wilderness to give Him without treading the pathway of suffering, but at the expense of the truth, at the expense of the homage that was due to God, and which the devil has always sought to have rendered to himself. Do you know what took place there? The Lord refused Satan's way, at the cost of His life, blessed be His name. He went to death, but that death has delivered us who believe, and enabled Him to associate us with Himself. Thank

God, what He refused from the devil's hand that day, is what He is going to come out of heaven for by-and-by, and we shall be with Him in the day of His glory. Ah, my reader, there is a grand day coming for the world when Christ gets His rights.

But now, look carefully at this scene on Jordan's banks. The heavens are opened, and the Father's voice is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17). For thirty years he had been in retirement at Nazareth, and men had seen nothing of Him. As a child of twelve He was up at Jerusalem and was found in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions" (Luke ii. 46). Then for eighteen years God dropped a veil upon His life. All we know of that period is this, that when He came out men said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark vi. 3). So I conclude that this blessed Son of God, here in human form on earth, wrought with His hands. Let not any one think then that service or toil is a menial thing to be shunned. Toil has been ennobled by the pathway of Christ, even as the grave has been sanctified by the fact that He has gone into it. Wonderful indeed is the pathway of Christ.

And now the thirty years are over, and He comes out. The Father's heart is delighted then to say, "This is my beloved Son," as the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, lights upon Him. In Noah's day the dove went out of the ark but came back because it could not find a resting-place. For four

thousand years the Spirit of God had been searching all over the earth to find a sinless man, a man suited to God's heart in every respect, but every man was sinful. No resting-place was found. At length there comes a Man upon whom this Holy Spirit can descend and *abide* (John i. 32). There is the resting-place the Spirit of God has found, a man suited to God in every spring of His being, every thought of His heart, every act of His life. He came into this world to do the will of God. And you will see how in doing God's will He is preserved, when the enemy comes to Him.

What a joy must it have been to Him to hear the Father's voice saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke iii. 22). Notice this. People are sometimes troubled about the Trinity. You have it here. "The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him." Then "a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." There you have the Son, a real, true Man, before your eye. A Man whose only thought was to do the will of God.

Beloved reader, have you any doubt about the Trinity? If you have, you will never make progress in your soul as to God's truth. It is not that I find the word in Scripture, but I find the blessed reality. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are each before us in this scene. The Son was come here to make the Father known. And moreover, in the power of the Spirit, He was come to do

the work by which man is delivered, as well as Satan absolutely defeated.

Are you not yet clear about the Trinity? It is of vital importance to have the sense of what the Trinity involves, and to rejoice in it. Christ is the revealer of the Father's love. He became incarnate that He might reveal God, redeem man, and absolutely crush and break the power of the enemy. The Man who adorns the throne of God to-day has defeated Satan. I quite admit He has not yet taken sin out of the world, and the devil has power yet over men's minds, but the title to everything is in the hand of Christ. He met Satan in the wilderness and defeated him morally. Then on the cross, and in His death He utterly destroyed his power.

And now redemption is accomplished, and Christ is risen, and the consequence is that if you have till now been in your sins and in misery, you may get the sense that your sins are gone, because the Lord Jesus, when upon the cross, bore the sins of sinners, that He might put them away for ever. And if He has not put them away, He never can do so. Why? He will not die again. Then you say, What am I to understand? That a work has been done by this blessed Man that enables God to let you know that your sins are blotted out. If you get hold of the truth of redemption, as revealed in the cross of Christ, your heart will be attached to Him, and you will seek to do, in your pathway, what He did perfectly in His—the will of God. w. t. p. w.

JOHN WESLEY'S DYING TESTIMONY.

AS John Wesley lay dying, he said: "I have been reflecting on my past life: I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow-creatures; and now it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing I have suffered that will bear looking at, I have no other plea than this—

‘ I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.’”

No man ever insisted more on the importance of good works in the life of a Christian. He pressed on all believers the absolute necessity thereof, as the evidence that faith was a living vital principle which works in all who possess it. He preached the fullest sanctification of the believer in Christ. He desired this sanctification to be manifest in holy living.

Did he preach good works as the ground of the believer's eternal salvation? Did he believe in progressive sanctification as a preparation to enter heaven's eternal courts of holy blessedness? No.

His dying testimony is clear. Indeed, nothing could be clearer than that he disclaimed all merit in himself. His fifty years of toil and suffering, for the One his heart loved, was not to be even looked at as a ground to rest upon in view of eternity.

He said nothing about his holy, sincere, and blameless life as giving him any title to meet God. In fact, his dying testimony is a strong disclaimer against such an unworthy idea. He could not take lower ground as to himself when he said—

“ I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.”

His spiritual eye was not dimmed. His spirit did not falter or sink within him. His faith in the great atoning work of Christ was unwavering to the end.

CALVARY'S FINISHED WORK

filled his open vision. His faith was not anchored in himself, but outside, on a greater and more worthy object. His soul was becalmed with the perfect peace that ever flows from the knowledge that the finished and all-prevailing transaction of Calvary's glorious Substitute for the chief of sinners, had settled all for him. He had not to make his peace with God, because Jesus had done that on the cross for him. “ Having made peace through the blood of his cross ” (Col. i. 20).

Great man and great saint though this soul-winner and world-renowned evangelist was, yet in his dying hour he took the same ground for his eternal salvation as the dying repentant thief. The thief had no merit to show. He had the sins and sorrows of a godless, misspent life weighing hard upon his guilty conscience. His heart-felt cry reached the Saviour's ears. As the result, he was snatched from the jaws of death and hell, and carried to eternal bliss in the

power and virtue of the Saviour's blood. What a mighty triumph of sovereign grace! It was the same ground as Tom the Pie-man of Glasgow took. When he got converted people wondered why such an illiterate man as he should be so happy. He was able to teach them the true secret of real happiness from start to finish of the Christian life. He said: "You all want to be great by doing something, but

'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.'

When the late C. H. Spurgeon preached his remarkable sermon on "Heaven" to over 20,000 people, in the Botanic Gardens, Belfast, in 1858, he quoted approvingly, and with great effect, these simple words. A leading religious journal, in an able review of that sermon, said, "Just think of such words, which are the very kernel of the gospel, being sounded throughout the length and breadth of the counties of Antrim and Down."

Is it not the language of even a greater than John Wesley? Did not Paul, who was unequalled for a sincere and blameless life, for zeal in the Jewish religion, for penetration of mind and force of character, use similar language?

Are not John Wesley's and the Pie-man's couplets rather a paraphrasing of Paul's words, "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified"? His person and His work are both included. Not a Person without a cross, and not a cross without a Person. Also, wrote Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance,

that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15).

This is the true beginning of the believer's confidence, of which Hebrew iii. 14 speaks. It is the end of our confidence besides. John Wesley and Paul were brought from the lofty pinnacle of religious zeal and pride, to own themselves the chief of sinners. They both accepted, and thus began with the sinner's Saviour, and ended life in triumph, in the power of the Saviour's blood.

THE ONLY FOUNDATION.

It is the true and only foundation to rest upon. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11). It dispels the tormenting dread of death, and gives boldness in the presence of a holy God. It is the basis on which the righteous governmental throne of God is for ever established with men, and the fullest revelation made of His wondrous love, that was equal to meeting all the claims of His righteous throne.

As well might that throne be shaken in the heavens, or the pillars on which the universe rests, as that the weakest believer who trusts with child-like faith in the Saviour's death and blood-shedding should be shaken, in view of that which has made the strongest men shiver with terror—DEATH.

Well has Bonar written :—

"Till then my peace is sure,
It will not, cannot yield ;
Christ Jesus died, and rose again,
On this firm rock I build."

The basis of the believer's peace is the work of the cross. The ground of his assurance is the resurrection of Christ. The enjoyment of his peace flows from faith in the testimony of the sure Word of God, received in the power of the Holy Ghost as to both. If these are shaken Paul's preaching was vain and our faith also is vain (see 1 Cor. xv. 14).

This is not building on a foundation inside yourself. Who ever felt two days alike? How can we trust anything so changeable as feelings? The quicksilver in the weather-glass is not more changeable. Another has said—

“ No infant's changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind.”

The work of Christ is a solid, immovable foundation outside yourself. Nothing can affect it. The rugged, perpendicular rock of Gibraltar has defied all the storms that have swept the Atlantic, yet an earthquake might shake it. But the finished work of Christ defies not only the storms of time, but all the upheavals that Satan may raise against it.

THE SECRET OF TRUE PEACE.

Some one has said, “ If you look within, you will be miserable ; if you look around, you will become distracted ; if you look above, all is bright and happy.” Why so ? Because Christ is above on the throne of the heavens, the righteous claims of which He met and perfectly settled, for the glory of God and our salvation.

The throne of glory claimed Him, because He was equal to meeting all its just demands. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." He said after His resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). Heaven's great and glorious Authority said to Him, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool." The gates of glory opened wide to welcome His triumphal entry: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in" (Ps. xxiv. 7).

His being on the throne is conclusive evidence of His resurrection from the dead, which is the sure and unmistakable proof His finished work has been accepted as a ransom for all, by which the peace of the believer is for ever secured.

What more is needed? Could my works, or John Wesley's, or Paul's, or Martin Luther's add to the lustre of His finished work? No! Is not that finished work the basis, and thus the spring or moving principle, of all the good works that ever flowed from the most exalted saint? Assuredly!

Our love to Him is the result of learning His great love to us, expressed in His sacrificial death, to atone for our sin and deliver us from its awful and eternal penalty. In the power of His love we are moved by faith to work for Him. All work done for Him, as our only object, is what Scripture recognises and calls "good works." All else are "dead works" in which He finds no pleasure.

Dear old John Berridge expressed it well when he penned these lines :—

“ Go thou and work, the law commands,
But gives us neither feet nor hands.
Better news the gospel brings,
It bids us fly and gives us wings.

“ I would not work my soul to save,
That work my Lord has done.
But I would work like any slave
From love to God’s dear Son.”

* *

CONSCIENCE AND ITS WORK.

CONSCIENCE tells every man that God must punish sin. You may say that you have no such belief. That may be, but I say your conscience tells you so, and conscience has more power over men than what they think to be their belief. John Bunyan said, Mr Conscience had a very loud voice, and though Mr Understanding shut himself up in a dark room, where he could not see, yet he could hear when Mr Conscience spoke, and he used to thunder so mightily in the streets that Mr Understanding used to shake in his house through what Mr Conscience said. And it is often so.

You say in your understanding, “ I cannot believe God will punish sin ” ; but you know He will. You would not like to confess your secret fears, because

that were to 'give up what you have so often so bravely asserted. But because you assert it with such boast, I imagine you do not believe it, for, if you did, you would not need look so big while saying it. I know this, that when you are sick none sooner than you will cry for mercy. I know that when you are dying you will believe in a hell. Conscience makes cowards of us all, and makes us believe that God must punish sin.

Many years ago there lived in Canada a godly man, who one evening found himself on the borders of a forest, which he entered, and walked along a track musing until the shadows of twilight gathered upon him. On a sudden he saw a light in the distance among the trees, and imagining that it might be from the window of some homestead where he could find shelter, he hastened to it, and to his surprise saw a space cleared and trees laid down to make a platform, and upon it a speaker addressing a large number of people. He thought to himself that he had stumbled on a gospel preacher; but, to his surprise and horror, when he came nearer he found a young man declaiming against God, daring the Almighty to do His worst upon him, speaking terrible things in wrath against the justice of God, and venturing on the boldest and most awful assertions concerning his own disbelief in a future state.

It was a singular scene; the place was lit up with pine knots, which cast a glare here and there, while all around was darkness. The people were intent on listening to the orator, and when he sat down

thunders of applause were given him; each one seeming to emulate his neighbour in his praise. The intruder thought he ought to speak, the honour of God and His cause demanding it. He feared to do so, not well knowing what to say to such an audience. But while weighing what he ought to do, a man of middle age, hale and strong, rose and said: "My friends, I have a word to speak to you to-night. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator; I shall not criticise his style; I shall say nothing concerning what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered; but I shall simply relate to you a fact, and after I have done that you shall draw your own conclusions.

"Yesterday I walked by the side of yonder river; I saw on its floods a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable; it was going fast towards the rapids; he could not use the oars, and I saw that he was not capable of bringing it to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony; by-and-by he gave up the attempt to save his life, kneeled down and cried with desperate earnestness, 'O God, save my soul! If my body cannot be saved, save my soul!' I heard him confess that he had been a blasphemer; I heard him vow that if his life were spared he would never be such again: I heard him implore the mercy of heaven for Jesus Christ's sake, and earnestly plead that he might be washed in His blood.

"These arms saved that young man from the flood. I plunged in, brought the boat to shore, and saved

his life. That same young man has just now addressed you, and cursed his Maker. What say you to this, sirs?"

The speaker sat down. The effect was striking. A shudder ran through the lecturer. The audience in one moment changed their notes, and saw that, after all, whilst it was a fine thing to make a bravado against God on dry land, and when danger was distant, this infidelity was dissipated to the winds in view of death.

Beloved reader of the *Gospel Messenger*, we ask you to make sure work for eternity. How wilt *thou* do in the swellings of Jordan? Every flimsy excuse will dissolve in that day, and you will begin to see things in their true light then. You may not be an avowed infidel, but remember that unless you are washed in the blood of Christ you must suffer eternal punishment for your sins. How good it is for God to give you a conscience so that you may turn to Him and find Him now! And remember, "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready" (Ps. vii. 12). ANON.

FRAGMENT.

THE death of the Saviour is the only foundation and basis of acceptance of any one before God, because in the cross we have God's judgment of sin executed on His sinless Son. There I see Him, who knew no sin, made sin for us. There I find that "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*"

W. T. P. W.

A HEAVENLY SECRET.

WHEN a man has been cured, by a certain medicine, of some long-standing disease, how solicitous he is that all others, who may be similarly affected, should have recourse to that which has done himself such good.

He proclaims its virtues on all hands, and is sorely disappointed if his advice be not followed.

Can you conceive such a case as this man, visiting, say, a personal friend, who has suffered from the same malady as he, and earnestly pressing on him the remedy whose efficacy he has proved, to be met only by questions and doubts and incredulity as to the suitability of the cure to his own case?

This is just about impossible! What long disappointed sufferer would not spring to any such hope? If a drug has effectually cured only one man who has suffered from my complaint, I should consider myself a downright fool, at the very least, not to try it myself.

But, what if more than one should have derived perfect health from it? And more than one hundred; aye, and more than one thousand—more, in fact, than can be counted! Then it were sheer and utter madness to turn from it!

Then, again, if I have been healed thereby, and have consciously passed from a state of chronic disorder into one of health and vigour, should I not do my best to make known the value of this healing medicine? If not I am selfish enough to be utterly

indifferent to my suffering neighbours. If I know that they are victims to a common disease, and from that disease I have been healed, should I hide the secret, I am largely responsible for their death !

What is the disease ?

It is sin !

And the remedy ?

It is the gospel !

Now the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." It has reached myriads of sin-sick souls, and has told them of the healing, cleansing, saving virtue of the blood of Christ.

It has presented to them the perfect suitability of God's salvation to their own guilty and sinful condition.

It has declared that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," that He became the sin-bearer, the substitute, that, in short, "he once suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"—thus becoming a perfect and "all-the-way-home" Saviour, if only there be the hearty acceptance of Himself as such.

Precious gospel ! Oh, the glad tidings that tell us of a God who loves even us ; a Saviour who did, on the cross, all the work needed by the throne of infinite holiness ; a Spirit who makes good in the believing heart all the truth of this glorious salvation, and seals it for the day of redemption !

Let us only find a soul sick of sin, wearied of the world, wounded by Satan, and in despair as to all self-help, then here we find the remedy !

But you may ask, "Have you ever met any such souls, diseased, wretched, guilty, hopeless, who have thus been healed and saved?"

Yes, indeed, thank God, and that by the hundred! They are as consciously delivered from the guilt of sin as the once fevered patient is aware that he has renewed health of body.

Then, reader, why not you? He who has done so much for others is willing and able to do the same for you—to wash you from all your sins and bring you to God. Yes, able and willing!

I have just received a letter from the Cape, saying, "I am so glad to be able to tell you that a girl in my class gave her heart to the Lord last Wednesday.

"Her mother, a widow, had said to her some time back, 'Betty, when are you going to give yourself to the Lord?'

"She replied, 'Oh, not these holidays, mother, there's plenty time.'

"I never saw a girl sob so about her sins, though outwardly she is such a sweet girl; but she fully realised that the Lord was willing and able, and she just knelt down and asked Him to save her. The mother's joy was so great; the tears just poured down her face as she said, 'Oh, what glad tidings!'"

A fine case, thank God, and a proof of how willing is the Lord to save.

"Not these holidays!" Why not? Because she wanted to be happy. You may depend upon it she never spent such a happy holiday before—never. The gospel gives truest joy.

No wonder the apostle said, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." He was far too large-hearted a servant of Christ to lock up in his bosom a secret of such universal benefit, or to close his lips to a report of such intrinsic and incomparable value.

Devoted man! just before his head was laid on the block of martyrdom he rejoiced that "through him the preaching had been fully known," and his lovely death-song was the gospel of the grace of God.

He, doubtless, had the secret in the greatest power, but each saved one, each child of God, has the same wonderful secret in some measure, and he has it, not to hide it under a bed or a bushel, but that it should be abundantly used in faith and hope and love. It is the one remedy for a poor sin-blighted world. May we all know and cherish and spread this precious secret.

J. W. S.

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD."

MORE than a century ago, Mr M—— was travelling on horseback from a town on the eastern border of Vermont, to another town on the western side of the same state.

Passing over the mountainous part of the country, between the Connecticut and Onion rivers, he perceived the heavens to be gathering blackness; the sound of distant thunder was heard, and a heavy shower of rain was seen to be fast approaching. The

traveller was then in a forest; no place of shelter appeared, and he hastened on until he arrived at a small cottage on the extreme border of the woods. The rain just then began to rush down with violence. He sprang from his horse, pulled off his saddle, and without ceremony went into the house. Surprised to see no family, but a female with an infant child, he began to apologise for his sudden appearance, and hoped she would not be alarmed, but permit him to tarry till the rain had abated. She replied, that she was glad he had happened to come in, for she was always much terrified by thunder. "But why, madam," asked he, "should you be afraid of thunder? It is the voice of God, and will do no harm to those who love Him and commit themselves to His care."

Further conversation ensued, during the course of which she told him, that she had neighbours about two miles off; to whose house a man was in the habit of coming once a fortnight to preach. Her husband went once, but she had never been to their meetings.

The rain had now passed over, and the face of nature smiled. The traveller, about to depart, expressed to the woman his thanks for her hospitality, and his earnest desire for the salvation of her soul. He besought her to read her Bible daily, and to give good heed to it as to "a light that shineth in a dark place." She, with tears, confessed that she had no Bible. They had never been able to buy one.

He was preparing to pursue his journey, but he

reflected: "This woman is in very great need of a Bible. Oh, that I had one to give her! but I have not. As for money to buy one, I have none to spare; I have no more than will be absolutely necessary for my expenses home. I must go, but if I leave this woman without the means to procure the Word of God, she may perish for lack of knowledge. What shall I do?" He recollected the scripture—"He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord: and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Prov. xix. 17). Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Eccles. xi. 1). His heart responded, "I will trust the Lord." He took a dollar from his purse, went back, and desired the woman to take it, and as soon as possible procure for herself a Bible. She promised to do so, saying that she knew where one could be obtained.

He again took his leave and set off. As there were then but few taverns on the road, he asked for a lodging at a private house, near which he found himself when night overtook him. He had yet a few pieces of change in his pocket, but as the journey of two more days was before him, he proposed to make his supper on a cold morsel which he had with him. But when the family came round their table to take their evening repast, the master of the house very urgently invited the stranger to join with them—not only so, but to crave God's blessing on their meal. He now began to feel himself among friends, and at liberty to speak freely on divine things. The

family appeared gratified in listening to his discourse till a late hour; it was a season of refreshing to their thirsty souls. In the morning the traveller was urged to tarry till breakfast, but declined, the distance he had to travel requiring him to set off early. His host would take no compensation, and he departed, giving him many thanks.

He journeyed on till late in the morning, when, finding no public-house, he stopped again at a private one for refreshment. While waiting, he lost no time to recommend Christ and Him crucified to the family. When ready to depart he offered to pay the mistress of the house, who had waited upon him very kindly, for his repast, and the oats for his horse, but she would receive nothing.

Thus he went on, asking for refreshment as often as he needed it, and conversing of the things of God wherever he called, and always offering, as another traveller would do, to pay his expenses, but no one would accept his money, although it was not known that his stock was so low, for he told them not, and his appearance was respectable—at home he was a man of wealth.

"What," thought he, "does this mean? I was never treated in this manner on a journey before."

The dollar given to the destitute woman recurred to his mind, and he inwardly replied, "I have been well paid. It is indeed safe lending to the Lord."

On the second day after he left the cottage in the wilderness he arrived safely at home, and still had money for the poor, having been at no cost whatever.

About a year and a half after this a stranger called at the house of Mr M—— for some refreshment. In the course of conversation he observed that he lived on the other side of the mountain, near the Connecticut River. Mr M—— inquired about some gentlemen there with whom he was acquainted, and was pleased to find that the stranger knew them well. He then asked him whether the people in that vicinity paid much attention to the things of God. The traveller replied: “Not much; but in a town twenty or thirty miles beyond the river, with which I am acquainted, there has been a powerful revival. The commencement of it was very extraordinary. The first person that was awakened and brought to repentance was a poor woman, who lived in a very retired place. She told her friends and neighbours that a stranger was driven into her house by a thunderstorm, and talked to her so seriously, that she began, while listening to his discourse, to feel concerned about her soul. The gentleman was much affected when he found that she had no Bible, and after he had left the house to go on his journey, returned again, and gave her a dollar to buy one, and charged her to get it soon, and read it diligently. She did so, and it has been the means, as she believes, of bringing her from darkness to light, to delight in the truth and ways of God. The name of this pious man, or the place of his residence, she knows not, but she believes it was the Lord who sent him. At this relation, and the great change which was obvious in the woman, her neighbours wondered much. They were induced

to meditate on the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, displayed in this singular event of His providence. They were led to think of the importance of attending more to the Bible themselves, and were finally awakened to a deep concern for the salvation of their souls. As many as thirty or forty are already hopefully converted, and rejoicing in God their Saviour."

Mr M——, who had listened to this relation with a heart swelling more and more with wonder, gratitude, and joy, could refrain no longer, but with hands and eyes upraised to heaven, exclaimed, "My God, Thou hast paid me again!"

ANON.

JESUS: TEMPTED AND TRIUMPHANT.

(Read Matt. iii. 13, 14, iv. 1-11; Mark i. 9-13; Luke iii. 21, 22, iv. 1-14.)

WHY do we not here get the word "*Hear him,*" as the Father says, on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew xvii.? It seems to me that at this part of Christ's life man is being tested, and further, it goes without saying, that everybody *ought* to hear Him. Should not you hear Him if He be God's Son? I appeal to you, ought we not to listen to Him without being told? Yes. And that is the point. At this stage, therefore, the word "hear him" is absent. When we come to Matthew xvii. Peter is bungling sadly when he says, "Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one

for Moses, and one for Elias" (ver. 4). Moses the law-giver, Elijah the reformer, and Jesus, the Son of God, he puts on a common level. The Father could not stand that. He swept Moses and Elijah off the scene, as a cloud overshadowed them, while the Father's voice is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him*" (Matt. xvii. 5).

Now this is the day of Jesus. Moses' day has gone by, and so has Elijah's. This is Jesus' day; hear Him. I have heard Him. Have you? I am going to ask you to come to Christ now. If I can so present Christ that the effect on your heart is that you are attracted to Him, then you will be found saying, "By the grace of God, Christ for me from this hour forth." Oh, cling to Him, trust Him, the blessed One who has charmed the heart of God, and defeated the arch-enemy both of God and man.

Well, here we read, "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil" (Luke iv. 1, 2). Now look at the difference between the temptation of Christ and the temptation of Adam and Eve. They were in Paradise, with everything at their hand that the goodness of God could surround them with, and there they fell. Observe here the surroundings of the Lord Jesus, He is not in Paradise, but in the wilderness, with everything against Him. He was there for forty days.

What a wonderful forty days we see here—the most

wonderful forty days that we have in Scripture, at least so far. If Moses went up to the mountain-top, what was it for? To spend "forty days" with God (Exod. xxiv. 18). If Elijah went forty days in the strength of divinely provided food, it was to meet God in the end, and to have wonderful communications from God (1 Kings xix.). But here we find One who had always walked with God, and now led by the Holy Ghost, He is taken into the wilderness to have forty days of conflict with Satan.

This touching and wonderful scene is not recorded in exactly the same words in each Gospel. Luke says, "Being forty days tempted of the devil." We are not told what the character of that continued temptation was, but the three instances that are named here suffice. The character of the temptation that the blessed Lord sustained, at the hand of the enemy during the forty days, would seem to have a veil flung over it by God's own hand, but the final assault of the enemy is fully recorded for our profit and encouragement.

After the forty days were ended, Jesus was hungry. Then again came the tempter, with four thousand years of experience of how to tempt man. He knows our weak spot. Oh yes. Down in the bottom of every heart there is a little bit of lust after something. To that the devil appeals. Satan knows exactly how to tempt every one of us. With one man it is love of money; with another some fleshly lust, perhaps a glass of whisky. Another man he knows is upon the very verge of a moral precipice, and he

will present a lure and drag him over. Satan knows the weak points of every Christian too. I do not think he exactly tempts sinners, but he knows how to work for their downfall. He does tempt the children of God because he knows they have escaped his grip. Unbelieving sinners he effectually controls, for of such it is written: "In whom 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 into them" (2 Cor. iv. 4). So he leads them on to destruction.

And now, look well at Christ, hungry, and note how the enemy assails Him. "And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread" (ver. 3). There are two ways in which you may look at that word "if." Casting a doubt on His relationship to God, or getting Him to act on the fact of that relationship. I think the audacity of Satan is sometimes surprising. He says to Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God." That too, fellow-Christian, is the way in which he will seek to upset you. He will raise with you the question whether after all you are a child of God. To the Lord he says here, "If you are really God's Son, command this stone that it be made bread." That is, God has let you hunger, now then, your opportunity has arrived, 'take yourself out of God's hand, for you are able to turn this stone into bread, and satisfy yourself. No miracle apparently had been wrought by the Lord Jesus, up till this moment, but Satan had a true idea of who He was. He

sought to upset this blessed One, and to trip Him up in the most plausible way possible.

There is no sin in hunger. It is incidental to man as he passes through this scene. If the Son of God become a Man, and enter into the world where men are, He must at least expose Himself to the vicissitudes of human life. Well, He was hungry. "And now, help yourself," was Satan's suggestion. Oh, hear what Jesus says. He had said before, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8). He was only here to do God's will, hence when Satan says to Him, "Command this stone that it be made bread," His answer is very beautiful—"It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God" (ver. 4).

Notice, my reader, that the Lord Jesus not merely *quotes* Scripture, but He quotes it *as* Scripture. Mark what He says. He does not merely say, "Man shall not live by bread alone," but "It is written." He had the most profound respect for what God had written. I should like you to notice that, because we live in a day when people say the books of Moses are not to be received, since they are just human compositions. Observe this, that all the answers with which Christ overcame the devil were quoted from one of these books. The first quotation is from the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, and the other two instances named here are from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. Christ puts His emphatic stamp upon Moses' writings over and over again,

affirming their authenticity, and that they were God's word.

By Jesus' action here we do well to be warned, young men specially, for to-day the devil is busy casting doubts on Scripture. Some people say the Word of God is not to be relied upon. Look at this blessed One, He should know its value and reliability. All that He ever was He brought into manhood. He was the incarnate Son of God, and therefore, as God, He knew perfectly what was and what was not Scripture. He takes the place of dependence, and then He quotes that striking verse which Moses uttered to the children of Israel: "That he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. viii. 3). The devil meets Jesus in the wilderness where Israel had been, and he tempts Him, as he tempted them. Our Lord's resource is Scripture, the sword of the Spirit, God's Word. He hangs on God's Word. He is here the truly obedient, as well as the absolutely dependent One, and Satan is foiled. How are you and I to meet Satan? Exactly the same way.

We will now ponder the second temptation as Matthew gives it. Satan is very wise. He is also very crafty. If you foil the enemy once, by dependence upon God, he will still come back to you. If he does not get in at the front door, he will come again and try to enter by the back door. And what will he come with next time? Very likely a text, since he finds that you believe in Scripture. So is it here.

“Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down (again notice the “if”), for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone” (Matt. iv. 5, 6).

This mangled quotation is taken from the 91st Psalm, which describes our Lord's pathway as the Messiah. Let us look at it for a moment. See how it starts. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (ver. 1). It is an oracular description of what Christ would be as Messiah upon earth. He then speaks: “I will say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust” (ver. 2), and indeed Jehovah was His refuge. The Spirit then addresses Messiah thus: “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence” (ver. 3). If I might so say, here, in this wilderness episode, the fowler is seen spreading a snare for Jesus.

Further down in the Psalm we read, “Because thou hast made Jehovah, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling” (vers. 9, 10). And now observe those words: “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" (vers. 11, 12). Satan did not quote the whole of the verse. He left out those four words, "*in all thy ways.*" Ah, how crafty is the enemy. To the blessed Lord he as it were suggests: "The scripture is very plain: that promise applies to You. Now is Your opportunity to show that it does apply to You." He suggests to Him that He should fling Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and thus He would prove that the scripture had its application to Him, and thus make Himself an object of great interest to men.

It is, however, never the way of a saint to put God to the test; so the Lord Jesus says, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," quoting this time Deuteronomy vi. 16. Do I need to put God to the test to know that He loves and cares for me? No. And there is the whole point of this temptation of the Lord. If Satan suggest this text to Him, boldly misquoting Scripture, His blessed dependence upon God preserves Him, as He says, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." It is never the way of a saint to put God to the proof.

I do not doubt Satan thought he had got a very strong point here with the blessed Lord, but when the heart is right it is always kept. There was nothing in His heart but a desire to do the will of God, and He was maintained in the most beautiful and perfect trust in God. He says in effect, "There is no need for Me to put Him to the test." Blessed, perfect, holy Man, He knew the heart of God. He

knew the love of God. He trusted in God. And what was the result at that moment? He is preserved from the snare of the fowler, and the enemy is utterly beaten. And that is the only way you and I can beat the enemy, by confidence in God and the humble use of Scripture, which then becomes the sword of the Spirit, by which the foe of our souls is driven off.

But now there is a third attack recorded. If you have beaten Satan twice, he will come again. A third time he comes to the Lord. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (vers. 8, 9). How many a man has fallen down and worshipped Satan for a very little. Have you not noticed that? The god of this world easily deludes men. But here, what was it? Satan proposes to Christ, as he shows Him the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time, and the glory of them, to give them to Him, if He will fall down and worship him. But this were apostasy. It would have been giving to the creature what belongs to God.

You know that men like glory, power, and authority. Christ, however, is the only One who is worthy of these; hence in the Book of Revelation, they are, in the songs thereof, ascribed to Him alone. All that men set so much stress upon, but which they generally use to their own self-exaltation,

heaven's voice, by-and-by, is heard in one blessed note, one universal strain, ascribing to Jesus, as they say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. v. 12). That is to say, other men's hands have held those things and abused them; but finally the universal judgment is that there is but one hand worthy of holding the sceptre of power, and it is the hand of the Man that first overcame Satan in the wilderness, and then was nailed to the cross to atone for sin and save sinners. It is our joy to anticipate that day and say now that His is the only hand that is worthy to hold the sceptre of authority and power.

But look at the craft of the enemy as he endeavours to turn the Lord aside. He seeks to get for himself that which is due to God, the Creator. Satan is a creature, but here he seeks to get for himself what belongs to God alone. Each temptation reveals some peculiar beauty in Jesus. In plain language, if we get *obedience* evinced in the first temptation, and *dependence* marking the second, it seems to me in the third that you get the most beautiful unfolding of the *fidelity* of His heart to God. Man is to worship God alone, therefore He says, "*Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*" (ver. 10). And what does Satan do? He leaves Him. Observe this, he is overcome; he is foiled; he is defeated. That is good tidings for you and me.

"IT'S ALL RIGHT AND BRIGHT."

PEOPLE may carp at what is called "conversion," and may deem it a mere passing emotion, which may continue longer or shorter, according to the circumstances or force of character of the man who professes to be converted. So they may; but, nevertheless, it does mean something, and, when properly understood, that something is of tremendous importance.

It is a scriptural term, and in the Scriptures the Lord Jesus is recorded as saying—"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 2).

Mark that, my reader! Never mind, for the moment, what it is, or how it is brought about, lay hold of the need of the thing itself.

It is necessary that, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, every one should be "converted." This is the one indispensable condition. No matter to what nationality, or class in society, or measure of education, or degree of supposed religiousness any one may lay claim; he must be converted if he wants to share God's kingdom, and to escape God's judgment. It is a change so complete and radical that it renders the repentant soul fit for the very presence of God; it gives him a nature capable of enjoying that which, otherwise, he positively hates; it produces a mighty inward transformation, it brings the soul from darkness to light, and from Satan to God! Could anything be more momentous?

Without conversion man is in moral and spiritual darkness and under Satan's domination. Quite true, this may not be realised, may be derided, just as a man walking at night is unconscious of an impending danger. When all around is dark, how can things be seen? When all within is dark, how can truth be known? It is impossible.

Hence the need of that vast inward change which "illuminates" and lifts the soul "out of darkness into God's marvellous light," and thus gives it to see rightly and divinely.

"I looked to Jesus, and I found
 In Him my star, my sun :
 And in that light of life I'll walk
 Till travelling days are done,"

wrote a Christian poet—born just a hundred years ago—and his beautiful words have been truly sung by thousands of happy hearts over the face of the globe.

A friend writes me to-day that a neighbour of his lay dying of double pneumonia. "It is all right and bright," said the dying man, "I am going to be with the Lord." And when too feeble to speak, he pointed upwards and clapped his hands together in order to indicate his joy. He was converted! He was ready! He was triumphant!

But is all this to be attributed to conversion? Certainly it is! Without conversion to God you may possibly die easy, and have no bands in your death. You may be, alas, so drugged by sin and Satan as not to know your peril, nor to feel your

lost condition, but so awfully important is conversion that the man who dies unconverted is lost for ever. “He that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 16).

The reason why the child of God dies in triumph is because he has been converted, forgiven, justified and indwelt by the Spirit of God. He has repented of his sins, has been cleansed from them by the precious blood of Christ, and is therefore at peace with God through Him. Now the foundation of all this is conversion. Hence its absolute necessity and importance. You may say that it is little preached to-day. The more’s the pity!

Nothing can take its place, neither rite nor ceremony, nor alms, nor sacrament. These may be allowed their own place, but in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, conversion to God is the *sine qua non*—the absolute and indispensable necessity.

See to it, reader, that above all things you are truly converted to God.

J. W. S.

“NAW’T TO STICK TO.”

IN a small town some three miles distant from where the writer resides, lay a young man sick unto death. After having lived a life of dissipation and vice, he was ultimately called to die. Along with his brother he had professed infidelity. A dear servant of the Lord, hearing of his case,

inquired whether he might be seen, and, upon gaining the consent of the sick man, went to visit him. In the course of the conversation which passed between them she brought scripture after scripture to bear upon his case, and God used the Word.

The agony of the man's soul became terrible to witness as the end drew nigh, and he began to realise to some extent the awful consequences of launching into eternity unprepared to meet his Creator. Whilst passing through this terrible ordeal his brother returned from work, and hearing of the visitor, and learning the nature of her errand, he went upstairs, and looking into the room where his sick brother lay, called out, "Nay, Bill lad, stick to what tha's got." But that advice was very poor consolation indeed to offer a person in a time of such soul-agony, as the dying man's words clearly revealed, for in agonised tones he replied, "Ah! Jack, there's naw't to stick to."

Thus in spite of his infidelity, and his indifference to God whilst in health and strength, when he came face to face with death he realised the awful mistake he had been making, hence he had to exclaim, "Nothing to stick to!" And how often, dear reader, is the case of this young man repeated, and that in the face of the Scriptures which have arrested thousands in their wild career, and brought them to know the One that sticketh closer than a brother.

And now how do you stand, dear reader, with respect to such vital questions? Is your heart right in regard to these matters? Has it never seriously

dawned upon you that “it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment?” Do not harbour the idea for one moment that you will escape meeting the One in judgment whom, whilst living in your boasted infidelity, or indifference, or shallow profession, you have slighted and disregarded.

If you disbelieve as to the existence of God, remember you are pronounced by the Word of God itself as a fool. Listen: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. xiv. 1), and depend upon it if you are pronounced a fool by God Himself, you are indeed a fool in every sense of the word. The day is fast hastening on, dear reader, when you will be called to render an account of “the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad.” And St Paul in his letter to the Philippians assures us of the day when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10, 11).

Seeing, then, that these things must inevitably come to pass, how foolish to allow this, God's day of grace and long-suffering to slip away, as though it were to you altogether a thing of nought. Wake up to the awful consequences of rejecting this great salvation. Great, indeed, is it since it is a matter which even “the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. i. 12). “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” (Heb. ii. 3). Whilst you have time and opportunity it is yours for the accepting, but how soon the brittle thread upon which your life hangs may be severed, is known to God alone.

Contemplate then the awfulness of being ushered into eternity with an unsaved soul. Then indeed would the words of the poet be fulfilled in your case :

“ In that lone land of deep despair,
No Sabbath’s heavenly light will rise,
No God regard your bitter prayer,
No Saviour call you to the skies.”

No chance then of resting your weary soul upon the pillow of Divine promises, which now you so lightly esteem. And then the thought of meeting the One in judgment who has done everything He possibly could for your eternal interests.

“ What could the Redeemer do,
More than He hath done for you,
To procure your peace with God
Could He more than shed His blood ?”

Time and again has God sought to draw your thoughts towards Himself. Maybe you have had a very dear friend, who was called away, to whom you made promise that you would turn from your waywardness and serve the true and living God. Perhaps through the death of a mother, a husband, a wife, or a child, God has sought to draw your attention heavenward. Have you, like Felix of old, said in your heart, “ When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” That more convenient season will probably never come.

Then think upon these things, dear reader, ponder them in your heart, and be wise to know your opportunity. The oft-repeated scripture is, “ Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of

salvation.” This holds out no future period, but “to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,” to-day whilst the golden opportunity presents itself, is the time to be reconciled to God. Fall in with God’s plan of salvation, which undoubtedly is your only safeguard for time and eternity. “There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.” Remember that during all your waywardness and indifference God is still saying, “Come now, and let us reason together, 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).

Reader, allow these things to engage your attention. God is not wishful that any soul should perish, but rather that all may turn and live. Do you doubt it? Then listen : “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance ” (2 Pet. iii. 9). Eternal life is yours if you will accept it, 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).

“ Why wilt thou linger, why wilt thou die,
 God’s wrath upon thee, judgment so nigh ;
 Now is salvation’s day,
 Tread the blood-sprinkled way ;
 Sinner, no more delay,
 Jesus will come ! ”

L. R.

THE UNSATISFIED DOCTOR.

“**I** SAT by the river of life early ; it dawned upon me that I was to float down it to the *ocean of Eternity.*” Thus wrote Dr M——. Has this tremendous fact ever dawned upon you ? The river, on which you have started your journey, never stops until it has emptied itself into the vast ocean of Eternity. You cannot disembark at any point short of your destination, you are a year and a day nearer than you were yesterday of last year. How has this thought affected you ?

Dr M—— says, “I was strangely fascinated by that which was before me, and eagerly sought from all who had gone before, and recorded their experience, to find out what lay before me in this rushing stream.”

Did he find it searching thus ? Hear his testimony. “After half a century encamped in this present world—encamped, not domesticated—I have found amid the wild waste of its deluging waters, *no rest for my foot*—whatever its citizens may say as to such a confession or complaint, it is a simple fact. Fifty summers—fifty winters—amid the sighs, the cries, the sorrows, the weepings. I lie down each night in sleep—the death of each day’s life—and rise in the morning to again find the busy circle of action. I am a man, and want, and must—if I can—find more than I have seen in man, take him at his best, as king, emperor, poet, philosopher ; the orbit of their experience is bounded and belted by the atmosphere, it is

under the sun and cannot fairly pretend to reach to any higher level than himself."

Will you be more successful than Dr M—— if you search for satisfaction where he sought his? Solomon of old sought rest and comfort in his ivory palaces, marble fountains, singing men and women, unequalled wealth, and undisputed dominion, but, after testing every source of human happiness, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit" was his verdict, he found nothing here to satisfy the cravings of his soul. Neither will you, your inmost consciousness tells you that something more is needed to make you supremely happy; you need an object for your soul's affections, you can never be truly happy until you acquaint yourself with God.

This was Dr M——'s mistake; he sought to find in this world that which can only be found in Jesus. He was not what the world calls a bad man; full of deep and tender feeling for suffering humanity, he sought to alleviate the woes of others, and, by philanthropic exertions, to lessen the wretchedness he saw around. Not far from where I write there is a home for the aged and infirm founded by him—one out of many efforts to help the poor; if, therefore, happiness could have been found in doing good, he ought to have been supremely happy. If ministering to the weak and sorrowful could have brought satisfaction, he ought to have been abundantly satisfied. If helping his fellow beings could have met the cravings of his soul, then no aching void should have troubled his days and nights. He loved his profession, was

successful in practice, and lacked not worldly means, still, unsatisfied, all was disquietude and weariness within. "The review of the past saddened him; the present was a burden to him; the future gloom and uncertainty; everything had failed to meet the cravings of his nature for something better than he had; his books, his love of poetry, his theories about man's perfection, all had failed him. After half a century spent in earnest search after good, he found himself an unsatisfied man." So writes an intimate friend.

Can you picture anything more touching than this loving and lovable man, seeking peace, rest, and happiness in vain? He travelled, visited other climes, sought in other lands what he had failed to find in his own. Mountain air, lovely scenery, sculpture, paintings, works of art, creations of man's device fascinated his mind, but failed to meet the yearnings of his soul.

Is this your condition? Are *you* satisfied? Have you found in Jesus a Saviour, living and soul-satisfying? If not, let me assure you that Jesus can satisfy the hungry soul, replenish the weary soul, and fill the thirsty soul with such satisfaction, that drinking of the water He gives, you shall never more crave earth's broken cisterns.

He did this for Dr M——. He will do it for you. Let me tell you how God graciously met this perplexed and sorrowful doctor, and put in his hand a cup so full, led him to a fountain so overflowing, that for the rest of his life joy, rest, and peace marked his days and nights, and overflowing with happiness, his delight

was to lead others to a treasure house filled with inexhaustible wealth, and eternal satisfaction, God's love as made known in Jesus.

He suddenly decided to go to Australia and seek ease and rest from this inward craving which had burdened his life for half a century, and on his way to the boat called to say adieu to a medical friend. "Why this sudden move?" his friend asked. He was slow to answer, loth to unburden his mind, but at last it came out that it was another expedient to get rid of the burden weighing on his spirit. The sin, death, misery all around perplexed and disturbed him, and he said it was "unaccountable how a God of love could permit such things."

His friend was a Christian, in the enjoyment of rest and peace, so he quoted these words from the Scriptures, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help" (Hos. xiii. 9). The only effect of this was an attempt by Dr M—— to throw the whole blame of a groaning creation upon God. Possibly you, my reader, have done this—blamed God for the misery due to man and Satan's work.

In answer to this, his friend pointed out that "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccles. vii. 29). He showed him that all his reasonings and fault-findings with God were wrong, since it was man, listening to Satan's lie, which had really produced all the misery that exists. Like an arrow from a bow this verse pierced his conscience and arrested him. God had spoken, light entered his soul, he was silent. This scripture

corrected his mistake as to the fall of man, and he listened, with earnest attention, as it was pointed out that the stream of misery in this world all flowed from the corrupt source in Adam, who believed the serpent's lie, and, consequently, by disobedience thus tainted the springs of his moral being.

His friend then turned to those lovely words in John iii. 16—“*God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son*”—and showed him that it was the boundless, causeless love of God which led Him to give “his only begotten” that “whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Like a hart panting after the water-brooks, Dr M—— drank in the words of life. His soul, his life-long weary soul found rest and repose, satisfaction and peace; the spirit of heaviness gave place to the oil of gladness. Then they looked together at those verses: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. viii. 9), and “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John i. 12).

His friend says, “The simplicity of his faith was beautiful; he dropped himself; everything of the past lost its hold upon him, in the abundance of the entrance of these new and divine relationships, which were ever after the joy of his soul; he saw sin put away by the Lamb of God, all that belonged to him as a man settled for ever by the cross, a new condition

in Christ, and a new home in the bosom of the Father."

Dr M—— took out his watch; two hours had passed like a moment, and he was too late to catch the boat, but, thank God, not too late for salvation, not too late to find an all-sufficient Saviour and an all-satisfying object. Thenceforth it was his joy to go forth and tell others that he had found another river, not like the one he had sat by in early days, drifting, drifting to an unknown beyond, but a "river of the water of life," flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. Looking back he says, "Thanks be to God I can look upon this world—its glories, its pleasures, riches, thoughts, ways, fashions, as a vast wreck where all is found of my former self—my sins all met by Him who hung on the cross. I have passed from darkness unto light, from distance to nearness. Once under the power of Satan, now brought to God. When God hath washed the sinner he is clean; when God hath clothed the sinner he is no longer naked; when God has opened to him His heart and home, he is no longer friendless and homeless, the lost one is found, the dead is alive."

Thenceforth he yielded himself wholly to God. His language was, "I am no longer my own, a debtor to mercy." Having seen Christ in glory without his sins, those sins which had been washed away in His precious blood, he counted all things but dung and dross, that he might know Him. *Onward* was his motto during the eleven years ere his earthly voyage was finished; his joy now was not only to minister to the bodily

needs of the men and women of this groaning creation, but also to make known the wonderful secret he had discovered that there was enough in God, in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit to satiate the weary soul and satisfy the hungry soul. Long distances he traversed to pour, out of a full heart, those refreshings which had quenched his soul-thirst, and made him to know that the same blessed One who fills all heaven with joy is all sufficient to fill the needy soul of man on earth.

Restless, unsatisfied reader, there is enough, more than enough, to fill thee; but it can only be found in a living Saviour in glory, only in the infinite love of God who gave His only begotten Son to tell how deep and real that love is. It is this ever-blessed God who says of Dr M—— and myriads beside, "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul" (Jer. xxxi. 25). He lingers in love and grace to say this to you—believe His love to you—"He that believeth on me shall never thirst." Come—he that cometh shall never thirst—but come now!

H. N.

"AND EVERY SOUL WAS SAVED."

A PICTURE bearing the above title was once exhibited in some of our large towns.

It represented the gallant captain and officers of the s.s. "Missouri" in the act of rescuing the passengers and crew of the sinking emigrant ship "Danemark," on her way to New York, from Copenhagen, in April 1889.

Those well qualified to judge pronounced it marvellously realistic, and the public generally showed their appreciation of it by daily flocking in large numbers to the exhibition rooms.

I will ask the reader now kindly to turn his attention to one of God's pictures, in which ALL THE WORLD is represented (Rom. iii. 9-23). The emperor and the serf, the king and the peasant, the prince and the beggar, the peer and the crossing-sweeper, the wearer of a coronet and the lowly labourer in fustian, the merchant millionaire and the workhouse pauper, the titled lady of the royal court and the fallen woman of the city, the countess and the charwoman, the proprietress of the manor house with its broad acres and the factory girl—every grade of society, from the monarch downwards, are here found ranged together, on one common platform, in the HOLY PRESENCE of a **THRICE HOLY GOD**.

What is the title of this picture?

“WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING.”

What? no difference between the sovereign and the cottager? None, for ALL have sinned. Would you class that polished gentleman with yonder poor inebriate? or this amiable and accomplished lady with that degraded and dissolute woman reeling out of the tap-room? YES, for IN THIS PICTURE God shows that there is no difference (ver. 22)—that every mouth is stopped, and that all are alike guilty before God (ver. 19).

Turn to another picture, drawn for us with unerring

accuracy by the Holy Ghost. Allow me to entitle it, "PARDONED SINNERS AT HOME" (Rev. iv. and v.). The scene is laid in heaven; the background, the unsullied light of the glory of God. See heaven's door opened (chap. iv. 1), and a throne set, and ranged around it twenty-four crowned elders. Who are these? A representative company of redeemed sinners from the earth. The slain Lamb is the prominent object, forming the centre of a vast radiant circle of glory.

Next to the Lamb, in the inner circle, are the crowned elders, then the living creatures, while an innumerable company of angels complete the threefold circle.

Dear reader, fix your eye steadily on this sublime picture. The book of Revelation is not a sealed book (chap. xxii. 10); simple, childlike faith in God unveils its mysteries to those who have ears to hear (chap. iii. 22). But it is largely symbolic, you say. Granted, but symbolic of what? Who is the centre and sun around whom the scriptures revolve and irradiate? Surely He who is clearly symbolised in the slain Lamb, the beloved One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note, to the elders in Peter's first Epistle, he thus speaks to a few despised, scattered, and persecuted followers of Jesus: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye

should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Pet. ii. 5, 9). And John writing to the seven Churches in Asia, composed of converted men and women, thus speaks (Rev. i. 5, 6): “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father” (1 Cor. vi. 10, 11).

From these and many other scriptures we learn who are represented by the crowned elders in Revelation iv. and v., the white linen and golden vials bespeaking their priestly service, as the golden crowns mark their royal character and dignity. In other words, it is designed to set forth, as far as our finite minds can grasp it, the future dignity, place, and portion of the redeemed sinners of Adam’s race.

In John iv. the sent One of God makes known to a seeking sinner that the Father is seeking worshippers. In chap. ix. 38 a sample case is given, proving that the only place to graduate for a worshipper is at the feet of Jesus. In Revelation iv. and v., next in dignity, as in place and portion to the One upon the throne, and the Lamb in the midst, see the mighty company of blood-washed sinners from the earth; only they, of all that holy throng, can sing the new song, “Thou art worthy, thou wast slain, thou hast redeemed us.” Only they can raise the note of worship (chap. iv. 10; v. 14) which shall swell louder and deeper as the eternal ages roll on. My reader, will you be amongst that number?

I turn you to one more picture in God’s gallery,

and, oh, friend, behold its title, written on every death-doomed brow in that vast company, "AND EVERY SOUL WAS LOST" (Luke xiii. 25-27; Matt. vii. 22, 23, xxv. 10-12). Religious professor, careless scoffer, orthodox hypocrite, infatuated slave of Satan, votary of scientific research, shameless profligate, refined lady of elegant accomplishments, abandoned outcast of the city, where will you find a refuge for your soul in that day? Heaven's door is closed for ever against you.

Dear reader, God's pictures are true. The skilled artist may fail to produce on canvas even the conception of his own genius, but every stroke of the Divine pencil is guided by a masterly hand. See that multitude with blanched faces, uttering a wild despairing cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" and the withering answer, "I never knew you, depart from me." Moralists, philanthropists, ordinance keepers, sceptics, rationalists, will your creeds and dogmas hold your souls up, as those sweeping sentences meet your ears? Not real believers now, then you are too late; never more will the silvery tones of the gospel be sounded in your hearing, and for ever, and for ever, you will bewail the folly, the infatuation, the unbelief that kept you away from the blessed One, whose heart lingered long over you.

Dear unsaved reader, whatever your present condition of soul may be, whether outwardly moral, upright, and respectable, or utterly careless and indifferent as to your soul's interests, one thing is certain, you are represented in two of these pictures.

Have you seen your full-length portrait in Romans iii. 10-23, and having seen it, have you owned in God's presence that it exactly describes you? If so, then listen to verse 24, which also applies to you: “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. iii. 24). Grasp this truth in childlike faith, then turn your eye to the second picture, in Revelation v., and let your soul feast on the Spirit's graphic delineation of your future home, where, with that blood-washed and exulting throng, who surround God's beloved One in glory, you will join the ceaseless anthem of praise to Him who alone is worthy.

Hardened sinner in your sins, do you refuse to own God's photograph is true of you? Then remember you have no part in that radiant circle of Revelation v., but, continuing as you are, you will most surely find your place in the third picture. You will be left outside, and the door of God's mercy will be barred against you for ever. To-day it stands open. God knows you, friend, better than you do yourself; why not accept His verdict of you? You will have to bow to it. Better a thousand times to own it now, when the river of God's soul-saving grace is streaming over this poor, barren scene. Then you will be able to sing—

“Oh! I am my Belovèd's,
 And my Beloved is mine;
 He brings a poor vile sinner
 Into His house of wine.”

Halting, undecided one, why do you fear to trust

Jesus? Is His strong arm not powerful enough to hold a trembling one like you? The precious blood He shed on Calvary has availed for millions; is it not sufficient for you? Venture upon Him, venture wholly, and venture now. He will save you this moment, He will satisfy your heart, He will put you on His shoulders (Luke xv.), and there you will remain until He lands you in His own bright home.

G. F. E.

A SOLDIER'S DEBTS.

A RUSSIAN soldier was sitting alone in his barracks. His face looked worn and haggard, and the expression of his eye betokened deep anxiety. His distress was due to the fact that he owed a large sum of money and could not satisfy his creditors.

His debts compelled his attention. They took possession of his unwilling mind, whether he performed his round of duty, or joined his comrades in the mess-room.

To-day he had made a list of those debts, and was trying to face the position. But as he looked at the paper lying before him, his case seemed hopeless. Where could he possibly obtain the money? In despair he wrote, "Who will pay these debts?" Worn out by the sickening anxiety, he fell asleep.

The Czar of Russia passed through the barrack room where the soldier was sleeping. The paper

attracted his attention ; he picked it up and read it. Only a list of debts ! But as his eye rested upon the inquiry, "Who will pay these debts ?" his heart was touched with pity. He took up the pen and wrote underneath the soldier's question his own name, "Nicholas."

Presently the soldier awoke and glanced wearily at the paper before him. But stay ! *he* had not written all these words. "Who will pay these debts ? Nicholas." Nicholas, the Czar ! It was the Czar's handwriting, the Czar's own signature. What did it mean ? Could it be true that the Czar would pay his debts ?

He was not left long in doubt, for the following morning a messenger brought him the money. Who can describe his relief, his joy and gratitude when he found the burden thus lifted from his shoulders ?

Reader, thou, too, unless thy sins have been blotted out by the blood of Christ, dost owe a mighty debt and canst not pay it.

For thy name has been entered in the books of heaven and against thee have been recorded the sins of childhood, of youth, and of thy riper years. "God requireth that which is past." Think how this debt increases with advancing age ! Yet at any moment death may step in and close the account. Too late then to discover that thou canst not pay it.

But God, who knew man's inability to satisfy His righteous demands, in infinite love and compassion devised a way by which the debt might be cancelled and justice yet be satisfied.

The Lord Jesus, in obedience to His Father's will,

became man and went into death, that He might bear the punishment of sin. There is virtue in His precious blood to cleanse man's sin-stained soul.

Oh, sinner, He died on thy behalf. Wilt thou not turn to Him confessing thy guilt? He would wash thee whiter than the drifted snows, in the crimson fountain of His blood. Sin's dreadful debt wiped out, thou wouldest hear His voice say, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins."

M. L. B.

"GET THEE HENCE, SATAN."

(Read Matt. iii. 13, 14, iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-14.)

IT is important to notice the different order of the three temptations as recorded by Matthew and Luke. Matthew gives us the *historical*, and Luke the *moral* order. The historical order shows that when the Lord bids Satan depart he *obeys* His word and leaves Him. As Luke presents this wondrous scene, however, the temptation on the mountain top comes second, and, as it now reads, in our ordinary English Bible, has this ugly appearance, that Satan stood his ground and did *not go* when so bidden of the Lord. This was not the case, and you should know, if you do not already possess the information, that what the Spirit of God records by the pen of Luke in verse 8 of his fourth chapter is this, "And Jesus answered and said unto him, It is written,

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

Carefully observe that the words “Get thee behind me, Satan,” are *not* there. Evidently in copying the ancient manuscripts some scribe judged that the previous copyist had omitted in Luke the words “Get thee hence, Satan,” which do occur rightly in Matthew iv. 10. This supposed error was sought to be corrected by the careless insertion of the words, “Get thee behind me, Satan,” which occur in Matthew xvi. 23, and are addressed to Peter. Having thus crept into the text, they remained, and are found in our otherwise very correct English version of the Scriptures. Read the passage, however, as God wrote it by Luke, and all is comely, for no command is given to Satan to depart, and the following temptation comes in its moral order, void of the ugly appearance I have indicated.

But you may ask—What do you mean by moral order? I mean the order in which Satan’s temptations usually reach us, as they reached Eve at first, and all the world since. It is written, “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food” (the lust of the flesh), “and that it was pleasant to the eyes” (the lust of the eye), “and a tree to be desired to make one wise” (the pride of life), “she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat” (Gen. iii. 6). The order here is akin to Luke’s account of the Lord’s temptations, and exactly what the Spirit of God elsewhere thus describes: “For all that is in the

world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John ii. 16). Poor world! Its composition is after all only twofold, lust and pride. *Lust* is seeking what I do not possess, *pride* is self-exaltation on account of what I do possess. These principles form and actuate the world—away from God.

Now in Jesus there was nothing of this, so when Satan sought to move Him in regard to the bread, which in us would appeal to "the lust of the flesh," he was foiled. Again, "the lust of the eyes" He was absolutely free from, and though He sees the kingdoms of the earth they attract Him not. Further, to fling Himself from the temple parapet, be unhurt, and become an object of admiration and interest, presented no charm to Him, for "the pride of life," which might easily lead us to act on similar lines, had no place in His being. Blessed, perfect, lowly, dependent, obedient Man that He was, to do God's will was His meat and drink, and in doing it He escaped the fowler's snare, and utterly defeated the enemy of God and man. May we all remember that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 17).

Jesus is seen here as the moral Conqueror of that malign being who has upset every man but Himself. By dependence and obedience He has, however, utterly defeated and routed him. When Jesus at length at the end of the forty days' temptation said,

“Get thee hence, Satan,” he obeyed and departed from Him. Ah, but that is Christ, you say. Yes. But do not you forget this scripture, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (Jas. iv. 7). Christian, get hold of this, Satan is a beaten and defeated foe. You and I could not overcome him, but the Lord did, and He shares His victory with us.

And now we read, “And, behold, angels came and ministered unto him” (Matt. iv. 11). To me there is a great charm about this. That wilderness scene angels had watched with the deepest interest. They had seen a Man that would not relieve Himself at the expense of the character of God; and when the testing time was fully over and Satan utterly routed, angels came and ministered to him. I do not know what they brought in their hands, but they ministered to Him. Oh yes, but that was Christ, you again say. True, but do not forget that we read of angels, “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. i. 14). I think, beloved reader, we have little idea of how much we are the objects of angelic ministry.

Have you ever noticed how they figure in the Gospels in relation to Christ? They predict His incarnation (Luke i. 30-33). They come and tell of His birth (Luke ii. 9-12). In the moment of His victory over Satan, angels have the pleasure of bringing to Him that which suited Him at that moment (Mark i. 13). He is strengthened by them in the hour of His deepest sorrow in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43). They roll back the stone from the door of His

tomb, sit thereon, and then announce His resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 2 ; John xx. 12). And when He comes again to earth they will be His happy attendants (Matt. xvi. 27 ; 2 Thess. i. 7).

Let me now say one word with regard to Satan. I hear some say that Satan is not a person. "I do not believe in the personality of Satan," you say. Perhaps you do not. But you forget this, that the very thing that would delight him best of all is that you should not believe in him. If you believed in him you would be afraid of him. I will ask you a question : Do you believe in the personality of Christ? "Oh yes, of course I do ; Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour." And you hope to be saved by Him? "Yes." What kind of a Christ must you have to save you? "He must be a sinless man, that is certain." I agree with you. Now, let me ask you another question. What is Satan, then, if he have no personality? Do you reply, as many others to-day—Satan is the proclivity to evil which is found in man's heart. That is plain, at least. Satan is not then a being who can trip men up? No! Satan, forsooth, is the tendency to evil in man's own heart. Now, then, you tell me you must have a perfect Saviour. True, but I want you to notice that if you get rid of a personal devil, you get rid at the same time of the personal Saviour the Scriptures present. They both go together. How is that?

You tell me that the devil is only the proclivity in a man's heart to evil. There will be sin coupled with that? Certainly. But I read that Christ was

tempted of the devil. Had He any proclivities to evil? “Oh no,” you exclaim. How, then, was He tempted of the devil? If Christ was tempted of the devil, and the devil be the proclivity to evil in a man’s own heart, then He must have had such, for Scripture affirms that He was tempted of the devil. Do you see, my friend, where you are? You have a Christ before your mind with proclivities to evil in His heart. If that were true He would not be perfect, and He would not be a truly holy man. God forgive me for saying the words. But I am only showing you where your false and hell-born ideas as to Satan are taking you. Their issue is the complete destruction of Christ as a possible Saviour, because He must have a fallen nature to have proclivities to evil in His heart—since out of it are the issues of life. That man cannot save me who has such a nature. A Christ with any proclivities to evil in His heart could not meet my case nor yours. See, my friend, by your cleverness, casuistry, and infidelity you have swept the devil and Christ off the scene together, and you have left yourself where you are, a sinner in your sins, and on your road to hell, but when you get there you will find that there is a devil, who will be your companion for eternity.

But further, unsaved reader, there is a Christ, whom, if you go on in your present sad and awful condition, you will never meet but once, and that to get at His hands the judgment you have earned. Ah, my friend, you may say, “I do not believe in judgment.” Satan is clever enough to keep you from

believing that too. There are plenty of men who say, "Did God prepare hell for men?" No, He did not. "And did God prepare eternal fire for men?" No. The Lord Jesus will yet say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, *prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. xxv. 41). But do you not see, that if you will not have the company of God's victorious Man for eternity, you must have the company of God's defeated foe for eternity? If you are not going to spend it with Christ, through faith in His blood, and through faith in His name, if you are not going to spend it with the One who defeated the devil—the One who loves to deliver and save sinners—you will spend it with the one who has been defeated and yet has deceived you.

The first and last acts of Satan are identical—deceiving men. (See 1 Tim. ii. 14; Rev. xx. 3, 8-10.) My friend, better far wake up to the truth now. Better far take your place as a poor, good-for-nothing, ruined, undone sinner, and let this blessed Son of God, this Man who is the Victor over Satan, bless and save you. How will He do it? Follow His history, and you will soon learn.

"Shall the prey not be snatched from the mighty
 By Him who is Lord over all?
 'It shall!' cry the hosts of the ransomed;
 'The foe shall no longer enthrall;
 For Jesus, the glorious Redeemer,
 Captivity captive has led;
 A free, full salvation accomplished
 For us when He suffered and bled!"

"A WRITTEN LIST OF YOUR SINS."

IT is now some years since, as a lad, I resided in one of the suburbs of London, under the care of a somewhat austere aunt, who (probably because she seldom entered a place of worship herself) considered it necessary for me to attend church twice every Sunday, and most proper to go to Sunday school in the afternoon. These observances being compulsory, I was a most regular attendant, and most punctilious in what was thought to be the basis and groundwork of a good Christian life.

All went well for some time, and eventually my teacher considered me a fit subject for confirmation. With my aunt's consent, I was taken in hand and duly prepared for the laying on of hands. This process occupied some weeks, and in due time I became capable of giving a correct answer to my Lord Bishop's questions; so I was passed on to the priest in charge for a little more drilling, examination, and cross-examination. After one or two such interviews he said, "Now, next Monday night, *you must bring me a written list of your sins.*"

I was astonished, but said nothing, and wended my way homeward, wondering what it all meant. That night no sleep came to my eyes, "a list of my sins—a list of my sins—how shall I begin?—where shall I leave off?—must so and so go down?—I cannot put that down," &c. A thousand and one

such thoughts passed through my mind that night and the following day. I was so upset that my aunt asked, "What is the matter?" Having heard the story, she was highly indignant, and said the whole thing was preposterous, and told me to take no notice of what the clergyman had said.

On Monday night I went to the church as usual, and after waiting some little time the priest came over to me and said, "Give me your list." "I have not brought one." "Why not?" "I could not think of them all." "You can think of some?" "Yes, more than I should have time to write, or paper whereon to write them." "Then why have you not brought some written down?" "I should not like you to know them." "But I must." "But you never will." "Nonsense, come up to the altar with me now, and confess them verbally." "No, never." "Well, I cannot present you as a candidate on Wednesday unless I have that list, so I will give you until to-morrow night to prepare, and if you do not bring that confession to my house by eleven o'clock, it is useless for you to attend the confirmation." "Very well, Mr C——, do not trouble to look for me, I shall not be there."

I returned home deeply troubled about *my sins*, and the thought came to me over and over again, "*If the clergyman does not know them, God does.*" Many were the sleepless nights I passed through, my sins were bound upon me, and what a fearful load; how they bowed me down. Oh that I could get rid of them, if only some one were competent to remove

that awful burden, how thankful I should be! Week in and week out this dreadful load I carried, no rest could I find. Although still attending church regularly, no one told me how to get rid of this awful load of sin; the service and sermons but bound them closer. I said, “Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners,” but would He?

I was a miserable sinner indeed, my sins made me one. Well, how can I get rid of them? Say the Catechism. Repeat the Lord’s Prayer. I said, “Lord, incline my heart to keep this law,” but He did not. He only said, “What about the past?” Ah, my sins. If only some one could have said those blessed words, “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John i. 7), how happy I should have been; but there was none near to help me, so I gradually became hardened, and sank into absolute indifference.

Passing on to manhood, I threw overboard all religious profession, and gave serious attention to pastime and pleasure, week-days and Sundays alike. But in spite of it all the old question would crop up again sometimes, and “What about your sins?” would ring in my ears, only to be dismissed from my mind at the earliest possible opportunity, as, led captive by the devil, I pursued the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. Presently I was brought much into the company of an earnest Christian young man, who lost no time in tackling me about eternal matters. I scoffed, jeered, and ridiculed all that he spoke about, making light of weighty matters, though

inwardly convicted of their importance. He spoke about forgiveness of sins. I said, "No one can possibly know their sins are forgiven." He said, "But my sins *are* forgiven." However, I laughed the matter off, as I did not wish to then consider these things.

About this time several other Christian young men began to take an interest in me, and to speak about a Saviour of sinners, but they were shocked by my levity and apparent indifference; still they would not leave me alone, and one night I was greatly sobered by a remark of one of these young men who said, "You can laugh yourself into hell, but you can never laugh yourself out." That agitated my mind, reviving all the horrors of my first conviction, when God spoke to me through that clergyman. Thenceforward I was haunted, not only by the load of sin resting *upon* me, but the terrors of hell before me. How I longed for salvation; eagerly seeking the quietude of some country fields, night after night I gazed into the starry heavens, as if by some strange chance something might occur in them to let the light into my dark and dreary soul.

Now thoroughly in earnest, I began to wait upon God, that He would show me what *I* must do to remove the awful burden of sin. For some weeks I went on this line; still God did not tell me what to do. But one night I was persuaded to go and hear a certain preacher, who chose for his text, "Zacchæus, make haste and come down" (Luke xix. 5), and he commenced by saying, "Some people have done such

a lot that they are too high up for the lowly Jesus; they have climbed such a long way heavenwards by their own efforts, they do not care to *come down*, and begin with Jesus, who on the cross could cry, ‘It is finished’ (John xix. 30).” Thank God, I came down at the Saviour’s command, and He said unto me, “Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace” (Luke vii. 48-50).

“O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found,
 And found in Thee alone,
 The peace, the joy I sought so long,
 The bliss till now unknown.”

Since then my sins have never once troubled me, because Jesus said, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”; and God’s Word clearly says, “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), and “God is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 26).

Dear reader, let me ask of you a favour. Before lying down to sleep to-night, get a piece of paper and write thereon the sins *you* have committed to-day. Mind, not all you have committed in your life, nor all this year, not this week, but *this day only*. Then ponder over the words of Jesus who said, “Ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,” which means, there is no heaven for you unless those sins are removed. Then come with me to Isaiah liii., and see what God has done with those sins, not of a day, but of a life-time; look at verse 6, note carefully the latter end of

the verse, which says, "The Lord hath laid on *him* the iniquity of us *all*." Yea, "it is by his stripes we are healed," blessed be His name. Now write across your list, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7), and keep it for future reference in case Satan has anything to say to you.

S. W. M.

SATISFACTION.

(PSALM cvii. 9.)

ARE you satisfied, really satisfied, with your life, is a question frequently asked. People think that wealth and a certain position in life must ensure satisfaction. The fallacy of this is easily proved from the Word itself. Haman, amid all the luxury of a Persian court, and occupying a high position as the monarch's favourite, could not hide his chagrin and vexation so long as Mordecai the Jew sat at the king's gate.

Ahab, in spite of his extensive dominion, is not satisfied, but must covet Naboth's vineyard. Eve, amid all the splendid luxuriance of the Garden of Eden, is not satisfied, but must take of the forbidden fruit. In the hearts of the fallen angels there rise up pride and rebellion against God, and they are cast out of heaven.

Haman in the court is not satisfied; Ahab on the throne is not satisfied; Eve in the Garden of Eden

is not satisfied ; the fallen angels in heaven are not satisfied. One of the most learned of Germany's scientists at the close of a long and weary life said, " I have been deemed (and I think justly) one of fortune's favourites, yet in the course of my whole life I have only known three weeks' real happiness." When in conversation once with one of the now despised Jews—though a successful man in business—he made this sad remark, " I have not known pleasure since I was a child." Solomon, the wisest of men, says, " I gave my heart to know wisdom : . . . this also is vexation of spirit " (Eccles. i. 17).

Clearly neither wealth, position, reputation, nor wisdom can satisfy ; " the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing " (Eccles. i. 8).

Do you think that the eagles in the Zoological Gardens, beating their wings against the bars of their cages, can be satisfied while their natural instinct leads them to pierce the snowy clouds, and while they remember their aerial flights upwards towards the sky ? Can they be satisfied apart from freedom ?

Neither can the soul of man be satisfied apart from God. In the hearts of most, though it may be deeply hidden, there is an intense craving after something altogether beyond the things of this world, and to still this longing some drink deeply of the stream of wealth or pleasure. Jesus says, " Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again ; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst " (John iv. 13, 14).

Come, then, to Jesus. " He satisfies the longing

soul." He can fully satisfy. You will never be disappointed in Him. A dear old saint once said, "I have found in Christ more than I expected to want."

On that last great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John vii. 37). "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

These are His own gracious words. Rest and satisfaction can only be found in Him. Come, then, "without money and without price." The price has been paid, even with the precious life-blood of the Lord of Glory. He paid the debt, and God is infinitely satisfied. No word or work of yours could add to that satisfaction. God in His tender mercy still lingers over this guilty world, but the day of grace will soon be over—may close at any moment. Then do not rest until you can say—

"God is satisfied with Jesus,
I am satisfied as well."

M. W.

It is only as the heart is in fresh communion with the Father and with the Lord Jesus Christ that there is real love to the brethren. The children of a family are not found together because born of one father and mother. If the tender mother, the beloved father be gone, the power that kept them together is gone from among them. So with regard to fellowship with the Father and the Son, if that be not maintained with all freshness, love to the brethren fails. G. V. W.

THE STORY OF MY CONVERSION.

BORN of a most devoted and Christian mother, it was at an early age that the Lord first spoke to my soul. I could not have been more than six years of age, when, during a severe thunderstorm, I was greatly terrified and thought that the end of the world had come; so, falling down upon the ground, I cried bitterly. The fear of God came upon me, and a dread took possession of me, lest I should have to meet Him, but as the storm subsided so my fears subsided also.

During my schoolboy days no very deep impressions were made upon me, except on one occasion, when about eleven years of age. I was then taken by my parents, one Sunday evening, to witness what to me was a most solemn service held in a large chapel in the East of London. It was to behold a great number of God's dear people partake of the Lord's Supper, my beloved mother being one of them.

My stepfather (for my father died when I was very young) not being at that time a decided Christian, sat with me in the gallery as a spectator. Deeply was I impressed as I looked down upon that favoured company; and the more so as I beheld a young man of about eighteen years of age, who was then, for the first time, remembering the Lord Jesus Christ in his death, a privilege sweetly enjoined on all those who love the Lord. "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke xxii. 19, 20).

As I looked on that young man, but a few years older than myself, I felt as if I would have given worlds, had I possessed them, to have been in his place among God's dear people that evening. But I was conscious of my unfitness, and the distance of my soul from God.

It was not until some seven years after this incident that the Lord again graciously spoke to my soul. This time it was while I was pursuing my own self-willed way, full tilt for the world and all its unsatisfying pleasures, as I afterwards found them to be.

I had for my bosom companion and friend a cousin that I greatly loved. Jonathan, methinks, did not love David more than I loved this young man. We were one in heart and thought, but he was thoroughly in the world, immersed in the gaieties of life which at that time just suited me. True, he regularly attended church on Sundays, a church where the clergyman was a most godly and faithful servant of Christ. Many a time have I accompanied my cousin there, and heard faithful and solemn appeals from that dear man's lips. Frequently he preached to young men, in whom he took a great interest, but no lasting impressions were made upon me, though I felt and assented to the truth I heard.

So weeks and months passed by as we together sought to enjoy as much of the world as we could. But a dark cloud passed over us, and a great sorrow came upon us. The health of my beloved cousin began to fail, and it soon became evident that we

must part. He consulted an eminent London physician, who ordered him at once to Australia. So in a few weeks he left our home, where he had resided, being an orphan, and sailed for Melbourne.

None but those who have passed through the grief of such a parting can tell what a sorrow this was to me.

Plunging yet more and more into the gaieties of this world, I joined a dancing academy and a literary institute, hoping that I might find something wherewith to fill my poor sorrowful, empty, and dissatisfied heart.

During the time I frequented the former an attachment sprang up, but God blew upon this, and, like Jonah's gourd, my hopes were withered. Thus did God, quite unconsciously to me, deal with me, being shortly about to bring me to a knowledge of Himself.

It was at this point in my history that He spoke to me one evening, and that most distinctly while I was in the enjoyment of the giddy dance. So clearly did He speak to me at this time, as to the vanity of this passing scene, that all pleasure was taken away and I felt sick at heart. Although the season was not yet ended, it was ended that night for me. Never could I go again, but continuing my connection with the literary institute, I attended the lectures and entertainments, until these also lost their charm, and became wearisome, my soul longing for something that would give me true pleasures and lasting happiness.

Well can I remember on one occasion while still

a youth I was taken by my parents to the Crystal Palace, thinking to give me a happy day, but little did they know the thoughts of my poor heart. So keenly did I then feel the vanity of all that I saw there (though as yet I did not know Christ) that, slipping away from them, I retired to a quiet spot to meditate on the vanity of these things and sigh for something I, as yet, knew not of.

In course of time the Lord so ordered it that I attended the ministry of a very godly servant of the Lord, a most faithful preacher of the gospel. Under his preaching I became more and more deeply concerned about my soul's eternal welfare, and being at that time in delicate health I became the more anxious; and one night after I had retired to rest, fearing that I should be eternally lost, I was crying bitterly, when my beloved mother, hearing the distress of my soul, entered my room, entreating me to tell her the cause of my grief. All I could say was, "Oh, mother, I am going to hell, I am going to hell, I know I am." She sought to comfort me as best she could.

These exercises continued more or less until a moment came, when under the preaching of the beloved man of God, of whom I have already spoken, the precious Saviour spoke to me again. Never shall I forget that hour as I listened to the preaching of the cross of Jesus. Jesus Christ Himself was evidently set forth crucified before me. I thought I could see Him on that cross of agony and shame. He seemed to fix His eyes upon me. It was a look of love, and yet of sorrow. I felt He was grieved

with me. But it was the grief of love, for I felt He loved me, but was grieved with my poor sinful, wayward heart. How could I stand that look, it seemed to charge me with His death. A deep pang wrung my soul as I thought He was dying for me, yet keener still did I feel it, as I was conscious I had no love for Him. This thought quite broke me down, causing me much grief.

Then I felt, oh that He were now on earth that I could go to Him, and tell Him all my grief. But how could I go to Him seeing that He is in heaven and I upon the earth? If He were only on earth, how quickly would I seek Him, and falling at His feet, would cry for mercy.

At last the auspicious hour came, that never-to-be-forgotten night. It was a Lord's Day evening, when the same dear preacher that had so sweetly and powerfully portrayed Jesus crucified before me, preached again. The Lord evidently guided His servant to that verse in Hebrews xiii. 8, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

This removed my difficulty, for this precious word assured me that whether yesterday on earth or to-day in heaven He was ever the same—the unchangeable Jesus. When He was on earth, He graciously received *all* who came to Him, giving this precious assurance that "him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." So I was assured that if I came to Him He would receive me.

Deeply anxious to have the question of my soul's salvation settled that night, as soon as I was able to

slip away from the family circle I retired to my room, and falling upon my knees by the bedside, I poured out my soul to Him, praying and crying to the Lord to save me, saying in my anguish, "Lord, if Thou dost not save me I shall be lost for ever, and if I am lost it shall be at Thy feet trusting Thee." Much more in my distress did I pour into His compassionate ear, in that night of soul-agony and distress, but at last, calmly trusting the precious Saviour, I retired to rest, saved and satisfied.

Never shall I forget the morning that followed. I awoke with my soul bursting with joy in my new-found Saviour. Everything seemed changed: the sun appeared to shine more brightly, the birds sang more sweetly; but *these* had not changed, it was *I* who was changed, being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. i. 23).

But though I had such joy I had not as yet learned "that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." I had not settled peace, neither had I learned that my "heart was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9). For weeks after this I was harassed with doubts and fears, until one day as I was walking past the Royal Exchange in the City of London, it seemed as if a voice spake to me and I heard these words—"For we walk by faith, not by sight." This was as if a flood of light entered my soul.

I saw from that moment that I had been looking within to find some good thing, instead of to Christ

who had saved me, and had become my life, and who alone could sustain me in the path of faith, as it is written, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

In Mark v. 24, the Lord said to the poor trembling woman, "Daughter, *thy faith* has made thee whole, go in peace." From that moment I saw it was not the question of my feelings or of any good thing in me, but of the grace of God, and through that grace I was enabled to "go in peace."

Now I must tell you that up to this time I had not with my lips confessed Christ. This I had refrained from doing, fearing lest I might backslide, or after all that I might only prove to be a hypocrite. Thus I kept all the blessing I had received to myself, not even communicating the blessed joy I had to my beloved mother. However, one evening as we sat together by the fireside, I felt I could no longer keep the joy of my salvation to myself.

With tears of joy I told her that I now loved the Lord, also how and when I was converted, and that now I wished to live for Him. She immediately replied, "You need not, dear Edward, tell me that, for I have seen it already, and have noticed for some time past the great change in your life. I knew you were the Lord's," adding, "Often have I prayed for you when you were a little babe in my arms, and when I saw you going more and more into the world, I deeply grieved over it, but I felt sure the Lord would answer my prayers."

May the Lord graciously bless this simple narrative of His dealings with a poor self-willed sinner, once gaily treading the broad road that leadeth to destruction, to the blessing of many who, at the present moment, are thoughtlessly treading that same road, so that their feet may be turned into the narrow way that leadeth unto life.

And may it encourage many a praying mother and many a praying father to pray on for the recovery of their poor wayward, wandering boy, being confident that God is faithful and will answer those prayers.

E. M.

FRAGMENT.

WE have to remember that at our appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ we are *already glorified*. Christ has come Himself in perfect love to fetch us; and has changed our vile body according to the resemblance of His glorious body. We are glorified and like Christ before the judgment takes place. And mark the effect on Paul. Does the thought of being manifested awaken anxiety or dread? Not the least; he realises all the solemnity of such a process. He knows the terror of the Lord, he has it before his eyes, and what is the consequence? He sets about to persuade others who are in need of it.

J. N D.

A SAVIOUR OUTSIDE YOURSELF.

THE axe of judgment, suspended over my head, the terrors of the wrath to come thundered in my ears, death, and after death the prospect of an eternity in the abode of the lost terrified me. When the lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled, the fear of death made me tremble; no heart seemed so hard as mine. I saw others weep in contrition, and vainly tried to wring tears from my eyes, and melt my hard and stony heart.

I thought salvation could only be obtained by reformation of ways and amendment of life. I measured God's feelings toward me by my feelings toward Him; and felt sure He would never save me until I loved Him better. I read, and prayed, but the good I sought evaded my grasp and my state of misery continued.

I was asked to teach in a Sunday school. This only made matters worse, for those terrible words haunted me, "Lest I, after having preached to others, myself should be a castaway." Working *for* salvation brought me no nearer to peace and rest. I sought out the greatest preachers, was charmed with their eloquence, delighted with their discourses, but the load was heavy on my conscience, the way of peace was hid from mine eyes. Resolutions to do better this week than last ended in bitter grief and disappointment, the new leaf I had turned over was blotted more than the old one.

Whilst in this state a young man invited me to accompany him to a preaching room in a London suburb. The building was plain, and the preacher plainer still. He was a most peculiar-looking old gentleman, and as he was suffering severely from hay fever, it did not add to the interest of his discourse. The address itself was entirely devoid of the charms of oratory and absolutely free from rhetorical display. For some time I was far more occupied with the appearance and manner of the preacher than with his theme. He read the fifth chapter of 2nd Corinthians and commented on it, but what he said I cannot remember, until he came to the last two verses. "God hath made him to be sin for us . . . that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

My attention was arrested as he spoke of a Saviour *outside* ourselves. He directed us to Christ on the cross "made sin," and bearing "our sins." He pointed out that "sin" described what we *are*, and "sins" what we have *done*, and that Christ settled both the "sin" and the "sins" question on the cross once and for ever. He bore the judgment for us, made complete atonement, and left nothing undone, long, long before we were born, so we could not possibly have any part in His work beyond our sins, and these sins Christ had borne and "put away."

For the first time I saw the sinless One made sin, the Holy One of God taking my guilty place, and suffering in my stead, enduring the wrath I so much dreaded, and so richly deserved.

He then directed our attention to the right hand of the Majesty on high, where, seated in the highest place of dignity is a Man, a glorified Man, a righteous Man, a sinless Man, a Man without a trace of the sins He had on the cross, absolutely and for ever freed from them; that Man is Jesus, not only God's Son, but in Himself "God over all, blessed for ever."

Like a bright light illumining the darkness it dawned upon me how Christ and I had changed places. The blessed Son of God had become a man, took my place on the cross, was made what I am—sin—and I had "become the righteousness of God in him."

Faith reasoned thus—Christ *had all my sins* on the cross—Christ is absolutely *without them now*—therefore, *I must be as free of those sins as Christ Himself.*

His sins on Calvary were mine; He had none of His own. He is back in the glory of God, an accepted Man clear of all guilt. God having set every believer before His face in all the favour in which Christ is, I must be as fully accepted and righteous as He.

What an exchange! A Saviour, who once had all my sins, now in the presence of God *without them*, and I as free of the burden and guilt of my sins as He. Do you wonder I sang for joy, and although it is now getting on for half a century ago, I am still adoringly occupied with a Saviour *outside myself.*

Why do I tell you this? Because, possibly, *you* may be making my mistake. I looked *inside* for

right *feelings*, instead of *outside* to a *finished work*. I sought to work myself into God's favour, instead of resting in the fact that God sets all who put their trust in Jesus in all the favour in which His beloved Son ever stands. I thought salvation and forgiveness were to be earned by good works, and only known by happy feelings.

On that evening my eyes were opened to see that salvation from judgment is assured, because Christ has borne the judgment. That righteousness is alone to be found in Him risen, and there it subsists for ever for all who put their trust in Him.

Some have asked, "Do you never doubt?" "Doubt whom?" is my answer. God *says* Christ was "*made sin for us*," and we are made or become "*God's righteousness in him!*" Dare I doubt God when He speaks!

Gaze upon those blackened heavens, hear the anguished cry of Christ on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Then ask "Why?" Why did God forsake the only perfect, spotless, holy man who ever trod this earth?

Defilement had never soiled His holy person, pure and perfect, in absolute obedience to God's will He had lived a sinless life, and yet on the cross was forsaken of God. Why? Because then He was the sinbearer, then, what the accumulated judgment of our sins deserved, He was bearing, but listen to that cry "It is finished!" He is not bearing sins *now*. He there made a full atonement for our guilt, He there gave a complete answer to all the claims of

God, and that work. He will never—never—take up again. It is finished—finished now—finished for ever.

But where is the One who did the work? Search among the angels who excel in might; visit principalities and powers, look at the throne of the archangel, gaze among the cherubim and seraphim, is He there? No; He has been raised, seated, above, and beyond, the brightest angelic beings, and occupies a throne which no created intelligence dare claim; a throne which is His by inherent right, and He sits there a Man, and yet never has ceased, and never will cease to be God.

Instead of tarnishing that throne He has added fresh lustre to it. God can not only proclaim Himself a just God and a Saviour, but the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus.

Do you believe in Jesus? If so, you may know *now* with divine and absolute certainty that all *your* sins, so great, so many, in His blood are washed away. *He who had them is now without them, without them in heavenly glory.*

“In the glory’s highest height
See Him! God’s supreme delight.”

Gaze upon Him there, and rest assured you are as clear of your sins, and the judgment they deserve, as Christ Himself is. Let your eye ever rest on a Saviour *outside* yourself. That same Saviour who *died* for us *lives* for us—lives to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him. We cannot do without His saving help for a moment—for ever

blessed be His name—it is always at our disposal. He has saved us already from the eternal consequences of our sins. He is saving us day by day through every danger, and if the language of our hearts is—

“Out of myself for help I go
Thy power alone resolved to know,”

He will save us, experimentally, from the power and thralldom of our sins, and presently He will come and deliver us from the very presence of sin.

Let any anxious, troubled soul look now, look always to a Saviour outside themselves, and they will find present salvation, like a young fellow who told me he was sure that when Christ was on the cross, God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He was quite sure his sins were laid on Jesus. “Where is He now?” I asked. “I never thought where,” he replied. “Will you think now?” He considered for a few minutes, then said, “I suppose He is in heaven.” “Yes,” I said, “He is in heaven, but did He take your sins there?” “No,” he replied, “sins could not go into heaven.” “Then where are they?” A bright look, and “I see,” and he also discovered that if Christ had his sins on the cross, and is without them now, he must be free of them. He looked to a Saviour outside himself and was saved. Have you done so yet? Why not now? Then will you sing—

“O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found,
And found in Thee alone,
The peace, the joy, I sought so long,
The bliss till now unknown.”

THE STRONG MAN AND THE STRONGER.

(Read Matt. iv. 1-11, 23-25 ; Luke iv. 1-15, 40, 41).

WE find in the end of the fourth chapter of Matthew that, Satan being overcome, Christ comes out to bless and deliver man: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (ver. 23). In plain language, He fulfils a striking verse found in Luke's Gospel. There the Lord Jesus says, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke xi. 21, 22).

Now what is the meaning of that? Satan is the strong man, and he is armed with everything that can encircle and hold his vassal—man. This strong man keeps his palace. His armour is the knowledge he has of the weakness of man, a weapon which he has well learned to use in upsetting and overcoming man. His palace is the world. His goods are sinners. And while he holds them thus, they are in peace. You were never in anxiety about your soul? Never. You have been in peace all your days. You do not believe in Satan. Not you. You are just an illustration of the truth.

Well, who is the stronger Man? The blessed Lord Jesus, the Son of God. He overcame Satan, and bound him morally in the wilderness. He took all his armour from him. Christ has gone into the devil's camp of set purpose, hence we read, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). He has come here to refute the devil's lie that God did not love men. God is love, and He has given His own Son to death for us. At so great a cost is His love expressed.

When the devil left Christ in the wilderness, we are told by Luke that it was "for a season" (chap. iv. 13). Another time Satan crossed His path in the garden of Gethsemane. Regarding that attack the blessed Lord said to His disciples, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John xiv. 30). He had met Him once before, and been defeated by Him. But, unabashed, he came to Him again in the garden. Then he evidently pressed on Him the awful consequences of His pathway if He would go on, even death. What was Christ's resource? Prayer. We read, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from (or out of) death, and was heard in that he feared" (Heb. v. 7). His agony was so deep then, that "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44).

Doubtless Satan then suggested to Him to pause and not drink that cup, for it would cost Him His

life, and the forsaking of God. He looked into the cup and measured its contents. It was all God's judgment against sin. If He drank it He must be forsaken of God, and be cast off, upon the cross. Not merely was it the physical suffering and sorrow that men could give Him, as they nailed Him to the tree, but the inevitable sense that God and He must part company. Hence, as He looked at that cup, He said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done." He knew that if He did not drink that cup of judgment upon the cross, you and I would have to drink it in eternity. If He did not drink the cup, in our room and stead, there was no deliverance, no salvation, no pardon, no cleansing possible for you and me. As He looked at that cup He shrank from it in all the perfect holiness of His being, and deprecated it with the utmost intensity. Then He took it, and drank it to the very dregs, in the perfection of His love. Blessed Saviour! Well may each redeemed one cry, Hallelujah, I am saved; I am saved by His death. We are saved because He drank God's cup of wrath, to the very dregs, so that He, in tender love and divine righteousness, might put the cup of God's salvation into our hands, and press it to our lips. May we not joyfully say, "What hath God wrought?"

Nor is this all. He died to save us, He now lives to succour us. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like

as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). What is that? Just what we have before considered—the temptation in the wilderness. And now He is able to succour us. "For in that he himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18). He is able to save, He is able to succour, and He is able to sympathise (Heb. iv. 15). Note well the passage—"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). What is the meaning thereof? That blessed, great high priest, now at God's right hand, understands perfectly all the pathway of the Christian here. He has gone through it Himself. He took up all our sorrows in His life that He might sympathise, and He took up all our sins in His death that He might save. Now on high He can succour and deliver His people absolutely. Hebrews iv. 15 alludes to the temptation in the wilderness, and Hebrews v. 7 gives us the agony in the garden, as He looked at the cup, shrank from it, and then drank it.

With Him, then, it was "prayers and supplications." Do you know what the Apostle Paul connects with prayer and supplication for us? "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by *prayer* and *supplication* WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. iv. 6). Thank God. Christ's prayers and supplications were coupled with strong cryings and tears, ours are to be coupled with thanksgivings, for His death and resurrection

have brought us into peace, liberty, and rest before God.

And now, let me again ask, who would not have this blessed One as Saviour, Lord, and Friend? Who would not seek to follow Him? He is the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him, for He has overcome Satan and spoiled his goods. Fellow-Christian, you and I were once servants and slaves of the devil. But what has happened? The Lord has picked us up, saved us and cleansed us, filled our hearts with peace and joy, and given us the privilege of telling other people of Himself.

What a wonderful thing is the grace that picks up the vessels of Satan's power, delivers and cleanses them, and then deposits in them some spiritual gift by which others may be helped. Christ ascended on high that He might send down the Holy Ghost with the glorious news which, when believed, delivers sinners from Satan's power, and brings them from darkness to light. And there is the value of preaching. The preacher goes out and tells the simple tidings of the love of Jesus and the value of His blood. Any one that believes and decides for Him, God will give His Spirit to, and very likely make him the means of blessing to somebody else. That is the way the gospel spreads. First of all you receive the gospel yourself, and then constrained by His love you go and tell others what Jesus has done for you. Like the man whose eyes Jesus opened, you can say, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now

I see" (John ix. 25). Who wrought this marvel? Jesus. My reader, believe in Jesus, and then go home and tell your friends: "I have found the Lord. I am delivered. I am set free. His blood has washed all my sins away."

Now, the gospel is not only that Christ has overcome Satan morally when tempted in the wilderness, but that He has gone right down into death, and there destroyed his power. Further, He has risen triumphant, and the devil knows it well. As a consequence there is peace for you. You are to know a risen, triumphant Christ at God's right hand. The Man who overcame Satan morally in the wilderness—while He was on His way back to God's right hand—has on the road carved the pathway for me to accompany Him, and has opened the doorway right up to God's presence through His death and resurrection. As He died He said, "It is finished." When He rose, He said, "Peace unto you." The Holy Ghost has now come down to tell us that the Victor is in the glory. And the man that believes in Him shares His victory, and enters into the spoils of His conquest.

If you have never before made up your mind for Christ, surely you will believe Him and confess Him henceforth. Then you can joyfully go through this world and say: "Come, see a Man that has overcome Satan, borne all my sins, saved me for ever, and now fills my heart with peace and joy. His name is Jesus." If this be the case, God will make you the means of blessing to others. May He grant it for His name's sake.

THE BOOK THAT NEVER DIES.

ABOUT thirty years ago Cleopatra's Needle was raised upon its pedestal on the Thames Embankment. In the core of the pedestal was placed a jar containing copies of the Bible in four languages, and of one verse in two hundred and fifteen languages.

"Thirty-three centuries ago," says Mr Canton, in his history of the Bible Society, "the obelisk was cut in the red granite quarries of Syene. Under clouds of gnats, driven hard by the rods of the taskmasters, long files of captives dragged it on sledges to the sacred river, while gangs of water-carriers poured a flood of water under the runners to keep the groaning wood from catching fire. It was floated down the Nile on a ship of war, and was erected with infinite labour before the splendid Temple of the Sun in the city of On."

Asenath, the daughter of the priest of On, became Joseph's wife, but by the time the obelisk was transported thither Joseph had lain in his painted coffin for some years. But it is quite possible that his grandchildren looked upon the monument. Moses must have seen it in his boyhood. Menephtah the Pharaoh who oppressed the children of Israel, inscribed the hieroglyphics we see to-day on each side of the previous inscription of Thotmes III. The heart of Menephtah was hardened, the Ten

Plagues fell upon the land, centuries swept by, but "the obelisk stood changeless, amid the wreck of war and the fall of dynasties."

"Is it not a strange coincidence," asks Mr Canton, "that after a lapse of three millenniums the Bible should have been committed to the care of this same obelisk, whose gold-capped summit flashed out to the far pastures of Goshen in an age in which the story of Exodus had scarcely yet begun to be lived?" It is indeed, yet not more strange and wondrous than the whole story of the Book.

Men may come and go, empires rise and fall, literatures grow and fall into disuse, but one thing is permanent amid all the change and decay, one book lives as much to-day as when the pen was dipped into the ink to write its last line, and that is the Bible. That a collection of Eastern books, written by various authors—kings, peasants, fishermen, &c.—could be bound into one volume, each book answering as a part to the whole, and maintaining such a hold upon the best and purest of mankind, winning its triumphs amongst bigoted Jews, cultured Greeks, and heathen sunk in unutterable darkness and idolatry, is a miracle stranger than fiction, and proving beyond a doubt that the Book is God-inspired, and contains His message to His creatures.

Other so-called sacred books have a limited circulation, and have been translated at least into the English language more as literary curiosities than as bearing a vital message without which we

should be undone, but one Society* alone has published the Bible, in whole or in part, in over four hundred languages, covering a circulation of over two hundred million copies.

And in the course of its history what persecutions the Bible has undergone, in the persons of those who have been transformed by its message. The catacombs of Rome, the Inquisition's cells in Spain, the fires of Smithfield—all bear testimony to the natural enmity of man's heart against the Book, which flatters no man, yet bears within its covers the offer of God's wonderful grace and redeeming love. The laborious but futile efforts of the higher critics bear witness to the same ceaseless enmity against the Book.

But to return to Cleopatra's Needle, we ask with deepening curiosity what verse, translated into two hundred and fifteen languages, has been deposited within the core of its pedestal. I venture to say that it is the best known verse in the whole Bible, and more used in bringing blessing to souls than any other in Scripture. Martin Luther called it the Miniature Bible. Its words, in the Latin language, were the last that fell from his dying lips. It is fitting that *God* should be the first word in it, love its theme, Christ its gift, life its offer, and the world its scope. The wit of man could never have conceived it. Here it is, speaking for itself in all its majesty and fulness:—

* The British and Foreign Bible Society.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John iii. 16).

Words, not for one nation, but for all; not for the civilised alone, but for the heathen also; words for the strong young man on the threshold of life, as for the bowed and aged on their death-bed; words the sovereign on the throne cannot afford to ignore, yet whose blessing is as free to the beggar by the wayside; words for—YOU. Wonderful words! Wonderful message!

There are four great things in the verse, two on God's side, two on ours. (1) *God loved.* (2) *God gave.* (3) *I believe.* (4) *I have.*

(1) *God loved.* Ay, and He expressed it. The rich give out of their plenty and don't miss what they give. But God expressed His love by doing that which cost Him more than tongue can tell.

(2) *God gave.* What did He give? Some give their money, others' their time, but God gave His only begotten Son. But this involved His death, and what a death! Think of that bitter cry, *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* Think of all the judgment that He endured at God's hands on the cross of shame that you might have the offer of pardoning love. Think of how gloriously He accomplished that work and is now in glory, proof indeed that God is well satisfied. What remains for us to do?

(3) *I believe.* Only believe. *“Be not afraid, only believe,”* said the Lord to one of old, and He says the

same words to you now by this printed page. You may ask, Do you mean to tell me that I have nothing to do but believe? What say the Scriptures? They are plain enough. Bow to them. "To him that worketh *not*, but **BELIEVETH** on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: *not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii 8, 9). Only believe. Launch yourself on God's mercy. Come as you are without waiting to turn over a new leaf, without delay. Venture wholly. That is faith. And in believing on Christ (and how wide is the door flung open, "*whosoever* believeth on Him") eternal life is your portion.

(4) *I have.* "*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" There can be no doubt as to it, if only I believe on Christ. Eternal life is my possession. God says it. Faith believes it. Oh! what a dishonour to God when a believer on the Lord Jesus cannot say that he is sure of salvation, sure of forgiveness, sure of eternal life. It is as much as to say that the work of Christ is not sufficient, to doubt that God is fully satisfied with it and expects something added to it by you. Fancy what the Holy Son of God could not complete, God asking a poor sinner to finish! Away with such a thought. And further, it is as much as to say that God's Word is not reliable. When God states explicitly that every

believer on the Lord Jesus has eternal life, have they got it or not? Why, surely, without the shadow of a question, eternal life is the portion of every believer. Then be as simple as a little child, and believing on the Lord Jesus say, "I have eternal life." Such language is not presumptuous but on the contrary God-honouring—the language of faith.

Reader, have you received the wonderful message which this verse reveals? Are you one of the *whoso-overs* that believe, and in believing have eternal life? The message is for you. It will be your own folly if you pass it by.

And how reliable is the message out of "the Book that never dies." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 35).

A. J. P.

THREE GREAT REALITIES.

(Read Matt. xxvii. 35-55, xxviii. 1-11.)

WHAT the gospel does for the soul that receives it, is to bring it to God, not merely to bring it to heaven, but to bring it to God *now*, to enjoy God now, before it gets to heaven. "Christ suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Now that is the very last thing that an unconverted man would like. Such does not want to be brought to God, and I will tell you why; because he is *afraid* of God. The unconverted man is

always afraid of God ; he does not want to get into His presence ; and why ? Because he knows very well that there are some questions God will raise with him, and he is not prepared to answer them. God must raise the question of sin with every soul. It is a question that has to be answered between every soul and God, and the man that does not know Christ cannot happily answer it in God's presence.

Now, there are three great realities that mark Christianity—*the veil rent, the Saviour risen, and the sinner redeemed*. In Hebrews x. 19, 20, we read : “ Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.” Here the Spirit of God tells us what the veil was a type of. If we turn to the Old Testament we shall see what this veil was, and what it was used for. It had a twofold use, it shut *man out*, and it shut *God in*—man could not go in to God, and God could not come out to man.

If we look at the description of the tabernacle, we shall see it was an oblong tent divided into two parts, the holy place, and the most holy. The whole mass of Israel might come no farther than the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle, on which the sacrifices were offered—type of the death of Christ in atonement for sin. Beyond this the people dared not go. The priests, the sons of Aaron, might go farther, having first washed at the laver which stood betwixt the altar and the door of the tent. They

went inside the first covering into the holy place, to perform the service of the tabernacle, but the veil shut them out from the most holy place. Within that veil they might never go; what was there, their eyes might never gaze on.

Inside that veil were the ark of the covenant, containing the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat; each cherubim looking *towards* the mercy-seat. But besides this, what else was there? The presence of God! God dwelt there between the cherubims, and into His presence men could not go, and if He came out, it could only be in judgment. Oh, the solitariness of those long years wherein God dwelt alone! One only day, once in a year, might man approach God. Once in the year the high priest might go inside that veil, shrouded by the incense, and with the blood of atonement in his hand, and every other man was shut out.

"But," you urge, "I thought you said the veil was the type of Christ." So it is! And what shuts man out from God most entirely? Christ does—a living Christ; Christ in life bars the way between man and God, for He was what no other man ever has been, or ever could be—holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and therefore now God has made Him higher than the heavens.

He, as man, walked this wilderness path *without sin*, and that is what no other man ever did. In

life, then, the *life* of Christ, there is no approach for a sinner to God. By His death only can you approach God.

Let us look for a moment at what that wondrous veil was made of. If you turn to Exodus xxvi. 31, you will read: "And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work; with cherubims shall it be made."

Now what is the blue? Blue is the well-known symbol of what is *heavenly*. And was not Christ heavenly? Where did He come from? From heaven? He could say while walking this earth, "The Son of man which is in heaven." He is "the second man, the Lord from heaven." He came from heaven, down to this earth, and everything about Him was heavenly. There you get the *blue*, the heavenly character of Christ, as the God-man, God manifest in the flesh.

What is the purple, then? Purple was the *Roman imperial* colour, and what is He? "King of kings, and Lord of lords." He whose right it is to reign shall yet be displayed in this character to the whole universe of God. In bitter mockery men clothed Him in purple in the day of His shame and agony, but He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the wide universe of God will yet own His sway. There never has been an earthly king or potentate whose kingdom has not been taken away from him; death has come in and robbed him of all his glory, but this King, after a long and glorious reign over the wide earth during a thousand years, at the end

of that thousand years *gives up* His kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Death comes and takes it from every other. This One goes through death first—wears no crown in life down here, but the crown of thorns they gave Him in cruel mockery—rises up out of death, and thereby acquires the right to be set as Son of man, God's King, over all creation.

Then there comes the scarlet. Scarlet is the *Jewish royal* colour, for not only is Jesus to be king over the whole earth, but in a very special manner He is "king of the Jews," and as purple was the Gentile imperial colour, so scarlet was the Jewish emblem of royalty. Over His cross was written, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, that all peoples and tongues might read the inscription. It really *did* describe who He was, and what their guilt was, for He was King of the Jews, and they had crucified, in scorn, hatred, and unbelief, their King.

The fine twined linen of cunning work in the veil was figurative, I believe, of Christ's holy nature as man; that which faith could see and recognise, and underneath was the veiled Godhead. Perfectly righteous, perfectly holy, perfectly pure He was as man, and with all the glory of the Godhead now and again shining through. The cunning work is emblematic of the way God devised, by which Jesus was *legally* Joseph's son, and thus heir to the throne of David—the Jewish law esteeming Mary as Joseph's wife after espousal—*really* the son of Mary, as it is

written, "a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son," while *actually* as to His nature the Son of God,—yea God Himself become a man. Amazing mystery of Divine wisdom and love!

Further, of the veil we read, "With cherubims shall it be made." Cherubims symbolise the governmental dealings of God; and is not "the government shall be upon his shoulder" written of Jesus? Has not God committed all judgment to Him?

We first read of the cherubims in Genesis iii. 24: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned *every way*, to keep the way of the tree of life." Here, as *the executive of God in judgment*, they appear looking *outward* toward man in his sin. Secondly, in Exodus xxv. 18-20, we get: "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat . . . of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof . . . and their faces shall look one to another; *toward* the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be."

Here, in type, they gaze *inward*, on to the blood-stained mercy-seat, which we know from Romans iii. 25 means Christ—having finished a work which enables God righteously to save guilty man. Thirdly, we see them *in* the veil, *i.e.*, connected with Christ personally. What does John v. 22 mean? "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Again (ver. 27), "and hath given him authority to *execute judgment* also,

because he is the Son of man." And again, God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will *judge* the world in righteousness, *by that man* whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). And, "who shall *judge* the quick (or living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," but our Lord Jesus Christ? (2 Tim. iv. 1).

It is, then, clear that Christ will both judge and execute judgment on the ungodly. How then, sinner, can you escape it? The rent veil is the silent, the eloquent answer. He who is the Judge, after our sin, but before the day of His judgment thereof, steps in, and Himself sustains the judgment we deserve, that He may deliver us from it. What amazing love!

The veil was to be hung upon four pillars of shittim wood. "What is the shittim wood?" you say. Well, I believe the shittim wood testifies to Jesus' humanity. He assumed humanity that He might be able to die. But the shittim wood was overlaid with gold. Gold, in Scripture, represents Divine righteousness. The hooks, likewise, were of *gold*, and the sockets were of *silver*. Now silver is typical of *redemption*. The sockets of the boards of the tabernacle were made of the half shekels of silver that were paid by the people as redemption money—"every man a ransom for his soul" (see Exod. xxx. 12, xxxviii. 25-28). Everything is based on redemption.

Since the Fall, man cannot meet God save on the ground of redemption. But how is this redemption accomplished? Jesus dies, and by His death opens the way of life for you, for me. Read carefully the tale the 27th of Matthew records. Look at it; look at the scorn, the enmity, the mockery, the hatred He passed through. "Oh," you say, "but did not God comfort Him in that terrible hour, did not God sustain His soul?" I believe from the third hour to the sixth hour, that is from nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Him, until twelve o'clock, that God *did* stand by Him, *did* sustain His soul, *did* manifest to Him His perfect, infinite delight in Him. I believe that never was He so the delight of the Father's heart as in that hour, when, scorned by the world, and forsaken by His own, He hung there between heaven and earth.

But see what happens! At the sixth hour—that is, twelve o'clock noon—darkness, like a pall, falls over the whole land. What is it? What is this strange eclipse at noonday? Is it God in judgment coming forth to execute vengeance on men—on sinners for their treatment of this Holy One, His beloved Son? Is God about to pour forth His judgment on their guilty heads? Well might they think so. No doubt they did. Well might they believe it was swift and just retribution coming for their murder of Him of whom even the thief, dying by His side, could say, "This man hath done nothing amiss"; and whom Pilate declared to be a "just person," in whom he could find no fault. Their own

guilty hearts and consciences must have known He was unworthy thus to die.

But was it God's judgment on a guilty world? No! It was something greater far, deeper far. It was not God dealing with sinful man, but God dealing with His own Son; God dealing with Christ, because of man's sin, that He had taken upon Him. In that terrible hour, when darkness veiled the land, there was another far greater eclipse, a perfect eclipse between God and that One who hung there, even His own beloved Son, bearing sin. God hid His face from Him then. When all had forsaken Him, as He says, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me," then, at that very time, God forsook Him too!

And those three hours of darkness, those three hours of total eclipse between God and the Son of His love, rolled on, and then at the ninth hour, three o'clock in the afternoon, comes that great, that terrible cry from Him, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ah, He forsook Jesus in that hour, that He might never forsake you and me. There was *darkness* for Him that there might be only *light* for us. He bore the judgment that we might go free.

Once more He cries with a loud voice, "It is finished," and gives up His spirit. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down *of myself*" (John x. 18).

And at that same moment God rent the veil from top to bottom, cherubims and all. He who will yet execute judgment on man, has in grace sustained and

borne it for man; the price has been paid, redemption has been accomplished, and God is able now to come out in grace to man, in spite of his guilt, because of what Christ has done, and man may go in to God through a "new and living way." Beautiful word, a *living way*. I like that word! How a living way? Because it is not a dead Saviour that I present to you now, but a risen and a living Saviour. He "ever *liveth* to make intercession for us." He has gone into the grave and come up out of it, having abolished death, and destroyed him who had the power thereof. The third day the tomb was empty, the Saviour had risen. That open grave, that risen Saviour, are the proofs that the sins for which He suffered are for ever gone.

And what about the redeemed sinner? Well, I need not say much about him—Christ has everything to do with his redemption, He has brought him *to God*, as I said at the beginning, and the sinner, or rather he is the *believer* now, thus brought to God, has nothing to do but to "*joy in God*," and to wait quietly for the return of the Lord to take him to be with Himself, delighting in the meantime in every little bit of sweet service he can render Him while he stays here.

As a redeemed sinner I have nothing to do but to rejoice in the One who has redeemed me. "But what about your sins?" you ask. Well, I will tell you: God has talked to *Christ* about *my sins*, that He might talk to me about Christ.

During those three hours of darkness God dealt

with the Lord Jesus about my sins, that He might be able to speak to me only of Jesus.

“But what about the judgment-seat: are you not afraid of that?” No. If I were to stand there and hear every one of my sins brought up, I should only say, “*Lord, remember—Lord, remember.*” Remember what? “Not me, but Christ. Remember He died for me. I am unworthy, but *He died for me.* His blood was shed for me.”

Have you ever noticed one thing lacking in the vessels of the tabernacle? There is no seat there found. And why, think you? I will tell you. Because the priests' work was *never done*. They offered “*oftentimes* the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for *sins*, for ever *sat down* on the right hand of God.” There is no repetition of His offering, there can be none. Whatever your sins are, His offering, *once* offered, is a full discharge for all. He “offered one sacrifice for sins.” For *whose* sins? For *sins*. But for whose? For *sins*. It does not say for *whose*, nor for *how many*, and if I had the whole sins of a nation on my shoulders this moment I should not care, with my eye on this word of the living God, for the next moment I might know that I am without a single one, free to go in boldly into God's presence because Christ died for *sins*, and therefore died for *my sins*. That veil was rent: rent, too, from the top to the bottom? Why from the top to the bottom? Because man had no hand in it. If man had rent that veil, it would only have

been to bring out swift destruction on himself. God Himself opened the way of access thus for the very vilest sinner into the holiest of all.

God will never enter into judgment with one who simply trusts in Christ. Those who believe on Him will be with Him, and like Him, before the judgment-seat is set. John v. 28 says, "The hour is coming in which 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 *judgment*."

"And does not that all take place at once?" No; more than a thousand years roll between the first part of that verse and the second. The Lord takes two days to empty the graves and to raise the dead. Will He not do it all at once? No; impossible! He comes first to fetch His own. He Himself descends into the air, and then His shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God are heard by some only. Part of the graves are emptied, the tombs are partially opened, and their occupants come forth. Where do they go? They go up to meet their Lord, to be for ever in His own bright presence. "They that have done good unto the resurrection of *life*," that is, of that eternal life which they possessed, because He gave it to them when they were still down here. The light that He lit in their hearts never went out, the life He gave never was extinguished, for there is a second thing that was not among the vessels of the sanctuary, there was no extinguisher: snuffers there were, to keep the light

bright, but no extinguisher, because once lighted, God never intended that that light should go out. "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28).

"They that have done good," then, *i.e.*, all who have received Christ, go up to be with Him, and the rest of the dead remain in their graves, and more than a thousand years roll by, and then there comes another opening of the graves, another resurrection of the dead, and they stand, small and great, before the great white throne; to be judged regarding those things written in the books, according to their works. "They that have done evil 'come forth' unto the resurrection of judgment." They stand there clothed in their sins, to be judged. Which of these two resurrections are *you*, my reader, going to have part in? Are you going to stand before Christ in your sins then, or do you know what it is now to have boldness to enter into the holiest, through that new and *living* way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh?

Do you know what it is to "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith"? And let me tell you "full assurance of faith" does not mean a very great amount of faith, but that which simply clings to Christ, and trusts in His atoning blood as its only ground of access to God to worship Him within the veil.

"Where do you worship?" one asked me, some time since. "Oh," I answered, "I am very High

Church; I worship inside the veil, in the holiest, that is, in heaven itself. I know of nowhere else where I can worship. If I worship the Lord Jesus, I must worship Him where He is." If you look on to *Hebrews xiii.* you will find something else combined with being "inside the veil," and that is, "outside the camp." Now, people oftentimes do not like this, they do not like reproach "outside the camp"; but depend upon it, the two go very much together, and if I am not prepared for the reproach of being "outside the camp" with a rejected Christ, I shall not know much of the joy of being "inside the veil."

These two truths are like the two blades of a pair of scissors—one is very little use without the other—to have one blade alone is no good at all, but when you have both joined together, they are useful. There is nothing so cutting as these two blades together—"inside the veil" and "outside the camp." People like to get "inside the veil," but depend upon it they do not remain there long unless they know something of what it is to be "outside the camp" too. That is why one hears so often of loss of joy: loss of peace, too, oftentimes.

May God give you, dear reader, to know the joy of standing on redemption ground within the veil, and the privilege of association with Christ "outside the camp."

"Lamb of God, through Thee we enter
 Inside the veil!
 Cleansed by Thee, we boldly venture
 Inside the veil."

THREE STAGES IN A SOUL'S SALVATION.

OUR Sunday afternoon meeting in a Gospel tent in Jamaica had come to a close, when a lady came to me desiring an interview.

"I do not at all like what you are doing in this town," she said.

"Oh! what is it that you object to, madam?" I inquired.

"Well, you are making people believe and say that they are saved, and I do not believe that any one can know that they are saved this side of death."

"Ah! I see. You are not saved, then?" I replied.

"Well, I am a constant attendant at church, and never miss the sacrament. I also help in Sunday school; but I should think it great presumption to say that I was saved."

"I should not call it presumption to say that at all, but, alas! you are not saved, for you are resting on an entirely wrong foundation, and if you die on the seat where you are sitting you would most surely be lost."

The lady did not like my answer, and indignantly left the tent without another word.

The friend who had brought her to the meeting was distressed at this, but I said, "Do not trouble about it, we shall hear of this lady again, for there are often three stages in the course of the salvation of a soul; they are madness, sadness, and gladness.

She has reached the first stage, for she is very angry at the plain way in which I have spoken to her."

I was not mistaken in my surmise, for while at breakfast the following morning I received a pencilled note from the lady asking if I would call and see her as soon as I could.

I went at once and was greeted by the words, "I did not like what you said to me in the tent yesterday."

"Probably not," I replied, "but what I said was true, was it not?"

She had to confess that it was. It had been a rude awakening, she said, but what must she do now?

She had reached the second stage now and was filled with sadness at the thought of her *lost* condition before God.

I talked to her for some time of the way of salvation, of the great mercy of God to lost and guilty sinners, but all failed to remove the sadness that filled her heart. Rising to go, I said, "Mrs W——, I must go, but will leave with you just three words. I will not tell you Who said them, or when He said them, or why He said them, I want you to find out those three things for yourself. The words are, 'It is finished.' Good-morning."

I met her the next day and saw, even before speaking to her, that those three glorious words had done their work. She had found out the meaning of them and Who it was who had uttered them, and she had reached the third stage in the history of her soul's blessing.

“ ‘It is finished,’ I can see it all very clearly now,” she said.

That lady had decided to seek admission into the Roman Catholic Church that very week, in order to find there the peace for which she had been longing. Needless to say that her intention in this direction was not carried out, for she had found in the finished work of Christ that which had given her the priceless blessing of salvation.

She is now with the Saviour who shed His blood to redeem her, for she was crushed beneath the ruins of the great Kingston earthquake. It was a sudden exit for her, but it was an equally sudden entrance into the presence of her blessed Lord.

I wonder if you, my reader, have passed through these three stages. It is not pleasant to be told the truth as to our sinfulness and need, it may make us angry even, but it is most needful, for we could never appreciate God's matchless grace, by which He freely saves the lost, if we did not realise our need of it. As this need dawns upon our souls we are sobered and saddened by it; but oh! how great the joy of seeing that all the work was finished long ago by God's own Son, and that simple trust in Him secures the blessing for us without any work or price on our part.

“ Oh, I am so happy in Jèsus,
From sin and from judgment set free ;
So happy that He is my Saviour,
So happy that Jesus loves me ! ”

BELIEF AND CONFESSION.

“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.

BELIEF and confession are both very important acts in connection with a soul's salvation and peace, and while the former is much insisted upon, and rightly so, too, the latter is often greatly neglected. “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” Nor can they be divorced without serious loss to a soul.

Confession, or the bearing testimony to what God has wrought in the soul, brings assurance of salvation. It is astonishing how many in the present day, who apparently have believed the gospel, are not in the enjoyment of peace.

How is it that there is this lack of the assurance of salvation? Chiefly because, that while believing the testimony of the gospel in their heart, they have failed to boldly confess the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord with their mouth.

Now, notice, the Lord would not allow the poor woman He had healed, as set forth in Luke viii. 43-48, to leave Him until she had *confessed*, and that before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. Nor did she depart from His presence until she had heard from His lips those precious words, “Thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace.” There could be no question,

after the Lord's interview with her that day, as to the possession of peace and full assurance.

Now I would like to give you two cases that came under my own observation. Having spoken in a room in the south of London, I was returning in a tramcar when a young person entered with a Bible in her hand, and took her seat beside me. She had just come out of a very large building, where an eminent servant of Christ had been preaching. Entering into conversation with her about the preciousness of the gospel to which she had been listening, and being anxious to know if she were a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I put to her the following questions. "Do you know that you are a sinner?" To which she readily replied that she did. "Do you know that Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" To this she also replied in the affirmative. I then said, "I suppose you are a Christian, and can say that you are saved?" To this third question I could get no reply. Confession she evidently shrank from. So I remarked, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing. You say that you know that you are a sinner, and that you know that Jesus Christ came into the world to *save* sinners, yet you cannot say that you are saved." Here I had to leave her, being unable to get any confession from her lips, though I have little doubt from her manner and expression that she was a believer in the Lord. Quite different was it in the other case I wish to bring before you.

It was that of a young person who attended a preaching in a room in Surrey. After the preach-

ing had ended, she remained behind, and upon my putting similar questions to those which I put to the young person in the tramcar, she replied with earnestness to them all, and before she left the room, *confessed* that she trusted Jesus as her own personal Saviour. The result was that the next Lord's Day evening she came with a beaming face, in the full assurance of salvation, bringing with her an unconverted friend, who also was brought to know the Lord Jesus Christ and to confess Him as her Lord.

My dear reader, I have brought these simple facts before you, feeling the great importance of not only believing on Jesus but of confessing Him as your Lord, which many, I am sorry to say, neglect to do, and, as a consequence, remain secret and doubting believers.

Let me put some questions to you. Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? Has He become your own personal Saviour? Have you confessed Him? If not, delay no longer, that peace, perfect peace, may fill your soul.

Let me add, I can truly sympathise with any who have difficulty in confessing Him, for it was some time after I had trusted the Lord, before I had boldness to confess Him. I feared lest I might fall away and so bring dishonour upon His precious name, but this was only a temptation of the evil one, to bring doubt and unbelief into my soul, and draw me away from Him.

At last by the grace and help of God I confessed Him, after which I had great peace and full assur-

ance of salvation. May you, if you have not already done so, confess boldly to your friends what the Lord has done for your soul.

It is written, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and his Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke ix. 26).

E. M.

"BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT."

(1 JOHN iv. 17.)

WHILST musing over this scripture some little time ago, I was struck with these words, "That we may have boldness in the day of judgment." "Whatever does it mean?" I said to myself, when suddenly there flashed across my mind a narrative which forcibly illustrates this blessed truth. A Christian officer was going out to India with his wife and family. The vessel encountered a tremendous storm, the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, and the hurricane raged with fearful fury. All was consternation and confusion on board the vessel, but calmness and composure were depicted in the officer's countenance. His wife, who was much afraid, turning to him said, "How can you be so calm in the midst of such danger?"

He said nothing for a moment, then drew his

sword, and pointing it to her bosom, said, "Does that alarm you?" "No," she replied, "I am not afraid of your sword, because I know you love me too well to harm me."

"Just so," was her loving husband's rejoinder; "the hand that wields this sword is the hand of one you trust, and of the one who loves you, and you have no fear, although its point is towards your heart. So, in like manner, I have no fear when the tempest rages, for God, who is my Father, wields the thunderbolt and guides the lightning's flash, and I know and believe He loves me, and that I am safe and secure in His hand in the midst of it all."

My dear reader, it is this blessed knowledge of God, and His wonderful love as revealed in the gift of His own beloved Son, that banishes every dread and fear from our hearts, and in its place inspires whole-hearted confidence in God. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear." It must be so, for it is God's love, and therefore must be perfect. You find three times over His love told out in an unmistakable way. If He loves us at all, it must be with a holy love. This, then, brings to light our sins. What does He do? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (ver. 10). He can put our many sins away now, on the ground of the blessed finished work His own Son hath accomplished.

But still there is something we have not got, and, oh, how the love of God has met us! "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" (ver. 9). Our Adam life was forfeited: "death passed upon all men" (Rom. v. 12); but, thank God, "He that hath the Son hath life (1 John v. 11-13); and as if this in itself was not sufficient to calm our hearts, it is boldly written, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

If He is my Saviour, how then can He be my judge? Ere He takes the character of a judge, He has first of all been my Saviour. At Calvary's cross His love was expressed to poor sinners like you and me. Dear reader, God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32)—delivered Him up for our sins, to death, and judgment which were ours, which we richly and righteously deserved, and which would have swamped us eternally. Jesus bore, that we might never bear, the Almighty's righteous judgment, and cried: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me. Why art thou so far from helping me" (Ps. xxii. 1). Consider what it must have been for us to be for ever far from God, eternally banished from His presence.

We deserved it for our sins, but the perfect boundless love of our God has devised the glorious means whereby poor sinners, no matter how vile, may not only be saved from eternal punishment in hell, but be blessedly exalted into His own very presence, in all the unclouded favour that dwells there. His perfect love meets us just where we were. W. N.

FOUR UNSAFE WAYS.

ONE day whilst looking through a column of advertisements, the above words caught my eye. I read no more, but often since I have been reminded by those words, of a world of sinners travelling to eternity by various "unsafe ways." Let me speak of four.

The first is the *Way of Unbelief*.

Infidelity is doubtless on the increase. Thousands are openly infidel to-day whose fathers would have died, if need be, for the faith their children now deny. These unbelievers joke of days gone by, when the "old folks" read and received the Scriptures as the very word of God. They speak jestingly of the faithful preachers, long gone to rest, who once thundered from their pulpits of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. And if they go to church, to while away an hour, they are relieved and gratified to hear some learned essay read on the "explosion of eternal torment theories," or perhaps, the "recent remarkable discoveries of science." They think the world has grown much wiser since their childhood's days, and imagine that only a few weak women, with the ignorant and the poor, believe the Bible now.

Alas! poor souls, they little dream that they are being blinded by the devil. The Apostle Paul reveals the secret of their unbelief. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom 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. 3, 4).

Reader, is the bandage on your eyes? You are lost, remember, if an unbeliever. You are on your way to hell, if your feet are in the way of unbelief. I do not wish to argue with you, though I do not think it would require a sage to answer your objections. Just the other day a friend of mine was speaking with an infidel, who said he would not believe in anything he could not see. "Do you believe that you have any brains within your head?" inquired my friend. "Brains! of course I have," he answered. "But you cannot see them. Why do you believe that you have any?" "Oh, that is another thing," said he, a little taken aback.

Be wise, and, like a little child, believe the Word of God. You imagine you are very wise, perhaps, but Scripture says you are a fool. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. liii. 1). It tells us, too, just why you love the darkness of your infidelity. "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 19).

Beware and hasten from this "unsafe way." It is dark and slippery. May you never reach its end.

Another "unsafe way" is the *Way of Unconcern*.

You may not be an infidel. The Bible may be true or it may only be a fable. It does not much concern you. You want a good time in this present evil

world, and are content to leave "the world to come whereof we speak" alone. You do not wish to be bothered with such questions. There is a verse of Scripture that describes your case exactly. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21). That "strong man armed" is Satan, and "his goods" are just such people as yourself. You may not like to admit this, but you are not Christ's, and so you must belong to Satan. I carry two coins in my pocket. One is a genuine American silver dollar, the other is a counterfeit. There is no neutral coin, partly good and partly bad. And you are saved or lost—glory-bound or journeying towards the lake of fire your sins deserve. The "way of unconcern" will surely lead you there. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3).

How can you be indifferent with eternity before you—that long forever that will never know an end? Unconcern is suicidal when your never-dying soul is in the balance. You may get concerned too late. God by His Spirit rouse you now from your lethargy.

God is not indifferent to your fate. "Why will ye die?" He calls beseechingly. He gave His only begotten Son, that you might not perish, but have everlasting life.

Satan is concerned. He wants you for his prey for ever. He plans and schemes to keep you unconcerned. "His goods" are precious, and he fears to lose you. And the Christian friend who placed

this magazine in your hand is not indifferent either. You alone are unconcerned.

A sight of your sins would wake you up. A good square look at yourself, in the light of the Word of God, would rouse you from your apathy. It declares, "We are all as an unclean thing." Where, then, must you go when you die? To hell. Yes, friend, make no mistake. Unless you are cleansed by the blood of Christ, your sins must shut you out of heaven for ever.

Yet another "unsafe way" is the *Way of Unreality*, in other words hypocrisy.

We are living in a day of shams. Unreality seems stamped on almost everything we see or hear. There are social shams, political shams, and worst of all, religious shams. I once stopped at a Christian lady's house, and when the time came to retire she said, "You need not look for pillow shams in my house, as I hate shams of every kind." And what honest soul does not?

Professing Christian, have you been converted, are you born again? Remember, masks are coming off some day. You may masquerade to-day and palm yourself off as a Christian, but God knows you, and will some day search you out. "The hypocrite's hope shall perish" (Job viii. 13). May your false hope perish now, in time, ere you perish with it in that lake of fire and brimstone where "all liars" have their part. Counterfeit coins may pass for a time as genuine, but they are at last discovered.

Two things prove bad coins to be but imitations.

First, they are light, not heavy or so solid as the genuine. And unreal souls are nearly always light. They may, of course, on Sundays pull a long face, but through the week they dance, sing comic songs, read romances, crack jokes, and in every possible way enjoy a Christless world. Saved souls are solemnised. They are like persons who have just narrowly escaped some frightful accident. They know that they are brands plucked by God's mighty arm of love from the everlasting burnings. They know the awful cost of their salvation was the sufferings of the Son of God on Calvary's tree. This makes them sober. I do not mean it sours their faces, but it takes a deal of nonsense from their hearts.

Second, counterfeits have not the ring of honest coins. Some experts can tell them by their ring alone, and counterfeits in spiritual things have got a tell-tale ring. If you ask them when they were converted they will say they always were converted, or they were brought up Christians. Most of them deny that you can know in this life that you are saved. They will justify themselves if cornered, and delight to tell what they have done, are doing, or intend to do. They leave Christ out, or make Him a sort of make-weight towards salvation, if they speak of Him at all.

How different with souls that really know salvation. Question them, and you will find that if they speak of self at all it is to own that they are vile and undeserving in themselves. They will not speak of anything that they have done (unless it be their sins). They love to tell what Christ the Lord has done for them,

and give Him all the praise and glory for their soul's salvation.

Be real, my reader. Do not deceive yourself and think because your name is on some church book it is in "the book of life." "Ye must be born again" (John iii. 3).

The last "unsafe way" is the *Way of Uncertainty*.

Some who read these lines, perhaps, would like to know for certain they are saved. They are not infidels, neither are they unconcerned. They may fear, at times, that they are hypocrites, but do not wish to be. They are honest in their hearts, but lack assurance; in other words, they are in the "way of uncertainty." And it is an "unsafe way," because they may discover in the end that they were self-deceived.

Now, how can any one be sure that they are saved and not deceived? By trusting Christ and just believing what God says of those who do. If they are trusting Christ alone they cannot be deceived. Their faith may not be very strong, but if its object be the Son of God, the sinner's friend and Saviour, all is well: their souls are saved. They may know it, too, because God says, "All that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

Reader, are you longing for assurance? Listen! God says, "Ye may know." Not "hope," "think," or "feel," but "know." Know what? "That ye have eternal life." And how? By what is "written." Not by feelings, emotions, or experiences, but by the Word of God. And who may "know" that they

possess "eternal life"? Poor sinners, all unworthy in themselves, who from their hearts "believe on the name of the Son of God." "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. 13).

Three questions, reader. "How readest thou?" "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (Luke x. 26; Acts viii. 30; John ix. 35).

One safe way and one alone is spoken of in Scripture. It is Christ. Hear His words, "I am the way."

C. K.

BETHLEHEM'S SHEPHERDS.

(Read Luke ii. 1-22.)

I DO not wonder that heaven went into a perfect ecstasy the moment it was promulgated that man could be saved. And how can he be saved? Only by the coming down from heaven of the Son of God, the Saviour!

And surely, dear reader, if God has been loving enough to provide a Saviour, the sinner should have wisdom enough to avail himself of the Saviour which God has provided.

Have you availed yourself of the Saviour, and the present salvation God presents to you in the gospel of His Son? It is the grandest news that ever fell on mortal ears—a *Saviour* for ruined *sinners*!

Let the shepherds of Bethlehem show you the way to the Saviour. I want you to be like these shepherds; they are the best illustration of good gospel listeners that I know. They are men who hear the gospel, receive it, embrace it, enjoy it, act upon it, tell their neighbours all about it, and then go home with hearts brimming over with praise and worship to God because of it!

Luke ii. opens with the birth of the Saviour. Did you ever notice that God tells the story of creation only once, and in few words; but *twice* He tells, with many particulars, the wondrous tale of the *birth* of His Son, and *four* times over the Holy Ghost records the *death* of the Saviour, and His resurrection. *Why* is this so? Because it is of very little matter if you know about creation or not; but it is of great matter for you to know about Him who is the *Creator* and the *Redeemer*.

Four times over the Holy Ghost tells the story of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, because that death alone avails to bring the sinner to God. On the actual knowledge of Him who was born, and Him who died, hangs the eternal salvation of your precious soul and mine.

The Roman Emperor, in his pride and folly, desired to know how many subjects he reigned over, and not only so, but their nationality, and also their city; and so Joseph and his espoused wife Mary had to go up to Bethlehem, their native city, to be enrolled, *i.e.*, to have the census taken. As a matter of fact the census was not taken till fourteen years later

(see verse 2), but Augustus' edict caused Scripture to be fulfilled as to the birth of Christ (see Micah v. 2), and then, for political reasons, he revoked the edict, and postponed the census.

The pride of the Roman Emperor was the means God used, however, for the fulfilment of Scripture, that the King of Israel, God's Messiah, should be born in Bethlehem. Note the manner of His birth: Joseph and Mary came up, and there was no room for them in the inn. "Oh," you say, "that was a coincidence." Ah, do you think so? Supposing Joseph had been a great man, with a large cavalcade, and he had sent ahead to order apartments, do you think there would have been room for him? I think so!

Hosts often make room for the rich in their inns, though the poor be put out. The Lord came as the poor man, though He came into the world His own hands had made, content to be reputed the son of a carpenter.

He came in this lowly way so that there never could be a poor sinner who could say, "I could not go to Him, for He was too great to understand my case."

Jesus took His place down here at the outset as a poor man; God came into the world in this gracious way to win man's heart. In perfect grace Jesus came, content to be cradled in one man's manger, to die on another man's cross, and be buried in a third man's tomb.

Do you still say that it was a coincidence that there was no room in the inn? Then I ask you—Is

it a coincidence that there is no room in your heart for Christ? There has been room for your friends; room for folly, for sin, for the world, for vanity; room for pleasure, but no room for Him!

Is that true of you? Well, let me tell you this: though there has been no room for *Him* in *your* heart, there is room for *you* in *His* heart. Though there was no room for *Christ* in *man's* world, He sends out the message that there is room for *man* in *His* world, *i.e.*, heaven! "Yet there is room" (Luke xiv. 22).

The sinner's heart is like the iceberg often; but beneath the rays of the sun the very iceberg melts, and beneath the beams of Jesus' love, the very hardest heart must melt too. Let Him make room for Himself in your heart, and let Him get a *whole* heart, too; for I believe, if He does not get the first place, and the chief place, He gets very little place.

If God tells you of His dear Son, do not you refuse Him. Look at these shepherds, they are at their business, and the Lord sends an angel to preach the gospel to them. Here is a message from heaven for sinners on earth; God visits them with a message for eternity, and what do you think is the effect? They are sore afraid. The first effect of the gospel is to make people *sorrowful*—it makes them glad afterwards. There are two lovely points in the way the message comes; not only it comes right down to the men where they were, God, as it were, interrupting them in their business to show them there is something better than their business, even the salvation of their souls, but there is more than this:

they are sensible of the presence of God with the message—"the glory of the Lord shone round about them." I covet that—the holy, solemn, searching sense of the presence of God Himself with the gospel message. God is there, God is dealing with those shepherds, and they are *sore afraid*, and rightly so; they are properly solemnised before God, and I maintain this is the first effect of the gospel, the sinner begins to feel he is in the presence of God, and that he is unfit for that presence.

But you will find, the moment the right kind of fear is produced in the soul, that God comes in to remove the fear. "Oh," you say, "I have never feared." Then, my friend, I am sorry for you, for the days of your fear are coming—the days of your terrible dismay are coming, in which no voice will bid you "Fear not." The mark of the unregenerate man is this; "there is no fear of God before his eyes." He sports with God's grace, risking His terrible judgment. O man, O woman, wake up! The day of your terror is coming. The first thing a soul knows when God is dealing with him is fear and trembling. A man sees the glory of God, and his own unfitness for it. Romans iii. shows us the *unconverted* man *unfit* for the glory of God; Romans v. gives us the *believer* rejoicing in view of that glory, because he knows he is fit for it.

The jailor of Philippi woke up when the glory of the Lord came into his prison, and he cried out, "What must I do to be saved?"—he saw his own unfitness for that glory.

When the glory of God shone in on the prophet's soul in Isaiah vi., what does he say? The seraphim cry, "Holy," but he cries, "Unclean, unclean, woe is me!" Oh, my reader, have you ever learned that you are undone, unclean? "I am a man of unclean lips," the prophet says. Why unclean lips? Because, deeper still, deeper than the lips, there is an unclean heart, which produces unclean thoughts. Then the right fear being produced in the prophet's soul, the seraphim *flies* with a live coal from off the altar. God loves to dispel the fear which He Himself has produced.

Have you ever felt this fear? I am very much afraid of you if you have not! Have you seen yourself in the presence of God? Have you felt what a sinner you are, and owned what a sinner you are before God, convicted by His presence.

What is conscience? It is the eye of God on the soul, the knowledge of good and evil in God's presence; knowing I am full of *evil*, and there is no *good* in me.

Repentance is the soul judging itself before God—owning it is, what God says it is, a *totally lost sinner*. If you are not a *lost* sinner, I have no gospel for you, for it was to save *the lost* Jesus came. When once I discover I am *lost*, I am glad to look outside myself for a *deliverer*, a *saviour*. It is a beautiful thing to see a soul going down, and owning itself lost, and really anxious. Are *you* anxious, my friend? If so, I have two distinct words from the Lord for you, "*Fear not.*" Are you troubled and cast down?

"Fear not" is God's assuring word to you. Do you feel the weight of sin? Then you are the very one Jesus came for. He came to save sinners, to seek the lost.

"Fear not," says the angel, "I have for you to-night the very news you need. I bring you to-night tidings which will produce great joy." The first effect is fear in the presence of God, and then, when the tidings God has to tell fall on the heart, what comes next? Great joy; and now, if you are anxious—if you are burdened by the weight of sin—I stand, an ambassador to you from the courts of glory, with this Divine message, "Fear not." And oh, I have better tidings for you than the angel had for the shepherds. He could tell of a Saviour born; I can tell you of the death and resurrection of that Saviour, of the work that has been done whereby the sinner's redemption is completed, Satan's power destroyed, death and hell vanquished, and lost man saved!

"To you is born a *Saviour*." Now, a *Saviour* is for the *lost!* not those who are *going* to be *lost*, but who are *lost already*. God never would have sent a *Saviour* if man had not been lost, for He is not a *helper*, but a *Saviour*. There is one thing Christ absolutely refuses to do—to *help* a sinner; His saints He helps. The Lord will *save* a sinner, He will not *help* him. *Help* is for a man who can do something. Christ comes down to the sinner when he is dead in his sins, utterly helpless, dies Himself for the sinner's sins, and saves him. Are

you saved or lost, I ask *you*, my friend? "I am not lost," you reply. Are you saved, then? "No." Then you must be lost. "Oh," you say, "I do not think that." Well, then, would you like to die just now where you are? If you did die this moment, would you be saved or lost? If I should be lost if I died this moment, I stand in the position of a lost man now. But the Lord came to seek and to save the lost. There is a lovely alternative and a dread alternative. What is the lovely alternative? I am saved the moment I come to Christ. What is the dread alternative? If I am not *now* in Christ, I *am now* lost.

You are either *Christ's, saved, and on your road to glory*; or you are *lost, and on your road to hell*.

This company of shepherds hear the joyful news that for lost man there is a Saviour; and as they hear it, the hosts of heaven seem to come trooping together, glad to hear the joyful news that there is a Saviour for man. Heaven seems to go into an ecstasy over the very thought of sinners being saved, and the heavenly hosts come down to give praise for it. It is like the picture in Luke xv. where we hear of "joy in heaven."

A *Saviour* for man—and how does He save? By Himself undergoing the judgment due to man's sin. He saves by bearing the punishment instead of me, by dying in my place. In bitter derision men cried, as He hung upon that cross, "*Himself* he cannot save." Is it "*cannot*"? No! no! no! Himself He *will* not save, that He may save you and me; because

if He save Himself, He cannot save man, and He chooses to save man.

On the cross Jesus takes on Himself the judgment due from God to wicked man: He takes the wages of sin, He meets the claims of God, He does that which can eternally redeem you, and then He expires. He dies as no other man ever died. Not in weakness but in *strength*; He cries with a *loud* voice, and gives up His spirit to God. And then the grave receives Him, but does it hold Him? No, it cannot; He comes forth again, Conqueror over it, risen from the dead, and by His resurrection proving that the sinner's Substitute is free.

An angel comes down again at His resurrection, as at His birth. He rolls away the stone. To let Jesus out? Far be the thought! It is to let us look in and see an empty tomb—to see that He who died is dead no longer, that He is risen.

Why is it there is such profound silence there? Angels praise at His birth, but at His resurrection there is no song. The angels seem to stand back now and say, "It is for you sinners to sing; He did not die for us, He died for you."

He died, He rose, and now He is on the throne of God. What are *you* going to do, now you *have* heard of Him? Mark what the shepherds did: "And it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us *now* go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." The moment they

heard the tidings they said, "Let us go and see!" What will *you* do?

Where can *you* see the Saviour now? In Bethlehem? No! Upon the cross? No! In the grave? No! In Galilee? No! Where, then? Up in glory at the right hand of God.

"And they came with haste." They lost no time; they were not even exhorted to come: they are so earnest to come, they need no exhortation. They are splendid gospel listeners. They came and *found*. It is what always happens. They who seek find! Oh, cannot you picture that scene as they bowed down before Jesus, the babe in the manger?

They heard, believed, sought, found, and accepted the Saviour, praised and worshipped God, and then they made known abroad the good news, We have sought and found the Saviour, *a babe in Bethlehem, but our Saviour!*

"And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." They *were* anxious sinners, but were calmed by the words "Fear not." they hear about the Saviour, they seek Him, they find Him, they worship Him, and they return, praising God for all they have *heard* and *seen*.

The Holy Ghost makes Christ so real and precious to the soul that believes Him, that He is seen and known better than the nearest friend.

The tale has come out that God has sent the Saviour, and what should you do? Accept Him simply; you cannot *buy* salvation, it must be God's *gift* to you.

The sinner comes to God oftentimes for salvation and *brings* something. "No!" says God, "I cannot sell it, I will *give* it to you."

May the Lord print upon your heart the blessed news that He has sent you a Saviour; and if He has sent you a Saviour, will you not accept Him—and, more, *confess* Him? These shepherds make known abroad the Saviour they have found; and let me tell you there is nothing that so impresses another as to be able to say, *I know Him myself*—this is the One I have found—He has saved me.

May this be your language henceforth—

"I have a glorious Saviour
 Who died upon the tree;
 My sins He bore and suffered there
 The wrath of God for me!
 And my salvation now is sure
 (Since Christ the work has done),
 For God declares in righteousness
 He owes it to His Son.

Oh! Jesus is my Saviour,
 'The Mighty God' His name!
 To seek and save the lost and vile,
 As Son of man He came.
 In all His great atoning work
 The will of God is done;
 And God delights, in righteousness,
 To bless me by His Son."

“IS THERE ANY WORD FROM THE LORD? . . . THERE IS.”

(JER. xxxvii. 17.)

“**H**ATH God said” was the first attack of the devil in Eden, and so to-day men follow suit, arguing and reasoning as to the meaning of Scripture, instead of accepting it as it stands. God means just what He says. I well know there are statements made by men which can be doubted, and which cannot be believed without hesitation. But not so God’s statements, “God is not a man that he should lie . . . hath he said, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. xxiii. 19).

Then if He says,

“THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE,

for all have sinned,” He means just what He says. All have sinned—not some have sinned more than others, but “there is no difference, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 23). “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” But, oh blessed fact,

“THERE IS FORGIVENESS

with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Ps. cxxx. 4). If one sin excludes from God’s presence, we may well exclaim, Who, who shall stand? Thank God, we have those precious words, “There is forgiveness with thee.” No need to argue or question it, it is plain and unmistakable, there is forgiveness with the Lord

—none other. All else *need* forgiveness; why, then, not go straight to Him for it? You need it, then why try to produce it by religiousness, or to procure it, no matter what church dignity may profess to bestow it?

The only One who forgives sins is the One who died for sins, and “to him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts x. 43). Beloved reader, do you believe in Him? If so, “your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake” (1 John ii. 12). But remember, if God’s statement in the past declared there is no difference, His present attitude is this, “there is forgiveness with the Lord” (Acts xiii. 38).

But, dear reader, think of the future. “Because

THERE IS WRATH,

beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee” (Job xxxvi. 18). Jesus has shed His precious blood, and given Himself a ransom for all. Blessed tidings! Despise them not, lest in thine unbelief thou be cut off in judgment; then no ransom can deliver, no blood can save. “Why harden thy impenitent heart, and heap up wrath against the day of wrath?” (Rom. ii. 5). One moment, and God might take you away. Careless, undecided soul, heed His warning, because there is wrath. Beware lest He take thee away with His stroke, and thou perish for all eternity. W. N.

THREE APPEALS.

GOD showed the greatness of His power and wisdom when He created the world we live in, some six thousand years ago, and has shown the greatness of His compassion towards perishing sinners by the way He appeals to them in His Word.

The appeals referred to are contained in the following portions of Scripture:—

The servants' appeal (Isa. lv. 1).

The saints' appeal (Rev. xxii. 17).

The Saviour's appeal (John vii. 37).

By means of these God has furnished us with a three-fold cord of Scripture testimony, which the power of earth and hell combined can never break. Mortals may make and afterwards break their resolutions, and fail to keep their rash and solemn vows, without affecting God's purposes in the least; and Satan knows the depravity of human nature, and readily lends his aid to those that heed his suggestions, thus ensnaring his victims.

The blessed God has means at His command by which He breaks the snares of Satan, and sets the sinner free, to which the Apostle Paul refers as follows: "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). We shall presently see what perfect agreement there is on the part of these remarkable witnesses to the grace of God. Each message borne by them brings with it

the warmth of divine love, while waiting for a response on the part of man.

The servant cries, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." The saints say, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and the Saviour's words are, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

What could equal the breadth, beauty, and bountifulness of the grace of God, as expressed in the words, "every one," "whosoever," and "any man"? They have been divinely selected by God with a view to the salvation of men, and therefore are perfectly adapted to the need of sinners everywhere. Now, could anything be more blind than the unbelief of the human heart which prompts an anxious soul to say—

"Living water, flowing free ;
But who's to prove it flows for me?"

When Moses smote the rock in the wilderness the water flowed forth, and flowed for the whole congregation of Israel, without a single exception, or any conditions whatever on the part of God. The water from the smitten rock flowed for "every one" in the camp, for "whosoever" and "any man," and each were responsible to make it their own by dipping it up and drinking it. Also when Christ died, He died for all, and His death has opened the fountain of life in order to quench the thirst which He creates by His spirit in our souls.

There appears to have been no need whatever for Moses and Aaron, or any other servants of God, to

enter the tents of the Israelites and invite them to come and drink of the flowing water from the smitten rock. Ah, no. Their sense of need was too deep and real to require anything like an appeal from their leaders.

And though so sadly strange, it is surely true that when it is a question of eternal life in Christ and eternal gain and glory, man's indifference with respect to the gift of God could not be greater. God often has to add the pressure of His hand (by means of trial and affliction) to the power of His Word, as a means of giving us possession of that which His love delights to bestow on His creatures.

The little word of one syllable already quoted, and which forms the preface of Isaiah's appeal, only occurs twice in the Scriptures. It is a word of immense importance, though so small. "Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north," is the anxious cry of the prophet Zechariah (Zech. ii. 6).

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," is the earnest appeal of Isaiah. One was just as anxious to free the captives from Babylon as the other was to bring them to the fountain of living waters after they had made their escape.

The word "ho," then, is a choice one, and beautifully in keeping with the Scriptures, which declares the freeness of salvation to "every one," "whosoever," and "any man." It is a word which was never intended to be trifled with, or taken upon the unclean lips of unconverted prophets or preachers. It was formed in the hearts of those we have referred

to by the Holy Spirit before it flowed from their lips, and was used by them as a means of showing how deeply they desired the welfare of others, proving their sincerity as the Lord's servants, not only by what they said, but by the way they said it.

Eternal life as well as the Holy Spirit is the gift of God in Jesus Christ. And many enjoy it, when they possess it, but none save one, can impart it to others; therefore the last appeal is all the more remarkable, and the gift and Giver are identified when Jesus Christ cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." On another occasion He said, "Him that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John vi. 35).

The opposite will be fulfilled in those that not only pass on, regardless of the earnest pleadings of the prophet, and the beseechings of ten thousands of God's people, but refuse to lend an ear to the Saviour's voice, and therefore when the saints are drinking evermore of the fulness of God's pleasure, never to thirst again, these, we read, will ever thirst, for want of that which was freely offered them on earth, and which they stoutly refused to receive.

"Ho, ye thirsty, Jesus calls you;
 Jesus came to give
 Wine and milk of free salvation;
 Come to Him and live.
 Whosoever will may take it!
 Hear the gospel cry,
 Without price and without money,
 Come to Him and buy."

"I LOVED HIM."

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them; they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them."—Hos. xi. 1-4.

WHEN *Israel was a child, then I loved him.*" These verses, part of the record of the insensibility of Israel, in Hosea's day, to the mercy, the goodness, and the grace of our God, written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come, may be considered as illustrating and exemplifying God's dealings with us in our day. I loved. I called. I taught. I healed. I drew. I liberated. I fed. God's love is like Himself, eternal. When did He begin to love? He says, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). Well may the believer sing—

"Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;
It tells God's love unbounded
To ruined man, ere time began,
Or heaven and earth were founded.

Thine is a love eternal,
That found in us its pleasure,
That brought Thee low to bear our woe,
And make us Thine own treasure."

Many years ago, a teacher asked his class, "Boys, who began to love, God or the sinner?" All, save one, answered promptly, "God." The teacher said,

"Yes, right, boys." Turning to the least boy in the class, he said, "Why don't you speak, John?" He replied, "Please, teacher, God never began." Divinely taught child! "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. xxi. 16). True, God never began. He cannot change. With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He says to His own, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3). But there was a time when the poor sinner, through grace, believed God, believed in His love, and *he began to love* Him whom he never loved before. There *was* a change in *him*, a wondrous change: once a child of wrath, and now a child of God; once far off, and now, in Christ Jesus, made nigh by the blood of Christ. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John v. 1). And now he can say, I love Him, because He first loved me; not because He first *began* to love. No, His love is like Himself, eternal, unchangeable, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.

"*And [I] called my son out of Egypt.*" And God is now calling poor sinners out of this world, of which Egypt was a figure, and of which Satan is the prince and god (see John xii. 31, xiv. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 2); and our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. i. 4). But what response is there to His call?

“As they called them, so they went from them. they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images,” one preferring a yoke of oxen, a piece of land, or a wife, to God; another preferring forbidden fruit, a mess of pottage, or thirty pieces of silver, to Him. Alas, alas! we may ask, What have we not preferred to Jesus? There has been nothing too foolish, vain, contemptible, or wicked for us to indulge in, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.

“I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.” Yes, God has gone on, watching over us, preserving from dangers, seen and unseen, supplying our need, and doing us good in His abounding mercy; every pulse that beat we owed to Him, and every breath we drew; but we went on, thoughtless, careless, indifferent, rushing ignorantly toward destruction.

“But they knew not that I healed them.” But, above all, He manifested His love toward us by sending 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). The eternal Son of God, the Word, became incarnate, saying, “A body hast thou prepared me.” “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God” (Heb. x. 5, 9). He came into our circumstances, tempted in all points as we are, apart from sin, telling out the heart of God in every step of His path: and then on the cross, that Holy One and True, who knew no sin, was made of God to be sin for us, in order that we might become

the righteousness of God in Him; and there the Son of man was glorified, and God was glorified in Him, so that God raised Him from among the dead, and set Him down at His right hand upon the throne of God. And consequent upon this, God has now sent down the Holy Ghost to tell us of the perfection and value of Christ's work upon the cross; that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15); that God our Saviour desires that "all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 3, 4); that "through this man [Christ Jesus, raised, and now glorified at God's right hand] is preached the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39); and that "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws." God, giving us, by His grace, to believe this good news, and by His goodness leading us to repentance, has drawn us to Himself with broken, contrite spirits, forgiven us our sins, justified us freely, delivering us from the power of indwelling sin, and creating us anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Thus He gives us joy and peace in believing.

"And I laid meat unto them." And now He feeds and nourishes the divine life in our souls. He

tells us of that blessed One who fills His heart, the One whom He delights to honour, who is the centre of all His purposes, who fills all heaven with His glory and His praise, the One who is the object, the expression, and the channel of His love; and He gives us also to find our all in Him. And this blessed Person, our adorable Redeemer, is He alone who satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness. He is everything for us, and becomes everything to us, our all and in all. We feed upon the very food of God, and find, increasingly, beauty, perfection, and satisfaction in Him, who is altogether lovely, our Beloved and our Friend.

“ His beauty shineth far above
 A seraph's power of praise,
 And I shall live and learn His love,
 Through everlasting days.
 The knowing that He loveth me
 Hath made my cup run o'er,
 Yes, Jesus all my song shall be,
 To-day and evermore.”

J. G.

FRAGMENT.

THE difference between the law and the gospel is immense. The law is all about me; what I ought to be and do, not do and not be. The gospel is all about Christ, what He is, what He has done, is doing, and will yet do. The gospel ignores me as to having any power to do anything. There is nothing *about me* in the gospel, it is all about Christ; but, thank God, it is all *for me*, and hence I know I am saved.

W. T. P. W.

THE DYING INFIDEL.

THE doctor had spoken plainly, for his patient had wished to know the whole truth. This patient was an infidel, a bold one he imagined, but to be told that in three months' time he would be forced out of this life, had shaken him somewhat, but it was evidently only momentarily.

An infidel friend called to see him, was very sympathetic, of course, but could only say "Don't show the white feather, B——," and he had replied that he would not.

A Christian relative called to see him and suggested that he might be glad to have a visit from some one who could tell him of God's way of salvation.

His reply was harsh and decisive. "I do not want any one to come here talking rubbish, and if you have nothing better to say to me stay away."

This was a burden and sore trouble to the Christian ; he confided it to me, and many a prayer went up to God that the dying infidel might have his eyes opened.

The weeks passed, but the answer to the prayers came at last, in the shape of a request that the Christian relative would go to his bedside as quickly as possible. I went instead ; he knew me by name and motioned me to a chair by his bedside, then he said to me with a thrill of earnestness that I shall not soon forget, "I have been looking DEATH in the face for two months and I am not ready."

Yes, the bravery and the infidelity had taken their flight from that sick chamber ; but was this the "white feather" of cowardice in the presence of a great foe, or was it "repentance not to be repented of"? This was the question in my heart as I interrogated him as to how this change had come about.

It was evident that God had been speaking to him, however, and that this was real soul trouble, and with a great gladness in my heart I told him of Jesus, God's way of salvation. I told him the story as I would have told it to a child, and he who had boasted in the breadth and strength of his mind listened to that story as a child would have listened.

Before I reached the end of it he put his hand on mine and said, "Stop." Then, while down his cheeks tears flowed fast, he said, "Lord Jesus, I trust in Thee, I trust Thee about all the past, and about all the future, and with the present." Then turning to me he said, "You told me that He would not cast me out if I came to Him, did you not?" "Yes," I replied, "I told you what He said, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.'" "I have come to Him and He has received me. Will you pray?"

I did so and left him, and saw him again and heard of him often. His witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus was very sweet and clear. A few days before the end he said to his doctor, "You have done your best for me, and I thank you. I am not afraid to go, and if you will hand me that New Testament I will show you the words that showed

me the way." And there he went over the life-giving words, first showing the futility of all human works (Eph. ii. 8), the sinfulness of all (Rom. iii. 23), the love of God for sinners, and the death of Jesus for the ungodly (Rom. v. 6-8), and last of all the blessed fact that God can freely justify the ungodly (Rom. iii. 24-26), because Jesus had suffered and died in their stead (Isa. liii. 6). This was his last testimony, he sank into unconsciousness when it was finished, and did not awake on earth. But the grace of God had triumphed, the chains were broken and the darkness dispelled, and another witness to the long-suffering and saving mercy of God passed away to be with Christ.

J. T. M.

THE NECESSITY OF THE CROSS.

I WAS struck by the following passage from the writings of an honoured servant of Christ long since gone to his rest. It touches a point of great importance in the minds of many at the present day when there is, as we know, a growing tendency to minimise the claims of divine righteousness by magnifying (may I say) unduly and out of balance the blessed fact of divine love:—

“No thoughts of God’s love are to be allowed which would interfere with the demands of His righteousness. The love is without measure, that is true; but it is not a mere emotion. It is that which, at

an unutterable cost, provided redemption for the guilty; and if we think of love without believing the provision that it made for the claims and exactions of righteousness, we are dealing with a mere sentiment of our own mind, and not with the revelation of God. And poor are the best conceptions of man's religion—something different indeed from the moral grandeur and perfections of the gospel of Christ, where God is *just* while He *justifies the sinner*, where we learn that He has brought back His banished ones, and received His prodigals, all the while upholding the full glories of His throne of righteousness, and providing in and from Himself an answer to all its demands. The cross of Christ is the secret and centre of all this."

These words—weighty and well balanced—deserve full attention. That God's love is an emotion, deep and infinite, is gloriously true; but it is not a *mere* emotion. It is His nature, but along with nature there is character, and there we find holiness as infinite as the love—an abhorrence of sin as absolute as the compassion that finds its delight in blessing the sinner. Love by itself, however deep its volitions, could never justify the sinner. It might long and yearn for his deliverance, but it is powerless so long as the claims of righteousness stand in the way.

Darius, the king, spite of all his love for Daniel, his majesty, his royal power and authority, was unable to deliver him from the lions' den until the law of the Medes and Persians, which had decreed his being cast into the den, had been fulfilled. That

law had to be satisfied first; its claims were paramount. Not till then could the monarch gratify his desires for Daniel.

But once those claims were met, then the barrier was removed, and love and compassion might flow unrestrained.

The illustration is, so far, good. Now, the throne of God has been outraged by sin. Its claims must first be met. What can love do? Is it powerless? Can it only lament the fate of the sinner as Darius lamented that of Daniel?

Far otherwise. The love of God, unable by itself to deliver the sinner, could yet supply the means of deliverance. This it has done. That love was not inactive; it exhibited its resources in the gift of the Deliverer. The cross of Christ is the secret. God loved and gave His Son. That was the provision. Then in the death of the Son of God the claims of the throne were met. Justice was satisfied, and now, in Christ risen, "God is just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

Leave out the cross of Christ, His atoning death, and you lose the secret. All must be dark. But that cross makes all plain.

"The Holy One, who knew no sin,
God made Him sin for us;
The Saviour died our souls to win
Upon the shameful cross."

INFIDELITY TESTED BY DEATH.

A PROFESSED infidel lay dying in the North of England. One of his confederates called upon him, to try and stay up his restless soul, and drive the agony he was suffering from his tortured mind. The prospect of death and its consequences was doing in him what it did in David Hume, and in most infidels—striking terror into the heart. As he thought of the past—a past of deceitful hypocrisy and blasphemy, and neglect of the claims of God, this poor man shivered with guilty fear.

Were there no future, what of the past? The past would have no terror to any man if there were no judgment throne on which God shall sit, and before which man shall give an account. As he lay with a mind racked with remorse, the whole error of his guilt burning into his soul, he showed signs of repentance, at which his confederate began to mock and upbraid him.

The dying man fixed his eyes upon him, and exclaimed with great earnestness, "Ah, Jim, it is hard for a fellow to hang on to nought. It is hard for a fellow to hang on to nought."

Oh, the dense darkness of infidelity! The awful cruelty of the horrible thing is what is so appalling. How heartless it is. What a soul-destroyer it is. How comfortless in life and how mocking in death. Its mocking, haunting, soul-distressing fears are too dreadful almost to write about. It would rid you of

all true happiness in life, and sting you with a sting more venomous than scorpions, in death. The adder's bite is not to be compared to it. Its end is worm-wood and gall, entailing the deepest soul-bitterness to all who are fools enough to embrace it.

Young man, beware of it as you would a venomous reptile. If it offers you its caresses, do not let it embrace you. Rise up and boldly confront it, and say, Begone, thou cunning fox, thou deadly nightmare, thou dream of hell.

It is a great question with the wise whether any man can really be an infidel in his heart; whether deep down in his inmost soul he does not know—have some consciousness at least—that there is a God, a great Almighty Creator, who loves him, who created him, and to whom he is accountable.

So many recantations and miserable confessions like the foregoing have been made on deathbeds that it is almost beyond the power of reason to believe that any man can be an agnostic. The devils are much more subtle and clever than man, and yet they are not agnostics. "The devils also believe and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19). They tremble like the coward infidel, because they know that God is, and that their doom is irrevocably fixed at the great day.

CREATION GOD'S WITNESS.

Creation, so vast and almost incomprehensible, speaks far too eloquently of God's eternal power for simple untutored men to be fooled by the notion that there is no great creating power, directing things

behind the scenes. "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. civ. 23). He "hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job xxvi. 7). Creation alone is the revelation of a Creator, and leaves man without excuse.

The fall of man from his living Creator is the cause of infidelity. Having got his affections corrupted from God by the power of a stronger than himself, he is helped on in unbelief to his utter shame, confusion, and destruction.

Yet God has a further witness than creation. Conscience is a witness of man's fall from God. It ever accuses or excuses the evil-doer. There is no getting over the witness of conscience. Even a heathen has to pacify it by worshipping a false god. You may make excuses because you do the wrong, but conscience will accuse you and torment you with the bitter pangs of remorse. It is like the judgment-seat in a man's breast. In the presence of its light he stands condemned.

Oh, the power of conscience when fully aroused! The sting of scorpions is nothing to it, from my little experience. No bitterness is to be compared to the pain it inflicts on its subject. If not cleared it can make a man commit suicide. Judas did so, and scores of others, under its awful power. It made Felix tremble on his judgment-seat. As his past licentious, guilty life was brought before him, conscience terrified him. Yet what an unspeakable mercy to have a conscience. Its loud voice, when

heeded, prevents simple men from doing many things which otherwise they would do.

Conscience is the sense of man's responsibility to God, whom he feels he ought to have loved, served, and adored. When he feels that instead of doing this he has wronged God, he is made miserable.

IS THERE A REMEDY?

What can lift him out of his misery? Will science and education do it? No. Will the pursuit of romance do it? No. Will penance and hot tears do it? No. Will a reformed life undo the results of a mis-spent life? No. If a man become sincere and turn religious, will that do it? No. What then? Listen—

“Could my zeal no respite know,
 Could my tears for ever flow,
 All for sin could not atone,
 Thou must save, and Thou alone.”

So sang dear Augustus Toplady. He was right. An awakened conscience may be sometimes lulled to slumber by the foregoing remedies. Many have tried to heal the pangs of conscience by these, but have been plunged in more helpless despair than before.

But those who turn from trusting to religious zeal—which for the most part only cleanses the outside—and human reformation, and say in utter helplessness to Jesus, “Thou must save, and Thou alone,” are brought into perfect peace with God as the happy result. That settles conscience.

Must not such a devoted Churchman as Toplady

have tried all these apparently pious remedies? How could he have written the justly celebrated "Rock of Ages" had he not? The very trying to save himself would show him his own utter weakness to do so, and make him glad to embrace Jesus as Saviour and trust in Him only.

"All other ground is sinking sand."

SPURGEON'S CONVERSION.

Did not Spurgeon try the same before he met the preacher who looked straight into his face as he sat in the pew, utterly miserable, and who said to him, "Young man, you are miserable. Young man, you are miserable. LOOK, LOOK, LOOK unto Me (God), and be ye saved." That was a bow drawn at a venture indeed. It did not miss the mark in the hand of the blessed Spirit of God.

That was the day Spurgeon turned from his miserable doings and self-occupation, and looked straight to God through Christ, who was lifted up on the cross to save him. "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."

Only one remedy could save a bitten Israelite. Looking to the serpent of brass on the pole was the only available God-given remedy. Only one thing can save a ruined sinner, that is, looking to Christ who died for his sins, and by His dying made an end of sin and sins for all who believe. Looking is believing, and believing is looking.

THE UPLIFTED CROSS.

No salvation can there be without an uplifted cross, and no salvation without a Divine Person, Jesus, Son of God, hanging on it for the sins of men. God is loving and mighty, but He could not save men unrighteously. The uplifted Son of man on the cross was for the upholding of His righteous throne before every created intelligence in the universe. The suffering Saviour was the gift of His love—wonderful love to men. But it makes very manifest how utterly He hates sin, and how justly it deserved to be punished at His righteous hand.

Christ—the man Christ Jesus—will have the unique and special glory for ever of maintaining by His death the majesty of the throne on which He now sits, as the universal Director of all things for the glory of God. Who would rob Him of such honour? “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

How truly simple the gospel is! How truly glorious and God-like it is! How God's love and wisdom in regard to man shine out in it! How it is brought within the reach and comprehension of the youth in his teens and the grey-haired old man! The profundity of the wisdom displayed in it is fathomless to the most gigantic mind.

God acts in His unspeakable love for man, and does all the work Himself. He gave His Son to settle His own claims on man, and turns to man in his utter sinfulness and helplessness, and says, "You have nothing to do but look and live." "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Open your eyes and behold what I have done for you. "Behold the Lamb of God." Look at Him. What shall I see Him doing? Taking away the sin of the world. Is mine taken away? Yes, thank God, yes. How shall I know? He is in heaven now, after having purged our sins.

Do not be occupied with your feelings, nor even with your trusting. Do not be wondering whether you have the right kind of faith. That is self, and not Christ. Faith is not Christ, the Saviour, though it is the eye that looks at Him. Feelings are not Christ, though they be the happy result of seeing Him as God presents Him to you.

His finished work is the resting-place, and He is the object we look at. His finished work procured peace with God, and the knowledge of this gives us peace. When we learn that God is satisfied with His finished work, *we* rest satisfied. We enjoy peace through knowing that God is satisfied with Jesus, and the completed work Jesus did.

What a solid resting-place! How secure our peace with such an impregnable foundation! Our peace is immovable, because the work cannot be shaken. If I look at Jesus, where shall I see Him? In heaven. Why is He in heaven? Because of His finished

work. Why because of His finished work? It was a work that brought eternal glory to God. God has glorified Him by putting Him in heavenly glory in consequence. Of what value that finished work must be to effect all this!

WORKS IN THEIR RIGHT PLACE.

If I get my mind and heart filled with Him who did the work for me, I shall work in earnest. My zeal for His work and His interests will be unbounded. Love to Him is the motive power for Christian zeal and good works.

“I would work like any slave
From love to God’s dear Son.”

Good works are as right in their proper place as the adornments inside a house are right in their place. No sane man would ever dream of laying a foundation with what would adorn his dwelling. If he did, woe betide him and his house. A good storm would soon make it come down upon him.

While Scripture says, “NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast,” with regard to our eternal salvation, yet it is most careful to insist on good works with those who are saved. Believers are exhorted to be ready to every good work. “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” (Tit. iii. 1). Paul exhorts those who are rich in this world’s goods “to be rich in good works.” Peter says, “They may by your good works, which they shall

behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Our Lord says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works."

All good works which are the fruit of life in Christ, in the power of the Spirit, are most acceptable to God.

P. W.

"A HOPE WILL NOT DO—MAKE SURE."

SUCH were the words which fell from the lips of one who was within a few hours of exchanging this weary scene of sorrow and suffering for the rest and joy of the presence of her Lord.

At such a time things are awfully real. That vast eternity, which stretches beyond this transitory scene, is felt to be a great reality then. Words from those who are about to pass from off the stage of time seem to have much power and weight about them. It was so in this case. The one who spoke them had a bright prospect before her. Six years before, she had made sure of eternity. She had given up a vague hope, for the blessed assurance that she was saved, not because of anything that she had done, but on account of what the blessed Son of God did on Calvary's cross eighteen hundred years ago.

The one to whom these words were addressed was a neighbour, who came in to say good-bye. She took her seat by the bedside, and gazed in silence on the pale but peaceful face. Few were the words the

sufferer could speak, and her visitor was one, who, like too many, had only a vague uncertainty about the things of God. When she rose to take leave, taking the hand of her dying friend she said, "Good-bye, I hope I shall meet you in heaven." "A hope will not do—make sure," was the rejoinder. The neighbour seemed startled, and without saying more, left the room. A few hours after, the sufferer gently fell asleep in Jesus.

How many there are that have no certainty about their eternal destiny. They just float at random down the stream of time, like a ship without helm or compass, adrift on the treacherous waves of mere human opinions, without any certainty as to where they will land at last.

Oh, reader, wake up to the fallacy of a religion without Christ. You may, like the Pharisee of Luke xviii. 10, be buoying yourself up with the false idea that you are quite superior to many around you, but you have yet to learn that your religion has no Christ in it: it is but an empty form, a cloak for your sins. "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Matt. xxi. 31). These are the words of Jesus. You must justify God and condemn yourself, or you can never be saved. If you do not apply to yourself what the Word of God says about man, as fallen, corrupt, and vile, there is no Saviour for you.

Romans iii. shows very clearly the awful state of every unconverted sinner. The very springs of your moral being are polluted and depraved. You have

not a single right thought about yourself, far less about God. You are an enemy of God, a child of disobedience, with your back toward heaven, and your face toward hell, "without God and without hope in the world."

There is no mistake about it, you are a sinner. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5).

This is what the blessed Lord taught Nicodemus in John iii.: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Perhaps you say, If this is our condition the sooner we reform the better. Oh, no; that is just the great mistake people are making. No amount of reformation will do. Man in the flesh is a plant that cannot be cultivated. He cannot be made to bear fruit for God. A new creation is needed, new life from God. "Ye must be born again." Ah, how worthless and futile are the efforts of those who are trying to improve that which God Himself has made an end of at the cross! "The end of all flesh is come before me" (Gen. vi. 13), God has said.

Now, dear reader, do you accept these statements as being true of you? If you do, you will be sure to appreciate that which alone can meet your deep need.

God Himself has measured the full extent of man's need, and has made provision for it in a way worthy of Himself. It has taken nothing less than the life-blood of the spotless Son of God to atone for sin. There is no approach to God but by His blood. God is so infinitely holy that nothing less than the precious

blood of that spotless Victim could open the way back to His presence.

That blessed One has been on the cross, and has there finished the mighty work of redemption. He has fully satisfied and glorified God about the question of sin, and as a proof of this He is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high—“Exalted a Prince and a Saviour.” And on the ground of this finished work, God can not only pardon, but justify the vilest sinner on the face of the earth. The efficacy of the blood of Christ is so great that it cleanses from all sin. Reader, do you know the value of this precious blood? Are you sheltered by it? If not, you are in awful danger. Before midnight the day of grace may be closed for you.

The moment you have faith in the work of Christ, you get the forgiveness of all your sins (Acts xiii. 38, 39); eternal life is received (John vi. 47); peace with God is known (Rom. v. i). These are all blessings to be known and enjoyed now. As to the future, we are “heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” We shall share with Him, in a little while, that inheritance which is “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Blessed prospect!

Dear reader, can you look forward with joy to all this? It is the privilege of every believer to be “rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God.” May it be your happy portion to have the certainty that you are saved; and to be not only saved, but satisfied with that Blessed One who alone can fill the heart. How blessed it is to fall back on the

unchanging Word of God, and there find something stable for weary sin-burdened souls to rest upon, even the finished work of redemption. "All other ground is sinking sand." G. S.

**"BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR
AND KNOCK."**

DEAR reader, if you receive no answer, after knocking many times at the door of a house in which you are convinced there are occupants, your opinion is formed immediately that there is something radically wrong. Perhaps the inmates are expecting some one they are not prepared to meet. Evidently callers are not wanted, and will not gain admittance.

When God created man, He made him a responsible being; but he soon failed in obedience, and fell, and God was forced to put him from His presence, and from that moment forward the heart of man has been closed to God, and he has sought to attain rest and satisfaction apart from God. "*The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*" God placed Adam in that garden where everything was provided for his happiness, and where he had control over everything. There was but one restriction, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." But the devil tested Adam,

and said, “Ye shall not surely die”; and giving heed to Satan rather than God, man disobeyed his Creator and fell, and thus brought about the ruin from which you and I suffer to this day.

Come down a little further in the world’s history, and we shall find another test.

After destroying this earth by a flood, God promised He would never do so again in like manner, but did the world believe Him? No. Men set to work to build a tower, to which they could flee for refuge when another storm came.

Now see the final test of man’s heart. It took four thousand years to test man’s heart to the full, and then man refused to hear God’s voice in His Son. From the moment of His birth the world sought His life. Herod desired to know the whereabouts of God’s Son in order to put Him to death. And all along His path, the religious as well as the reprobate clamoured for His blood.

What does all this mean? Simply this, that “*the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.*” And, friend, not only those who pierced His hands and feet and side, and not only those who declared, “*We will not have this man to reign over us,*” are guilty of His death, but if Christ be not the joy of your heart, then God identifies you with the murderers, and if you die unsaved, your doom will be to spend ETERNITY with them.

Now, dear reader, consider the awful consequence of distance from God. Is there no remedy? Thank God there is, and we find it in Christ’s own words,

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.”

What gracious words from One whose life was taken from this earth—who, by wicked men, was crucified and slain; and intended for all to heed, even those who murdered Him. Is that not real love? Can human heart imagine such love? Is it possible for man to love like that? Nay, friend, the natural man says, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”; but the love of Jesus is divine. Do you appreciate it? Have you ever heeded His knocking? He has knocked many times, perhaps, but you have turned a deaf ear. Did you not hear the knock of Jesus in some trouble you passed through? Have you lost through death some one you loved, one who was the delight of your heart? Has one of your work-mates been taken away by some accident? Have you been laid upon a bed of sickness, perhaps very near death, when your friends have given you up?

Take heed, reader, that is Jesus knocking at your heart's door. He has knocked many times, but have you heeded? God will not always strive with man, for His Word says, *“He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be cut off, and that without remedy.”* God forbid that such should be your lot.

Thank God, Jesus still knocks. Will you not

“Swing the heart's door widely open,
Bid Him enter while you may”?

There is coming another knocking, but in terrible contrast to the present. Look at Luke xiii. 25-27. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are, then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” Those who knock then will be unheeded, for the Lord will say, I know you not whence ye are.

F. A. P.

FRAGMENT.

“REMEMBER Lot's wife” (Luke xvii. 32) is a striking exhortation. Why, of all the women named in Scripture, should we remember her? Because she had such opportunities and yet they availed her nothing. Prayed for, warned of what was coming, dragged out of Sodom, and pointed to a place of safety, she reached it not, but died in sight of safety. Unbelief and disobedience did their fatal work in her soul. She could not bring herself to believe that God would judge Sodom. And, though charged not to look behind her, she disobeyed just to help her unbelief. A pillar of salt was the result. Why salt? Because that meets most people's eyes daily. Next time you see it on your plate, unsaved reader, “Remember Lot's wife.”

W. T. P. W.

SALVATION IN NONE OTHER.

Tune, "Lagos," H.C.F. 414, or Jubilee Hymn.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

OUR God in grace doth still proclaim,
 To all men under heaven,
 Salvation through the only Name
 Which unto men is given,—
 The Name of Him who died to save,
 The Son of God who loved us,
 Who rose in triumph from the grave—
 Our Lord, our Saviour Jesus.

The Spirit of our God from heav'n
 Is come to spread the story
 Of saving grace, of sins forgiv'n,
 Through Christ our Lord in glory;
 None other Name can we proclaim,
 None other way to favour,
 Through ages long, —'tis still the same!
 The one and only Saviour!

Though other ways some minds may seek,
 None other can avail them;
 The storms will come, the floods will break,
 And Satan will assail them;
 But on the Eternal Rock who stay,
 Though tempests roar about them,
 Trusting in Him, the Truth, "THE WAY,"
 Nought can prevail against them.

The firm foundation stands secure,
 And Christ is now ascended ;
 Enthronèd in the place of power,
 Till gospel days are ended ;
 Then while our God doth still proclaim
 Salvation through the Saviour,
 Call now upon His worthy name !
 And sing His praise for ever !

H. J. V.

“I WON’T BE MASTERED.”

POOOR fellow, he was dying ! Appendicitis had seized him, mortally, in the prime of his manhood. But although the end was fast approaching, there was no thought of repentance in his heart ; only rebellion, awful rebellion.

Summoning his fast failing strength, he got out of bed and walked round the bed. Wringing his hands and tearing his hair, he exclaimed, “*I won’t be mastered ! I won’t be mastered !*”

His young wife fled in terror from the house. Three times he paced round the bed ; the last time he sank upon it and expired. Terrible end ! “*I won’t be mastered,*” he had said ; but how can poor puny man resist the power of death !

One feels such a scene is almost too solemnly awful to put on paper. I do so only because it may be, reader, you are as little concerned about death, as if it were true that you could turn aside his dart and elude his grim grasp upon your life-cords. Death,

friend, will one day claim you as his victim, and will brook no disputing of his claim. How soon you know not. He may lay his irresistible hand upon you suddenly, and in a moment usher you into the presence of God—into a lost eternity. But in whatever way, sooner or later, he will claim you as his lawful prey; and then, whatever be your present position and possessions, all that will be left of you here will lie within the compass of a coffin and six feet by two of the cemetery earth; and your soul, your precious soul, be in the company of Dives, unable to command a single drop of water—the smallest vestige of comfort or relief.

Oh, soul, awake! Awake to the dread realities of a lost eternity. Death and, after death, judgment await your unsheltered soul. There is one only Deliverer from the power of death, one only Refuge from the storm of judgment; but, thank God! He is "mighty to save." He is the Rock of Ages. His name is Jesus. By His going into death and rising again, the bars of death have been burst, its bands rent asunder. His victory was for every one who flees to Him as his or her Deliverer. His open arms, victorious, omnipotent, are stretched out, entreating poor helpless ones to find there the Refuge they need. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," is the command of His grace, the entreaty of His love. Heed it, fellow-sinner, heed it to-day, lest death and judgment overtake thee. "Beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

A SEATED PRIEST.

“And every priest *standeth* daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, FOR EVER *sat down* on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected FOR EVER them that are sanctified.”—HEB. x. 11-14.

IN the June number of this magazine appeared a paper entitled, “THREE GREAT REALITIES,” in which occurred the following words: “Have you ever noticed one thing lacking in the vessels of the tabernacle? There is no seat there found, and why, think you? I will tell you. Because the priests’ work was *never done*. They offered ‘*oftentimes* the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had *offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.*’”

Regarding these words the following letter has come to hand:—

“DEAR SIR, The writer of this paper has fallen into the serious misreading of the passage underlined, caused by the improper punctuation in the *authorised edition* of the Bible, but now happily corrected in the *Revised Version*. Place the comma, after the words “for sins,” after the words “for ever,” and you get the true and only correct meaning of the passage. Was not our blessed Lord’s death the “sacrifice for sins *for ever*”? How can any one say He has “for ever sat down on the right hand of God”? Do we not all believe that He is to come *the second time* to “judge both quick and dead”? How, then, has this earnest writer made such a mistake? I shall look for a reference to this in the July number.

C. A.”

The mere position of a comma will not solve this difficulty, but a glance at the use in the New Testament of the words "εις τὸ διηνεκές" should do so. They occur in Hebrews vii. 3, x. 1, 12, 14, and *only* in these places. The translators of the *Authorised Version* have rendered them by the one word "*continually*" in the first two passages, and by "*for ever*" in the last two.

Clearly the idea is "in perpetuity," as others render the words, but "to connect εις τὸ διηνεκές with sacrifice spoils the whole force of the passage," another has well said, and I quite agree with him. The point of the Apostle Paul in Hebrews x. is the absolute perfection of Christ's sacrifice as contrasted with the Levitical system to which a Jew clings. Under that regime God was not pleased, and the worshipper's conscience was not purged, because the sacrifice was not perfect. Now, all is reversed, and the perfection of the offering precludes the possibility of its repetition. Hence, Christ has sat down on high. The Old Testament priest could not sit down. His work was never done. It was a sin and a sacrifice, a sin and a sacrifice, and so on, year in and year out. "But Christ being come High Priest of the good things to come, by the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (that is to say, not of this creation), neither by blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 11, 12).

Atonement effected, and the whole question of sin, as God views it, settled according to the claims of

holiness and righteousness which His throne prefer, not only does Christ pass into the holiest but, unlike any other priest, He sits down there in perpetuity. He has no more to do to effect the purgation of sins, or to vindicate God's throne and gratify His heart. All was done when He offered Himself once without spot to God, on the cross, by the eternal Spirit. He will never rise up to again offer for sin. On the cross He said, "It is finished," and His present position in glory as a man is a witness to the truth of His words.

It is very blessed to see this, and the soul who apprehends it really gets rest before God as to the question of sin. The perfection of the offering has its answer in the perfection of the worshipper, so far as his conscience is concerned. This latter is the reflection of the former, and peace the blessed result before God. A *perfect sacrifice pleases God and purges* the conscience of the one who avails himself of it. The seated priest witnesses to the value of the sacrifice, on the ground of which he sat down before God. Repetition is impossible, and so He takes His seat in perpetuity, so far as the question of the blotting out of sins is concerned. Manifestly this is what the Spirit, by the pen of Paul, gives us in the passage under consideration.

That the Lord Jesus is coming again, first as the Bridegroom, and later as the King, is abundantly clear from other scriptures, but on these occasions He will not again take up the sin question in relation to God and His claims. That He did *once* when He offered Himself. Hence we read: "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. 28). He will not touch the sin question then. He has settled it for God and for those that "look for him." Those that do not look for Him, *i.e.*, those who live and die in their sins, will without doubt be dealt with by Him when He "shall judge the quick (the living) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 1). The *living* nations we are distinctly told He will judge—"When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32).

This will be before His millennial reign. The dead—and the unbelieving dead only are in view there—He will judge at the close of His mediatorial kingdom. No believer, no saint, will be there, to be judged, just because what Hebrews ix. and x. unfold has transpired, *viz.*, that Christ, who will then be the judge, has already borne the judgment due to all who believe in and look for Him.

What a blessed salvation is God's, and ours too, the moment we believe His testimony to Christ and His finished work. All you have to do, my reader, to possess it, is to rest simply on Christ and His absolutely finished work. In simple childlike faith just repose on Him, and God's salvation is yours.

“HE DELIGHTETH IN MERCOY.”

(Read EXODUS xxxii. 30-35, xxxiii. 1-23, xxxiv. 1-9, 27-35.)

THIS is an intensely interesting scene. Israel had put themselves upon the ground of responsibility before God, and declared, with the utmost folly possible, that they would do all that the Lord commanded them. The very first word of the law was, that they were not to make any graven image, and the first thing that meets the eye of Moses, when he comes down from the mount, is a golden calf, and Israel dancing round about it, and saying, “These be thy gods, O Israel.”

The ruin was absolute. The breach was complete. The ordered relation between Israel and God was absolutely broken by this open idolatry. I can quite understand how deeply Moses was affected when he brake the tables of stone. What must God have done if he had carried them down? He must have brought in immediate judgment upon the law-breakers. Moses met the difficulty in this way, so to speak, saying, If I do not carry them down, there will be an opportunity for God to bring out His resource, if there be any resource. God is holy, they are guilty, and if the law be bound on them He must judge them. So he brake the tables of stones, and God did not chide him for so doing.

Next Moses turns to the people and charges their sin on them. In verses 11-13 he had been zealous for the people before God. Here he is zealous for

God before the people, and says, "Ye have sinned a great sin" (xxxii. 30). It is a great thing to know that you have sinned. I have sinned; so have you. Their sin was idolatry. It was breaking the known commandment of God. For that sin, Scripture tells us, they got all their future punishment. There was the root that brought forth such bitter fruit in Israel's history in days to come, because idolatry was in the heart. Now I do not say that your sin and my sin have been exactly the same; but you have sinned a great sin. What is it? That is not the point. I am not going to unfold what your sin is. But this I know, you are a sinner, and sin is a serious thing. Sin God will not pass over. He could not. If He did, He would not be God.

Now we think, that when sin comes out, then is the time for God to judge. Ah, that is man. But you see God is not like that. What comes out in this scene at Sinai is, that when everything was ruined and gone, and Israel's case absolutely hopeless, then it was that God retired into the blessedness of His own being, and the absolute goodness of His own nature. When grace had been abused, mercy came out, and God said, I will be sovereign, I will do what I like, and I will bless them, spite of their sin.

But first Moses charges their sin upon them, "Ye have sinned a great sin." Do you not hear the Holy Ghost saying to you, "You have sinned a great sin"? The greatest sin you have committed is this, you have never believed the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not a converted person you have never bowed to God's Son,

and that is the greatest sin that any sinner can commit. And by-and-by, if you die in your sins, even though there may be ten thousand sins laid at your door, the damning sin of all will be this, you have heard of Jesus, and yet never believed in Him. That is the great sin of every unconverted person. And, if you feel it, all the better for you.

Then Moses says, “And now I will go up unto the Lord; *peradventure* I shall make an atonement for your sin” (ver. 30). Mark the word “*peradventure*.” He is not sure that he can effect what he sees necessary, the making atonement for their sin. And you say to me, Is that all the comfort you have for me? By no means, listen. There is a Man gone up to God with no “*peradventure*” on His lips. There is a Man at God’s right hand who was once on the cross, and there, bearing the sins of sinners, went down into death under the judgment of God. But mark, he has risen from the dead and gone up to God, a victor. He has gone up as the One who *has made* atonement—gone up as the One who, in death, has met all the claims of God, and having finished the work which God gave Him to do, has taken His seat on the very throne, the judgment of which He bore at Calvary. Blessed Victim, glorious Victor!

Do you know what a legacy is? It is a gift that comes to you from one that is dead. And I rejoice to tell you that you have been left a wondrous legacy. What is it? Ere that Saviour died on Calvary’s tree, He said, “It is finished.” There is His legacy

to every anxious, labouring soul—a finished work. Moses must say, “Peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.” Not so the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I would fain turn you to. He has gone up with no “perhaps” on His lips. Note what the Holy Ghost says of Him: Who “*when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*” (Heb. i. 3). It was when atonement was fully effected, when every claim of God had been met, when He had crushed Satan’s power, and borne man’s sins, that He annulled death, and, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, that He went on high.

Resurrection is the evidence and witness of the satisfaction of God in that which Christ has accomplished, and if you see a living Christ at God’s right hand, you will get peace in your soul. You will not get peace by only knowing that Jesus died. There is no dead Christ now. I take you to His grave. There is no buried Christ. Where is He? He is risen! “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” No, my friend, look up. I want you to now look up and see at God’s right hand that blessed, adorable, holy Man, the Lord Jesus, God’s only Son, who was once in death for us. Nothing is left for you or me to do, nothing except to appropriate and enjoy the benefit of the blessing that flows to every believer in Him who died and rose again.

The law did not give life, power, or an object. The gospel gives the believer in Jesus Christ all three. It gives you life, eternal life, the gift of God,

in Christ Jesus; it gives you power, because consequently on receiving the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, the Holy Ghost falls on you, and you have power. And what is the next thing? You get an object for your heart in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what the gospel brings you.

When Moses went up, he said to God: “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, *if* thou wilt forgive their sin.” He felt it almost impossible. He does not say, “You will do it,” because he did not know the heart of God well enough to say that. So he only says, “Yet now, *if* thou wilt forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (ver. 32). In this instance Moses is like Christ. He is prepared to lose everything if only the people might be blessed. He was not called upon to do it, but there is where his love and the love of Christ came out. Jesus absolutely gave himself up to God, and He gave Himself for our sins. The discovery that He has loved you and given Himself for you will bring blessing to your soul immediately.

Moses gets very bold as, filled with the sense of what Israel’s sin is on the one hand, and equally with the sense of the goodness of God on the other, he says, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory” (ver. 18). The answer of the Lord is beautiful: “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.” If the glory of the Lord had then shone, Moses must have been withered up. Only in Him, who is God’s Son,

can that glory and majesty be revealed without man being overwhelmed. But He who Himself was God, left that glory, the glory which he had with the Father, came down here, became a man, and passed through this scene as the revealer of God. That perfect Man closed His life in death for the man who had no link with God. Then God "raised him up from the dead and gave him glory: that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. i. 21). Get into his presence and see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

"I will make all *my goodness* pass before thee," is God's response to Moses' wish to see His glory, and then He lets out what I may call the secret thought of His heart, as He retires into the absoluteness of His being in goodness, in order to spare a guilty people. He, so to speak, says to Moses, The case is very bad, and if I let law have its way, I must cut the people off to a man. And then adds, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and *I will show mercy* on whom I will show mercy" (ver. 19). Had righteousness had its sway at the moment Israel must all have been cut off. But He says, Although they have abused my grace, and broken the law, there is one resource I have left—mercy. "I will show mercy" is divine prerogative and divinely charming.

It is a wonderful thing when the soul has the sense of the mercy of God. In the words "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," He, so to speak, says, I will do what I like. I am absolute. Beloved

reader, do not set your face against God. Do not oppose God. You leave God alone to exercise what I may call the prerogative of His love, and what will He do? “I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy” is His way of meeting the guiltiest sinner that ever trod the earth.

When Israel had utterly ruined themselves because of their sin, then it was that God retired into the infinite goodness of His own being, and mercy rejoiced against judgment. How beautiful it is to read, “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him” (Ps. ciii. 11). Do you want to know the measure of God’s mercy? Try to measure the distance to heaven. You would have some difficulty to do that. You cannot measure it. And then the Psalm goes a little further: “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children” (ver. 17). That is what God is in His own being. He delights in mercy.

Observe the lovely expressions regarding mercy in the Gospels, where the Lord speaks. It is a blessed theme for a troubled soul to dwell upon, and for all our souls to dwell upon. “And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not

a physician, but they that are sick." It is not wholefolk that need a doctor, but people who are sick. Then He says, "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." There is the keynote to all God's ways. Did you think God wanted something from you to put things right? "Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. ix. 10-13). That again is what comes from God.

Mercy once more is seen in the twelfth chapter, where Jesus was blessing and healing on the Sabbath day. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless" (ver. 7). Observe, they were condemning Him for blessing a man on the Sabbath day. What is His answer? "But if ye had known what this meaneth, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*"

That God delights in mercy has perpetual testimony in His Word; and a lovely instance of it is found in the Book of Micah. There you get the character of God, and the attitude of God towards a troubled people, beautifully expressed. Well may they exult in God's mercy and faithfulness, saying: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, *because he delighteth in mercy.* He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will

subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old" (Micah vii. 18-20). What a thrill of joy goes through the heart to find that a holy God so delights in mercy. And if you are at this moment a wretched, good-for-nothing, undone sinner, understand that the Lord delights to meet you, and He will gladly show you mercy, pardon all your sins, and give you the knowledge of His forgiveness.

Do not delay to taste God's mercy. If you owed me a ten-pound note, and you came to me and said that you were hard up and could not pay it, I might say, "Oh, well, it can be paid later on." "But I shall never have it," you reply. "Then I shall just have to score off your debt," is my remark, and you go away and say, "He did not do it with very good grace." Well, that would be like me. But when God forgives a man his debt, his sins, He delights in it. He is rejoiced to meet a man trembling in his sins. His very nature thrills with joy in giving you the sense of His love, and He receives and blesses you on the ground of righteousness. God has immense joy in blessing a man like me, on the ground of what His own dear Son has effected. "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," reveals the depth of the goodness of God's heart.

Some people stumble at the sovereignty of God. They think His ways are arbitrary. I do not. Did not God say, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I

hated"? (Rom. ix. 13). Yes, but God did not say it when the two lads were born. You find this statement in the last book of the Old Testament (Mal. i. 2, 3). He said it long after they were gone off the scene. With all his crookedness Jacob was a believer, and God loves faith, and always blesses the believer. But Esau was a real man of the world. He sold his birthright for a mess of pottage—a little bit of enjoyment in this world. And what about his posterity. Why, they were always fighting against God and God's people, Israel.

What is the next thing we read of in Romans ix. ? This, "He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (ver 15). Do you not see, beloved reader, that God is sovereign? But His sovereignty He retired into, in the scene before us, that He might exercise the most blessed attribute of His nature, mercy. Have you tasted it, man? God is rich in mercy. May you taste it this day, and go on your way and say, "I have tasted God's mercy." If God had dealt with Israel as they deserved, they would have been cut off to a man in their sin. Instead of that He had mercy on them. If God had dealt with you and me as we deserved, do you know what would have happened? I can speak for myself, and surely for you too. He would have cast us both headlong into hell for eternity. But He has saved me with an everlasting salvation, and I hope He has saved you. I have tasted His mercy. Have you? If not, may you taste it to-day? W. T. P. W.

WHOM WILL YE SERVE?

“If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar’s friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

“When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth.”
JOHN xix. 12, 13.

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”—JOHN xv. 14.

CÆSAR’S friends? or friends of Jesus?
Solemn question for to-day!
Friends of Cæsar! friends of Jesus!
Take your sides, without delay.

If ye pause for man’s forbidding,
Cæsar’s friendship ye secure;
If ye do the Father’s bidding,
Scorn, reproach ye shall endure.

Friends of Cæsar! Friends of Jesus!
Stand revealed! your choice declare!
Who in truth two masters pleases?
Who may rival banners bear?
Jesus’ friends account Him precious,
Lose for Him all other gain;
Dearer far the smile of Jesus
Than the praise of sinful men.

Cæsar’s friends! ye foes of Jesus!
Mingling in a motley throng—
Shall your sheepskin garb deceive us?
Wolves to Christ’s fair flock belong?

Mighty is Jehovah's fellow,
 Though on earth in weakness seen
 Righteous is our Royal Shepherd !
 He will sweep you from the scene.

Free from Cæsar, friends of Jesus !
 Stand in phalanx, never fear !
 Love, severely tried, increases,
 Courage yet, the Lord is near !
 Onward still, His name confessing,
 Weaving crowns to grace His brow ;
 Lo, His hands are full of blessing,
 Lifted for your succour now.

Cæsar's friends were we, but Jesus
 Owns us for His friends to-day !
 What ! shall rival friendship please us,
 While the Bridegroom is away ?
 No ! through grace would we surrender
 Cæsar's things to Cæsar's care,
 Whilst to God, our God, we render
 Filial homage, praise, and prayer.

ANON.

FRAGMENT.—Neutrality, where Christ is concerned, is utterly impossible, for " He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth " (Luke xi. 23). Well said Moses long ago—" Who is on the Lord's side ? " (Exod. xxxii. 26). Reader, are you really on His side ? If so, hoist your colours boldly and let all the world see them.

W. T. P. W.

FORTY YEARS AGO.

IT was on the last Lord's Day in May 1869 that God spoke to me in a barn at Bemersyde. The preacher had for his text John xv. 15: "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

Neither the text nor the sermon touched me, but at the close Mr S——, who was the speaker, asked his hearers, "Do you all pray? If not now the time will come when you will pray to the rocks and the mountains to fall on you to hide you from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for we read in Revelation vi.— 'And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him

that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

These words woke me up to my danger, and I was led to *flee* from the *wrath to come*; to fly to Jesus and find *in Him a hiding place*. As it is written in Isaiah xxxii., "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." I learned the glorious truth then, that "there is *one God*, and *one mediator* between God and men, the *man Christ Jesus*; who *gave himself a ransom* for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). I could take up the words of Psalm xxxii. 7, "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

Before I fled for refuge to the Saviour, I had many a struggle. I thought there was no mercy for me; my sins rose up like a great mountain before me; and I wept and prayed but told no one how miserable I was, though it was manifest that there was a change in my life. "Repentance unto life" had been granted me by God (Acts xi. 18), but I had not yet heard the words that save the soul from sin's consequences — death, and judgment. I was asked at times what was wrong, but gave no answer; only I thought if the inquirer knew my mind he would be melancholy too. But it was "godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Cor. vii. 10).

Through that summer I could not endure company; I always inclined to be alone with God. I came next to see that it was the blood of Christ that settled all for God and for me: "Having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20). It was from a dead Christ the blood flowed, after He had said, "It is finished" (John xix. 30). He had done all the work, and left nothing for me to do, for "it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."

I then understood the words: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in *his* blood . . . Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. . . . Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Much more then, being now justified by *his blood* we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. iii. 24, 25, iv. 25, v. 1-9). "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

This is what I found in Christ for myself—*justification, salvation, and reconciliation*. It was a new beginning, like God's people in Egypt (Exod. xii.), when the blood was shed and sprinkled on the lintel and two side-posts, with the bunch of hyssop, for God's eye, and He said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." They sprinkled the blood of the lamb, and the word of God to them was—"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months:

it shall be the *first* month of the year to you." In no other way can a soul begin with God but by the blood of Jesus—"the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." It is the way in which all who are brought to God and bound for glory begin now. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20).

When the younger son, of Luke xv., came to the father, what a welcome he got! Covered with kisses, the best robe, the ring, and the shoes put on him, and the fatted calf killed, "*they began to be merry.*" He was very lonely in the far country when he began to be in want, and no man gave unto him—but in the father's house there was *music and dancing*; there was the best of company and all happy. It is a new beginning that *never, never* ends.

It is forty years now since I came to myself, and came to know God as my Father revealed by His Son Jesus Christ, for "neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27).* Before that time I could not settle to read any good book; I had no relish for good, but all the summer of 1869 I delighted in every good book that I came across. Before that I could not bear to read a tract. It was a dry thing for me to read the Bible up till that time.

Ever after that I delighted myself in the Scriptures (Ps. i. 2). I searched them daily, and carried my Bible with me to my work, and prayed continually, finding great pleasure in so doing.

The Lord's Day was a precious day to me; I rose earlier on the first day of the week and spent my time in reading the Scriptures, and in prayer, and praise. I could not bear worldly company, I kept out of the way of such going to the meeting: the preaching of the Word of God by His servants I greatly enjoyed; I thought it was all for me. It was not to see and be seen, as it had hitherto been, that I went, but to worship God and hear more of Jesus my Saviour and Lord.

I never stayed at home for a friend coming to visit on the Lord's Day, from the time I was converted. It is a very common custom to visit and spend the Lord's Day among friends now, more so than it was forty years ago. It is a very unprofitable way for a believer to spend the Lord's Day, putting earthly things and natural relations before the Lord. "*Will a man rob God?*" (Mal. iii. 8). There is much robbery in this way.

At first I was weak and slow to show or say much, but I got strength and began to make known what great things Jesus had done for me. I wrote to a brother who was from home; he got converted too. I began to teach the children and show I was on the Lord's side, at home in my mother's house.

After that I began to have cottage meetings in all the places round about where I lived. Every town

and village and farmplace I preached at, round St Boswells, Melrose, Kelso, and Duns. I went to the hiring markets and fairs and preached Christ, for I found that the gospel was for every creature—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16).

Through the grace of God our Father and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ I have been kept these forty years. "*Faint yet pursuing.*" It is mercy from first to last. "Rich mercy and great love" from God took me up and keeps me up.

The man in Luke x. who had fallen among the thieves found that his neighbour was the one who had compassion on him, and showed mercy, and did everything for him; and put him in the inn where he was cared for till that neighbour came again; and that neighbour is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. "Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." We begin with mercy, the mercy-seat is where God meets the guilty sinner and speaks peace to him. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." This was in Jesus and His blood (Rom. iii.). Now we have Him as our great High Priest, and we can come to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace for timely help (Heb. x.). It is the Word of God and the priesthood of Jesus the Son of God that keeps us on the road. And when glory is reached it will all be on the ground of

mercy and not *merit*. Not what I am or what I have done; but what Jesus is and what He has done will be the only rock to rest on for *eternity*.

“O Lord! how does Thy mercy throw
Its guardian shadow o'er us,
Preserving while we're here below,
Safe to the rest before us.”

R. W.

“THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST.”

(2 COR. viii. 9.)

HAVE you ever considered the wondrous grace of the Son of God in laying aside His glory, and in making Himself of no reputation, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man, and then still further humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross? Just think of the grace and love of His heart: “He who was so rich for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” Have your eyes ever been opened by the Spirit of God to behold in the lowly guise of the One whose cradle was a manger, for whom there was no room in this world, who had no where to lay His head, the lowliest of men, no less a person than God’s beloved Son—God Himself manifested in flesh?

Yes, God Himself has been down and has taber-

nacled in flesh amongst men. The Son of God, the One by whom the universe was made, took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was found here upon earth in fashion as a man. What wondrous grace to thus stoop so low. He was the heavenly stranger, homeless and unknown in the world His hands had made. But what return did man make to His Creator for all this grace and love so manifested? Man despised this Blessed One, man rejected Him, man would not have Him. The only place man deemed fit for the One who had no sin, who knew no sin, and in whom sin was not found, was the gibbet, and there upon Calvary's cross they hung Him, after heaping every abuse they could upon His head, and choosing in His place one named Barabbas —yet Barrabas was a robber and a murderer (Mark xv. 7; Acts iii. 14). This is how man treated the Lord Jesus Christ, thus proving thereby his lost and ruined condition, his hatred and enmity to God Himself.

And yet, how wondrous it is to think that while man had thus proved His moral condition, the counsels of God had been fulfilled by His death. God had sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world (1 John iv. 14). This blessed One had come to do the will of His God. He had come to establish God's righteousness. He had come to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He had come as the Lamb of God to bear away the sin of the world. He had come to make propitiation for sin. He, the Just One, had come to die for the unjust that He might bring

them to God. He had come to finish the work God had given Him to do, and how perfectly has all been accomplished.

He has by His death perfectly atoned for sin, and opened the way back into God's holy presence. Propitiation has been fully effected. The work is done. God can now be just in the justification of every sinner that believeth in Jesus (Rom. iii. 21-31). The precious blood of Christ has been shed, and is the only title of entrance and acceptance in the presence of a holy, just, and sin-hating God. Holiness has been met. Righteousness has been satisfied, God has been glorified. He who once humbled Himself God has exalted. He whom man abased and crucified God has crowned and glorified (Phil. ii. 9; Heb. ii. 9). God in His love can now righteously offer pardon to the vilest that trust in His name.

Come, then, ye sin-stained ones, ye troubled ones, and avail yourselves now of all the full and abiding efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, once shed upon Calvary's cross. Come and taste the joys of redeeming love. Come and prove by faith that this most precious blood is sufficient to cleanse you from all your sins and to fit you eternally for the Father's presence (1 John i. 7). Come and find everlasting rest for your conscience (Heb. x.). Come and find in the person of God's blessed Son an object that will find and satisfy the heart, now and for ever. He alone can and does satisfy the longing soul. He alone is sufficient for these hearts of ours. He alone is the fairest among ten thousand, yea, the altogether

lovely. He alone is the One worth living for. He alone is the One whose love is unchanging, whose compassions are infinite, whose interest in His own blood-bought, blood-washed ones is untiring and never-ending.

Come now, as you are, and whatsoever you are. He will give you more than you ask for or even think of. He will give you power to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. He will be with you, come what may. No power on earth shall separate you from His love (Rom. viii. 38, 39). He, and He alone, is worthy of your trust, of your confidence, of yourself.

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

A. E. R.

“DO YOU YET KNOW JESUS?”

IN the summer of 188—, while sailing from Ardrishaig to Glasgow on board the well-known steamer “Columba,” a young man, seeming to be alone, came to the part of the boat where I was, and spoke to me about the beauty of the scene. Really it was very beautiful, as we were then passing through the Kyles of Bute.

We then spoke of the things of God. He knew the Scriptures well and seemed to enjoy the conversation, but when I asked him if he knew the Lord

Jesus, he looked at me with surprise. I said it was not enough to know the Scriptures. "And this is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). He soon left me, and I had almost forgotten all about him, when one night about three months after, and about fifty miles from the place where we first met, I came across him again.

One look at his face brought the whole incident to my memory. On repeating my question, "Do you yet know Jesus?" he said, "No, I have been religiously brought up, and have read the Bible from beginning to end, and passed examinations on the Scriptures for a schoolmaster; but I do not know God's way of salvation." I turned to Luke ii., where Simeon took the child Jesus up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (vers. 29, 30). It was Jesus he was looking at, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

The young man saw he was a lost sinner, and that it must be on the merits of another he could be saved. We then turned to Romans x. 8-10: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He

said, "I believe with the heart, and I confess with the mouth, and on the ground of God's authority I can say I am saved."

Dear reader, on what ground do you stand before God? Is it on your own righteousness, which is in the sight of God but filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6), or is it Christ? Nothing short of that will satisfy God. Satan may seek to deceive you by telling you that you are good enough; but be not deceived, you have to do with One of whom the Psalmist says, "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. xc. 8). "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 14).

He knows all about you if others do not; you may pass before your fellow-men, but you have to do with God. Christ satisfies God, is He not enough to satisfy you? "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace" (Job xxii. 21).

A. S.

FRAGMENT.

IF we have not been able to discover the good thing in our brother and fellow-servant; if our eye has only detected the crooked thing; if we have not succeeded in finding the vital spark amid the ashes—the precious gem among the surrounding rubbish; if we have only seen what was of mere nature, why, then let us with a loving and delicate hand, draw the curtain of silence around our brother, or speak of him only at the throne of grace.

C. H. M.

WHAT A SAVIOUR.

"Jesus . . . touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."—MATT. viii. 3.

LEPROSY is a type of sin, and man is defiled thereby. But God interposed in Christ to cleanse him, therefore "*Jesus . . . touched him.*"

If, apart from Christ, God had touched man, it must have been in judgment, but He approached him in Jesus Christ.

A story is told of a soldier, about to depart on foreign service, coming in his uniform to embrace his little daughter who, seeing him, screamed and fled in alarm from his presence, not knowing who he was, until he removed his helmet and other accoutrements, for he could not depart without fondling his little one. Then when she saw him approach she was glad, for she knew him and allowed him to cover her with kisses, and she nestled on his breast.

A faint picture this of God's grace. Man had fled from Him in Eden to hide among its trees, for already he had become alienated in heart. At a later date a privileged people quaked with terror at Sinai and begged that God keep concealed and speak no direct word. There was but one way to reach man, and that is by the "Daysman" (Job ix. 33) who could "lay his hand" upon both. He is called the "mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6).

In incarnation He came to sinful man in the most winsome way, but at Calvary *He touched the unclean* so closely as to "bear our sins in his own body on the tree," yea, becoming identified with us in our state of moral leprousness, being "made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Oh, what grace!

"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" (Luke vii. 39).

The Lord's accessibility offended some. He had allowed *a sinner to touch Him*. We have no doubt that the Lord's disposition to that sinful woman was, from the outset, one of forgiveness, but to make it an eternal reality in her soul He allowed her to touch Him. Doubtless this was done physically, but it was also done spiritually, and the words, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace," tell us it was *by faith*.

On another occasion when multitudes "thronged" the Lord on the way to Jairus' daughter, a woman "touched" the border of His garment and was healed. But, her act being in faith, she touched not merely His clothes, but Himself. Hence He inquired, "*Who touched ME?*" And when she confessed He said, "*Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be whole*" of thy plague (Luke viii. 43-48). She secured virtue from Him *by faith*.

But some may say, "How can Christ in heaven be 'touched'?" We reply "By faith." Did man derive from Him simply by physical contact? Did

those who "thronged" the Lord really "touch Him"? The Scriptures teach, and you also know, they did not. Then, as now, the need that applied to Him was met. Christ in glory to-day, no less than Christ on earth yesterday, knows when one exclaims—

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary."

The presence or absence of this "look" it was that determined the difference between the friends and foes of Christ, and no less is it that will fix the gulf between them for ever.

We recollect at this moment Charles Spurgeon's account of how he first met the Lord. Entering a small Methodist chapel one stormy day, this lad of sixteen years trembled as he listened to the unvarnished discourse of the layman who preached: so much so, that the preacher said, "Young man, you look very miserable." But then he shouted as only a Methodist can, "Look to Christ." Afterwards when multitudes flocked to hear his burning words Spurgeon told them the result, saying, "I looked to Him, He looked on me, and we were one for ever." The dear youth, afterward so honoured, by faith had "touched" Christ in glory, who perceiving this, gave him the Holy Ghost. Praise His name.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15).

By its double negative this scripture teaches that

in a spiritual sense *believers touch Christ* through their infirmities. Infirmities are not sins. Paul had an infirmity the Lord would not remove but which He left to help His servant. Thus he could say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities; that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Christopher Wren, the architect of St Paul's Cathedral, was on one occasion examining a work of art from a high scaffolding. So intent was he that carelessly he backed toward the edge of the platform and would have fallen, had not a workman, perceiving the danger, hurled a brush at the work under inspection. Instinctively Wren sprang forward at once to save the picture from ruin, but in so doing escaped a fearful death, although this was only discovered by him when the danger was past.

And we are persuaded the Lord often saves us similarly, although like the architect we may be unconscious of the need of intervention: so much so that His dealing may appear to us like the throwing of the brush at the painting, but it is to save us from a fall: it is an act of sympathy. Even Paul prayed three times to have his circumstances altered; but the Lord, as it were, said, "No, I leave you as you are to save you from falling by making Myself indispensable to you."

This, reader, is the Saviour we know and commend. One of whom George Wigram said, "A Saviour who has saved me, who is saving me, and who will save me until there is nothing to save me from." Do you know Him?

"THE GREAT POT."

"And Elisha came again to Gilgal; and there was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot. And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people that they may eat. And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord."—2 KINGS iv, 38-44.

THERE are two very striking expressions in this passage which I want to draw your attention to, and to show you that Christ is superior to both the conditions which are expressed in the words in verse 38, "a dearth in the land," and in verse 40, "death in the pot." No two sentences could express more aptly what is before the eye of God to-day than "dearth in the land," *i.e.*, famine; and "death in the pot," *i.e.*, what people are feeding on is fatal in result.

Why has God recorded this very striking incident in the life of Elisha? Because, no doubt, Elisha is a

beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ all through his history. He was the man of grace, the one who here represented God. Through him and his ministry Israel were to know the thoughts and mind of God in spite of all their sin. The famine was the result of their sin; if they had not been sinful there would not have been a famine; and if there were not sin there would not be famine and death to-day. Elisha shows God's thoughts and character, and how He can meet the misery of man's condition, and how He not only delights in meeting the need, but that there is always excess of grace.

The first part of the story shows how God meets need. The prophet meets the dearth and death, and further, brings in something that will satisfy. It is but a figure, but it illustrates the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you have never really known what God's salvation is, what it is to have your need met, look for a few moments at this picture.

First of all, Elisha comes to Gilgal. Why did he come there? Because he knew very well that "there was dearth in the land," and that things were in a very serious state there. A large company of depressed, tried, hungry souls were at Gilgal. I wish I could get you to sit down, as these people did, and look at Elisha, and listen to him. Elisha is, typically, Christ. God draws near to man in Christ. His attitude is not that of a judge—that will come by-and-by. He is not a law-giver—that is past. God is not now asking anything from man. He steps in where there is the direst need and the deepest

danger, and He meets the whole case from His own side, and leaves that company abundantly satisfied and with plenty over, which they can carry off to other people.

If you were to get God's blessing in your soul, by getting into touch with the true Elisha, you would be enriched so as to carry away something to someone else. First of all see the person of the blesser; then the place of blessing; and then the manner in which they were blessed. It is all connected with the person of Elisha.

God has come out to us in the person of Jesus, that blessed lowly man, who came from the heights of heaven's glory, and has been down here, a real man. He is the man of God, the man that can represent God, that can stand for God; he is God's man in every possible difficulty and circumstance. And was not the Lord Jesus Christ that? He was more—He was God Himself. But I am speaking of Him as the One who has come freighted with the thoughts and feelings of God, to a world of dearth and death.

You may say, I do not know about dearth, but I do know about death. Perhaps it has taken the one you loved best from your side; and there is the unsatisfied look of deep unrest on your face. Why? Because of dearth and death. Christ meets both.

Elisha comes to Gilgal. That is a very significant place in Israel's history—it was where the circumcision took place, where the flesh was judged, the reproach of Egypt rolled away. Gilgal is the place where

men sit down and face their real state, where they acknowledge their utter good-for-nothingness, the hopeless badness of the flesh, and own that if there is to be any blessing it must come from God. Have you ever done what these men did? The prodigal son had reached what Gilgal means when, friendless and famine-stricken, he came to himself and said, "I will arise and go to my father."

"And one went out into the field to gather herbs" (ver. 39). What you have to do, if you want to taste God's grace, and know what is in His heart, and what will meet your need as a sinner, is to sit down. We live in a day of tremendous activity, and men are trying every way of making themselves happy. You know you have tried all sorts of founts of refreshment and joy, and you have never been satisfied yet. God tells you of the fulness that is in Christ, and the goodness in Christ, and the worth of Christ, because the gospel is the unfolding of what God is, in all the blessed goodness of His heart.

"The gospel of God" is "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. i. 1, 3). It is of God, that is the native *source* of it, and it is *concerning* His Son. It is what Christ is, in the glory of His person, the goodness of His heart, the efficacy of His blood, and the power of His resurrection; and thank God, it is all *for* you. If you have never tasted it yet, sit down, give up your struggles, your running to and fro. Paul thus describes you, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and *going*

about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. x. 3). I want you to sit down in the presence of Jesus and look at Him, and listen to Him.

Mark this, the voice of the people is not heard in this scene save once, to own their discovery, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot" (ver. 40). They break out in honest confession of what the result has been of what they were feeding on. The sons of the prophets were sitting before Elisha, and he speaks. He breaks the silence. Did not God know their need? Does He not know yours? He knows all your history, He knows every in and out of your heart, and all your life and ways, and your disappointment, and how you sojourn in the spot where dearth is. That means little food, and what have you been feeding on up till now? You have gone to the world, but it has not satisfied you. Proper food satisfies hunger, but I know very well, till God's grace met me, I tried every earthly fount of joy and pleasure and refreshment, but I was not satisfied. Your heart is too big for anything but God to fill it. Nothing beneath the sun can satisfy it.

"There was a dearth in the land." Have you found it out? Have you proved it? Sin has brought in distance from God, and there is dearth, want, need, misery in men's souls. I do not deny that there are such things as "the pleasures of sin." Moses "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). Have you got among the people of God yet? You will never be right till you are one of them. There is pleasure in sin, but there is no satisfaction. It is gone with the sin, and what is left? The sting, the reproach, and stamped upon the conscience the sense of sin's due, fear of the consequences of sin, hence uneasiness and unrest in the soul. There is dearth, barrenness, emptiness, vacuity. Are you still in that state? Listen, God knows exactly what your state is. Do not be afraid to tell Him, because He is love, and although you and I are guilty sinners, He has come to us in the Person of His Son in a way that wins our hearts, because He comes out, not to tell us plainly what our condition is, but also to meet it.

I look at that group of hungry men, wan, gaunt, and with distress in their eye. Hunger is an awful thing, but, fancy! being hungry for ever and thirsty for ever. They sit before Elisha, God's man, and they do not say a single word. "And he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets" (ver. 38). He says, I have come in to meet this case, this state of misery. "Set on the great pot." Why the "*great pot*"? Whenever God steps in, what is seen is always great. You cannot find anything that God does that is not great. When I come to the New Testament, the moment His blessed Son comes into the world there is "great joy." In Luke xiv. it was a "great supper." Whatever God does is great. There is nothing little about

Him ; there is no barrenness with God. In Heb. ii. the apostle speaks about the "great salvation," and in Eph. ii. we read of His "great love." Elisha comes in here to meet the need of these people, and that is what God is doing to-day. Oh that men knew what was in God's thoughts for them !

"And one went into the field to gather herbs" (ver. 39). Who bade him do it? No one. God supplies that which will divinely meet the need of man, and away goes this foolish man and spoils everything. Man spoils everything he puts his hand to. He goes *out in the activity of nature*. *The prophet did not bid him go*. God was supplying need. Does He want anything on your side? No! See what happens ; one goes out and gathers herbs. Elisha had said to seethe pottage without saying more. This man said, "I must contribute." That is what people think to-day. Let me assure you of this, you cannot contribute anything but sin.

The contributor here found a "wild vine" which exactly expresses what man is. This man "gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not" (ver. 39). This man actually brings in death. Many a man thinks he has got to do something for his salvation. No, you will only be like this man. He exercises his own will, and thinks he is going to contribute, and he brings in poison—death. Nothing will do but that which God brings in. How blessed is the grace of God. He has come into this scene in the Person of His Son, and now see how the figure

opens up. "And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot" (ver. 40). They begin to eat, and it is pressed home to them that what they are eating is bringing death to them. What are men really feeding upon to-day? A solemn mixture of what is poisonous with that which of itself is good enough. To-day men are feeding upon that which brings in blight and death and disappointment upon them. Man has brought in dearth through his sin and death as a consequence. God brings in life. He brings in Christ in all the fulness of His Person and the blessedness of His work.

"They could not eat." They were obliged to stop. And I say to you, Stop. See what God is bringing to you in the Person of His Son. You have had dearth all through your life, and the next thing is that death will put its hand upon you. And do not forget this—after death there is judgment.

"But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot" (ver. 41). The meal is the figure of Christ. He Himself could go into death and annul it. Putting meal into the pot had the effect of nullifying the poison. Meal is a striking figure of the Person and humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. How has God met man's wretched condition as a sinner? It is not simply by Christ becoming a man.

The incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ is not that

which meets man's state. Christ in incarnation brings out the blessedness of what He was as a man, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). That is what He was—absolutely fit for God, perfect in all His ways. There was nothing in Him that was unsuited to God. He was the pure meal; but that does not connect man with God, that does not bring man into contact with God, in fact, the very reverse. Like the veil in the Temple, it keeps man from God, because He was holy and we are not. He was spotless, and we are not. He was fit for God, and might have passed into God's presence without death from the Mount of Transfiguration, where the Father says, "This is my beloved Son." He might have passed up as a holy, sinless, perfect man into the glory, and heaven would have welcomed Him with acclamation; but He could have taken no one with Him, because there is no vital link with Him through His incarnation, for that He must die.

Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" (John xii. 24). The meal must go into the pot. Christ must go into death. If you and I are to be brought to God, it is only by the One who was exempt from death going into it. And He has done it. He died "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). On the cross He took up the whole question of man's sin and guilt, died for man, and bore the judgment due to him.

I can see in His death that my sins are blotted out, and I too have died before God.

But death is not all. For peace and joy you must get resurrection, and we have it in this very chapter. What God has before Him to-day is a risen Saviour. It is a wonderful thing that there is a Man in glory, who was once in death for God's glory and to deliver those who were under sentence of death. God has exalted Him, and set Him at His own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. There is now not a dying or dead Christ, but a risen Christ, and the gospel comes down from a risen Saviour in glory. The meal met the whole difficulty, and His death has met the whole question of sin before God ; but there is more than that in the gospel, because if I only knew that Jesus died I should not have peace. If I merely had the truth of the cross of Christ—if I did not get beyond that—I should not have liberty and joy. Now the mass of Christendom to-day have a Christ on a crucifix, and what is that? A dead Christ. You will never get peace from the truth of Christ having died. You must get to the other side. God took Him out of the grave, and put Him at His own right hand ; and if you sat down now in the presence of the true Elisha you would have a feast for your heart, peace in your conscience, and you would carry away a good deal for others.

That is what follows here. " And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said,

Give unto the people, that they may eat" (ver. 42). What is the first fruits? "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20). Get hold of this, that Christ died for our sins—there is the basis of the gospel. The spring of it is the heart of God, the foundation of it the glorious truth that Christ died for our sins, and was buried, and that man's history as a responsible sinner is closed. But He is risen from the dead, having gained the victory, met all God's claims, and broken Satan's power.

Do not let the devil rob you of the grand and glorious truth of resurrection. Get out of your sins now by getting hold of a risen Christ. He has been brought out from among the dead, and by-and-by all that are His are coming out. There will be a wonderful awakening one of these days; they that are Christ's will be taken up, and they that are not will be left undisturbed. Are you one of those who are Christ's, that He will raise to be with Himself? Or are you one of those that will be left to the second resurrection?

"And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, *They shall eat, and shall leave thereof*" (ver. 43). Do not be among those that limit the grace of God. This is the Old Testament picture of the Lord and the loaves and fishes. It is very simple; bring in Christ and there is no end to the blessing. Jesus said, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that

believeth on me shall never thirst." The want in the soul is met. "So he set it before them, and they did eat, and *left thereof*, according to the word of the Lord" (ver. 44). Now look at their faces—they are shining with divine contentment. They have been fed by God's own hand. The dearth has been met, and the death arrested. They have found in God's man the one who has met all their need.

Who is God's man? The blessed One who now sits at His right hand. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." Will you not eat and live? Unless you touch Christ, believe in Him, appropriate Him who died and rose again, you have no life in you. Everything is made good in resurrection. The dearth is all met, and you have divine satisfaction in the knowledge of the love of God.

W. T. P. W.

FRAGMENT.

THE sinner's faith adds nothing to the gospel, any more than the windows of our houses add to the light of the sun. The sun shines for everybody. My window lets the light into my room, so that I enjoy it and am warmed by it. In like manner the sun of divine grace is shining for everybody. Faith is the window which lets the light and warmth of it into the soul of a sinner. If you appreciate that grace and rejoice in it as the only thing which could possibly meet the need of your soul, you need have no question as to the nature of your faith. C.

THE ATTRACTION OF LOVE.

WHAT is it that alone can melt the heart of man?

It was, I think, that well-known servant of Christ, Dr Thomas Chalmers, who spoke of *the omnipotence of loving-kindness*. How good! Other forces may be strong—this is the strongest. We all admit that “law and terror only harden.” So they do; and yet God is holy. He cannot look on sin. His angels veil their faces before Him. Holiness is the habitation of His throne.

But neither can holiness, nor law, nor terror, nor miracle melt the proud heart of man! Oh! that heart! The more truly known, the more essentially wicked!

What can melt that heart and make it right with God?

“I have learned one lesson,” said the dying Hewitson, “by reading the Word in my illness, I see that when I preached with what I felt to be some measure of tenderness I scarcely knew what *Christ’s* tenderness was. The Bible gives not only God’s mind but His heart. It is the latter, exhibited to man, which draws and wins. Mere hard demonstrations do not win; they only steel the heart. If I could preach now I think I would be far more tender.”

But his preaching days were over. He learned more fully, when too late, the true secret of successful heart-winning. He learned, when within sight

of Love's fair mansions, that tenderness—the tenderness of Christ—is the secret, and that it is the only power to win.

It is necessary for the preacher to denounce sin, just as it becomes the hearer—all of us—to feel its malignancy; but though sin is so damning, and the heart so hard, yet the tidings carried by the gospel are those of grace, and love, and mercy; and it is these tidings that win their way, by God's Spirit, into the hard and stony heart, change its thoughts, lead it to self-abhorrence, cause it to loathe itself in repentance, and make known to it the value of the blood of the Son of God, which cleanses from all sin and fits for His presence.

This is no *hard demonstration*, it is no cold philosophy, nor metaphysical abstraction to puzzle the brain or confound the intellect. Quite true, there is abundant demonstration, there is that which appeals to the very highest powers of the very highest intelligence, but it is not hard, nor cold, nor perplexing. It is all plain to him that understandeth. "Come, now, let us reason together, saith the Lord"—the matter is therefore rational and intelligible—"though your sins be as scarlet"—that is deep enough surely—"they shall be as white as snow." Could aught be whiter? And this is the kind of reasoning! Oh! how simple and easy if only ye be willing!

Reasoning? Yes—read the Epistle to the Romans—never was there such a demonstration of the truth so closely argued and carefully explained, but it is

that epistle which says, "He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all"; and also, "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Is there anything hard in that? Nay, it is the ground of salvation.

The whole ministry of our blessed Lord on earth was a demonstration of the truth, but He came to save. "How often," he cried to Jerusalem, "would I have gathered thee . . . but ye would not!"

How tenderly He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

His ministry was marked by the most tender compassion. He was the embodiment of loving-kindness. Love was His mighty charm.

And yet He was rejected, and His ministry of love refused! If men were not blessed thereby, the fault lay with themselves. It lies there still.

I can conceive no greater crime, more diabolic or more suicidal, than to close the heart against the overtures of love.

Divine love rejected is divine wrath incurred. "Wrath without mercy" followed the law-breaker. How much surer, yes, surer than death without mercy, must be the doom of the man who treads under foot the Son of God!

And there is tenderness in the very warning, mercy in the premonition!

Thank God, that "much surer punishment" has not yet come for the reader. His day still shines, that day of grace and golden opportunity. Let, oh!

let the love of Christ burst into your heart in all its living brightness.

“In tenderness He sought me,
Weary and sick with sin.”

So sang another servant of God, now gone to be with his Lord. He had proved the exceeding tenderness of Christ; he proclaimed it to thousands, and passed away with the joy of it filling his heart.

Believe me, the love of a Saviour-God known and enjoyed in the power of the Spirit is the one secret of peace and joy in time and eternity.

Make sure, dear reader, that whatever else you may cherish, you value this wonderful love above everything.

J. W. S.

ONLY TWO FAULTS!

WHEN Gonsalvo di Cordova (famous in history as the *Great Captain*) was nearing the end of his remarkably active life, he repeatedly said that he had only two errors, or faults, to regret in reviewing the past: one of these was his breach of faith with the King of Naples and Cæsar Borgia—and in this he only followed his master's (Ferdinand of Spain) orders: the other he would never name; and what it was, none of his contemporaries could ever guess. And it is fruitless for us to speculate concerning it at this late date, five hundred years after. Nor is it necessary or even desirable perhaps for us to know. The only point

worth noting for us—and may it be noted well—is that this celebrated warrior was thoroughly deceived as to his true character and condition before “God the Judge of all,” else he never could have spoken of his past with such complacency.

Only two faults! What said another warrior, greater and more celebrated by far than Gonsalvo—David, the Captain of God’s people Israel. Hear him confess: “My sins are more in number than the hairs of my head” (near 100,000, physiologists tell us). This is anything but the language of self-righteousness or self-complacency. But, some might think, this suited David very well, he being a particularly bad man, and not anything like the moral Gonsalvo, who was considered the fairest specimen of a military man to be found in his day.

Well, let us see if David was such a specially outrageous character, that a confession of sin such as he made could be only voiced by a few of the most depraved of mankind. God, we have just incidentally stated, is “the Judge of all” (Heb. xii. 23). It is He, and not infidel disciples of Tom Paine and Ingersoll, who shall tell us what His servant David was in His eyes, compared with the residue of men. And this is what He says: “I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart.”

Ah! not a bad recommendation that, you see. And yet he frankly owned his utter sinfulness and need of mercy.

Let us take James as another example of man entirely unlike the self-gratulatory Gonsalvo. He is

considered by some the most practical of all the New Testament writers, insisting, as he does most strenuously, on works as an inseparable accompaniment of every profession of faith. But hear him: "In many things we all offend" (Jas. iii. 2, R.V.). He does not seek, you see, to let himself and others down easy, with one fault noted, and a single unnamed other. No, no; he freely, like an honest man, confesses his many offences. And in the light of all this what must be said, or what can be thought, of Gonsalvo's confession of *only two faults*?

But he has long gone to his account, so we leave him and turn to you, reader, a sinner of half a millennium later. What sayest *thou* of thyself? Are you one of the never-done-any-harm kind? Perhaps you belong to the "always-been-a-Christian" class. God pity you, and in mercy give you a glimpse of yourself as He sees you. Then you will have done for ever with this pitiable mock confession of one, two, or at the most three sins. You will see that your iniquities are innumerable, and of such a deadly and damnable character that nothing short of the death of Christ the Son of God could make adequate atonement for them. This He has done, blessed for ever be His glorious name. "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures," one text says. Another reads, "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust." Oh, reject not then the counsel of God against yourself, but own yourself lost, according to His Word, and trust for your soul's salvation His beloved Son, who "died for the UNGODLY!"

FACT, FAITH, FEELING.

A MAN may have strong faith in an unreliable object, and the stronger his faith the more disastrous the consequences. For instance, some years ago many investors had strong faith in the Liberator Building Society, but their strong faith did not prevent the society from becoming bankrupt, and the savings of the investors being swept away.

Again, the Mahomedan or the Brahmin has strong faith in his religion, but how worse than worthless, nay, how soul-destroying, his faith is.

A man may have weak faith in a reliable object, but the weakness of his faith does not lessen the reliability of the object on which he has placed it.

For instance, the distracted father, who brought his devil-possessed son to Jesus, cried out with tears, "*Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.*" His was an unbelieving belief, a doubting trust, but his weak faith was placed on the *right* Person, and he was not disappointed.

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THE CRYING NEED OF THE WORLD IS FAITH.

"When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). The world is growing more and more careless and indifferent. I trust that some reader of these pages may have desire

for faith. "*Without faith*, it is impossible to please God" (Heb. xi. 6).

But as we have just shown, it is not necessarily a blessing to have strong faith, nay, it may be a curse, but it is a blessing beyond words to have faith *in a right object*. So our facts must be divine and of God, and as we ponder and receive them, and we trust the One of whom they testify, our faith will grow exceedingly, and we shall be filled with "all joy and peace in believing."

It is a singular trait of faith, that the more we examine *it* the less likely we are to keep it; but the more we are occupied with the facts on which our faith rests the more will our faith grow to the glory of God and our comfort.

For instance, when a lad is first learning to swim, how small is his faith that the water will support him. But after he has learned and tested the buoyancy of the water, how boldly he plunges in. Occupation with his faith would not strengthen it, but increasing knowledge of the buoyancy of the water strengthens his faith without his thinking about it.

Again, suppose at the approach to London Bridge a gentleman taps a policeman on the shoulder. "Do you think the bridge will bear my weight?" he asks. If the policeman does not turn on his heel and mutter "lunatic," but takes the trouble to answer the foolish fellow, he would not talk about the man's faith or lack of it, but the strength and reliability of London Bridge. He might tell him the bridge had

stood since 1831, that it had cost £506,000, that every day about 200,000 persons pass over it, and thousands of heavily laden vehicles crossed it in safety. With such facts before him, if he have any sense at all, his faith in the bridge would embolden him to cross it.

Sufficient has been said to show how deeply important it is that we should be sure of the *right facts*, and putting our confidence in them, inquiry will only increase our faith, and we shall be ashamed of lingering doubts and fears. "*O fools, and slow of heart to believe,*" said the Lord to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

What, then, are the divine *facts* we would consider?

(1) "*The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*" (1 John iv. 14).

Who sent the Son?

The Father.

Whom did the Father send?

The Son.

What did He send Him for?

To be the Saviour of the world.

Then *you* may be saved.

Yes.

Why, then, is all the world not saved?

Because all do not believe.

Suppose a ship foundering with twenty hands on board. The lifeboat is sent to save the crew. There is room for all; there is welcome for all; there is

an invitation for all. Suppose five out of the twenty refuse to enter the lifeboat, why are all not saved? The answer is obvious.

But to return, *you* may be saved. Why not? Jesus was sent to be the Saviour of the world, and you are part of the world. Do you reply, "It seems to me it is too easy a way to only believe and be saved. A great work must be done before I can be saved"?

Yes, you are quite right; a work too great for you to do, or to help to do. It were easier for you to create a world than to wash away your sins.

A great work must be done before it is possible that you could be saved. That brings us to our *second* fact.

(2) "*When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, IT IS FINISHED, and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*" (John xix. 30).

The work that is necessary *has* been done. Atonement is completed. We stand in presence of a finished work.

"IT IS FINISHED ; yes, indeed,
Finished every jot.
Sinner, this is all you need,
Tell me, is it not?"

Now nothing remains but to put our trust in the One who has done the work. "*There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*" (Acts iv. 12).

YOU may be saved. Jesus came to be the Saviour of all.

YOU may be saved. He has actually finished the work of atonement on the cross.

The proof of this lies in our *third* fact.

(3) "*God raised him from the dead*" (Acts xiii. 30). This is the proof that God is satisfied with the work that His Son has done. It is a most important fact for our faith. To illustrate: a young sailor, anxious to be saved, remained behind at the close of a gospel meeting. The preacher placed the simple gospel before him as clearly as possible. The young man answered again and again, "*I'm not satisfied.*" At last the preacher wisely answered, "It does not matter that *you* should be satisfied. The *great* point to learn is that *God* is satisfied." He then showed the young man that the Lord Jesus had died for him, that He had finished the work of atonement on the cross, that God had shown His satisfaction by raising Jesus from the dead, crowning Him with glory and honour at His right hand. When the young man saw that *God* was satisfied, he no longer said, "*I'm not satisfied.*" How could he fail to be satisfied when he learned that God was satisfied?

The reader may say, I agree to all this. (1) "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." That means He came to save *me*. (2) He said on the cross, "It is finished." I know the work has been accomplished. (3) "*God raised him from the dead.*" God has accepted the work done by Christ on the behalf of sinners. My question is, How am I personally to receive salvation?

Your question, reader, brings me to my fourth fact.

(4) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). It is a fact that all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are saved. To believe is to trust—to receive Him as your own personal Saviour. Get hold of this *fact*. All who believe in Christ are saved. Do you believe on Him? do you trust Him as your Saviour? If you can say, yes, then you are saved. I say it without fear of successful contradiction, because God says it. If God says it, *you* can well say it. To be doubtful as to your salvation is to doubt God. What a dishonour to Him! You do not intend to do it, but "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar" (1 John v. 10). To believe on Christ and doubt your salvation is to say that God's word is not sufficiently clear or trustworthy, and that Christ's work is not sufficient or not complete. Surely you are not prepared to take that ground.

Other verses are just as clear. Acts xvi. 31 is quite sufficient, just as one good title-deed to an estate is enough. But let me give you one or two more without comment.

"Through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall *receive* remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). "BE IT KNOWN unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe *are justified* from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

"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. 13).

The reader may say, Now you have spoken about *facts*, will you tell us about *faith* and *feeling*?

In answer I would reply: The less said about faith the better. The more we talk about facts the more are you likely to have faith. The more you look at an outside object of faith—the Lord Jesus Christ—the more will your faith grow. The more you examine your faith, the more will it diminish, just as the sensitive plant shrinks from human touch. And as to feelings, the less said about them the better. They are utterly unreliable as a ground of assurance. Often they vary with health, the weather, and our surroundings. But we insist on faith as the link of blessing between the soul and God in contradistinction to works or merit.

Let me give you a final illustration to show the relation between *fact*, *faith*, and *feeling*.

Suppose you owed £100 — to some man who presses you for the immediate discharge of the debt, and that you were quite unable to pay. You have plenty of *feeling*, which you would rather be without — unhappy feelings, miserable feelings.

Suppose, further, a relative, knowing your distress of mind, discharges your debt. He brings you the receipt.

Now what does the receipt testify to?

Two things—both *facts*. (1) The debt discharged. (2) The creditor satisfied.

Further, what does the receipt effect in your mind? Nothing but doubt and perplexity unless you have *faith* as to the two facts to which it testifies.

But believing the receipt, in other words having faith that (1) the debt had been paid by another; (2) that the creditor is satisfied, what is the result?

Your *faith* in the *fact* leads to relieved and thankful *feelings*. But faith is founded *on* a fact, and feelings flow *from* faith. Mark the order. And the more undoubted the facts the more is faith strengthened, and the more fully happy feelings flow.

So you see feelings do not *give* assurance, but *flow from* assurance.

In conclusion, let me beseech the anxious reader to weigh over the facts put before him. He may indeed put his full unhesitating faith in them, or rather in Him—the Lord Jesus Christ—around whom these facts centre, and then may he be filled “with all joy and peace in believing”—happy divine feelings wrought by God’s Holy Spirit, and flowing from faith in the Lord Jesus and His finished work, and confidence in the testimony of Scripture.

“Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer’s blood.

Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,
From that same love we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
The gift had been in vain.

We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,
To Thee our all we owe;
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes Him precious too.”

FOUNDATION PRINCIPLES.

IT is well to bear in mind that there are certain great truths—certain immutable principles—which underlie all the dispensations of God from age to age, and which remain untouched by all the failure, the folly, and the sin of man. It is on these great moral truths, these foundation principles, that faith lays hold, and in them finds its strength and its sustenance. Dispensations change and pass away—men prove unfaithful in their varied positions of stewardship and responsibility; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; it never changes, never fails. “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” And again, “Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” Nothing can touch the eternal truth of God, and therefore what we want at all times is to give that truth its proper place in our hearts; to let it act on our conscience, form our character, and shape our way. “Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.” “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.” This is true security. Here lies the secret of decision for Christ. What God has spoken must govern us in the most absolute manner ere our path can be said to be one of plain decision. There may be tenacious adherence to our own notions, obstinate attachment to the prejudices of the age, a blind devotion to certain doctrines and practices resting on a

traditionary foundation, certain opinions which we have received to hold without ever inquiring as to whether or not there be any authority whatever for such opinions in holy Scripture. There may be all this, and much more, and yet not one atom of genuine decision for Christ.

C. H. M.

FRAGMENT.

GRACE is the activity of the love of God to us after we have sinned, and before the day when He deals with our sins as the righteous, moral Governor of the universe, because God must judge sin. He would not be God if He did not judge sin. He would be no better than we if He did not judge sin. I know perfectly well that men try to get rid of the judgment of God, but the truth is this, God judges sin, and must do so, because He is God, and is infinitely holy. But what has He already done? After you and I have sinned, and before the day of judgment, when He must deal with men about their sins, He has stepped into this scene in the Person of His own beloved Son. Grace has come in, and what do I find? That the very One who is going to be Judge, by-and-by, anticipates the day of judgment, enters into the scene, dies in the room of guilty man, bears his judgment, and delivers him not only from the consequences of his sin, but brings him into the enjoyment of the love of God, makes him a child of God, and makes him the happy possessor of the forgiveness of sins and of eternal life. W. T. P. W.

“HELL-FIRE EVER SINCE.”

“**W**HAT do you make this confession of your guilt?”

“Because my soul has been in hell-fire ever since!”

Such was the bitter wail of anguish, of soul torment, that fell from the lips of a murderer who had escaped detection, but who voluntarily gave himself up to the authorities in the hope that confession of his crime and expiation of his guilt would relieve his sin-burdened conscience, and free him from blood-guiltiness before God.

Had it this effect? For a brief moment he felt relieved, but, shortly afterwards, what he termed “hell-fire” again took possession of him with more than its former violence. He had vainly thought that, in the confession he made to man, relief from the intolerable load would follow, but, alas! he was mistaken.

He had not learned that all sin is against God, and neither confession or reparation on our part can make atonement for our sin. Whatever the nature and character of our sin, it is ever true, “I have sinned against heaven,” “I have done this evil in thy sight,” for it is God who said, “Thou shalt not kill,” and this sin, as all sin, is sin against God. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,” David said in like case.

Finding that the confession of guilt availed not

for relief, he fondly hoped that after his trial and *condemnation* then all would be well. Vain hope!

He was removed from Chicago to Philadelphia, tried, and condemned. To his great disappointment the rest of conscience he looked for did not come; there was a passing sense of relief when the sentence of death was pronounced, a sort of feeling that all that he could do had been done, and he now hoped his sin would fade from memory and conscience. But "hell-fire" was not quenched in his bosom, he became conscious that he needed forgiveness from God, and that the life he had voluntarily yielded up to undergo the capital sentence of the law still had sin attached to it, which his death would not remove.

In reply to a friendly offer to bring his case before the authorities, and get him reprieved on the ground of insanity, he said that he was never more sane in his life, and it was not death that troubled him, but how to face God with such a crime and such a life as his.

From an account written by him the night before his execution we learn that he was of English parentage; his father dying early, left his mother a widow. From his earliest days he had been a source of sorrow to her. Choosing evil companions he quickly fell into their ways, spite of the entreaties and rebukes of his mother. He "stood in the way of sinners, and walked in the counsel of the ungodly," until he committed acts rendering him amenable to arrest and imprisonment, so he fled to America. There he continued his evil courses, and companioned with others of like depraved and dissolute habits.

Having spent a day in debauchery, he strolled out with a companion along the banks of the Schuylkill River. A quarrel arose, and drawing his knife he stabbed his comrade in the heart. The blow was fatal, instant death ensued. "Sobered by the awful deed, he threw his companion's body into the river and fled.

Several days afterwards the murdered man's body was seen floating down the river, but no clue could be found to the murderer. Six months later the murderer delivered himself up to the authorities in Chicago, telling them who he was, and what he had done, and that he knew it would take him to the scaffold, but in this way he hoped to atone for his crime and find rest for his soul, adding that "hell-fire" had been "in his soul ever since," and he could endure the torment no longer.

The sequel you already know, how vainly his way of escape from a tormenting conscience failed, how neither the confession nor the death sentence blotted out the dark past.

What a pitiable object! condemned to die by his fellow-man; every beat of his heart telling him that the moment was quickly nearing when time should be exchanged for eternity. What a prospect as he contemplated the reality of "hell-fire," with its undying worm already gnawing at his vitals!

Picture him, reader, alone in his cell, afraid to meet God, and knowing no way of escape.

What of thyself? Ah, you say, I have never committed murder. Perhaps not, but are your sins for-

given? Are you cleansed by the precious blood of Christ? If not, however respectable outwardly, however law abiding, it is a most serious consideration that you are travelling to the *same hell* as the condemned felon. If not by the law of man, you are by the law of God "*condemned already*," and every step leads you to the dismal abode where harlots and murderers, liars and thieves are in blackness of darkness. Think of the society you will be in for ever and ever, of the great white throne, and the lake of fire!

Your sin is not that of murder, but you have sinned—for *all* have sinned—therefore *you* have sinned, and apart from the atoning work of Christ there is neither forgiveness, peace, nor salvation for you.

Thank God, you need not be lost for ever. There is salvation even for you, for God is not willing that any should perish, and yearns with the same tender pity and compassion over you that He did over the poor, miserable inmate of the jail in Philadelphia.

Cowper wrote, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform," and nothing is more wonderful than the various links in the chain of blessing by which souls are reached.

There was one eye resting on the occupant of that solitary cell with its wretched inmate. That eye had traced every step on his downward road, and in pitying love followed him, and in an unlooked-for way magnified in him the grace and compassion of a Saviour God.

Years before, another poor murderer had been

visited in the condemned cell with the salvation of God. His name was Daniel Mann. A deeply interesting account of the way God reached him is to be found in a small book called, "An Account of the Lord's Dealings with the Convict Daniel Mann," written by Mr Paul Loizeaux, who was the means of his conversion, and spent the night before the execution in the cell with the prisoner.

This little book has been greatly blessed of God to the salvation of many souls, among them a wealthy gentleman in Philadelphia. Desiring to spread far and wide the book which had been such help to him, he paid for a special edition of twenty-five thousand to be scattered broadcast through the United States. A thousand of them he reserved for himself.

In the same city lived an old soldier who had been converted to God, and whose delight was to speak of the Saviour to any who would listen. He could not preach, had no means to buy books, but, through the kindness of the gentleman who had got blessing through reading "Daniel Mann" he was supplied by him with as many copies as he could carry. Sallying forth, he took his stand close to a seat in one of the squares which abound in Philadelphia, and spent one Lord's Day afternoon in distributing copies to the passers-by. Among the recipients was a lady who carried it home, read it, and was so blessed by the reading of it that she felt she must pass it on to some one else.

Her thoughts turned to the poor criminal whose case was exciting great sympathy, and she deter-

mined early on Monday morning to carry it to the prison. The result is best told in the words of the murderer, taken from the account he wrote before he was executed:—

“There were piles of publications on the table, but when I saw the title ‘The Lord’s Dealings with the Convict Daniel Mann’ my attention was drawn as to none before. I took to it at once, I read, and by the time I had read the first three pages the awful load was off my soul. I saw Jesus Christ hanging on the cross *for me, for all my sins*, and I was out of my misery, and I go *peacefully to meet God!*”

The sentence of the law was executed, but instead of descending into hell-fire, he ascended to the same Paradise where the convicted thief found himself with his Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ after he had expired on Calvary.

They both looked away from self, turned to the One upon whom God had laid man’s iniquity, and found peace, salvation, and glory.

There is no other way of salvation; to the cross you must turn if you would know your sins forgiven and heaven secured. A spotless Victim has taken the guilty sinner’s place. Sin is put away, atoned for: but only thus. Reparation, restitution, and reformation avail nothing; salvation is alone in Jesus.

Surely this narrative has a voice to every sin-burdened conscience. It tells the poor convicted sinner that the cross is the only way of peace, the only way by which guilt can be cancelled.

It reminds us that there are none too bad for God to save, none beyond the reach of mercy.

Has not this narrative also a voice to writers and distributors of gospel books? What a cheer and encouragement to all such to hear of results like this.

Then what an investment for the Lord's stewards who have means! How in this way sower and reaper will rejoice together. P. J. L. wrote "Daniel Mann"; a wealthy Philadelphian paid for a large edition; an old soldier distributed them; a passing lady receives one, is blessed, carries it to the jail, and the murderer who had given himself up because "hell-fire" was in his bosom, passes peacefully from the place of execution to the Paradise of God through reading it.

The salvation of this poor criminal should be a cheer to mothers, and an incentive to them to pray for their prodigal sons, for the murderer tells us that his mother was a Christian, and he hated her piety when a youth. We must connect the first link in the chain of blessing which reached him with the teachings, example, and petitions of his prayerful, widowed mother. Both redeemed by the same precious blood, both indebted to Jesus for their salvation, what a joy, in a coming day, when she discovers sowing in tears has resulted in reaping with joy.

“Twas the same grace which spread the feast
 That sweetly forced me in,
 Else I had still refused to taste
 And perished in my sin.”

H. N.

"NOT."

HEARKEN, all ye who are working for salvation, to a truth written in Romans iv. 5: "To him that worketh not!" So that—

It is "*not*" by baptism,
 It is "*not*" by confirmation,
 It is "*not*" by the holy communion,
 It is "*not*" by church membership,
 It is "*not*" by alms or charities,
 It is "*not*" by vows or resolutions,
 It is "*not*" by tears or penance,
 It is "*not*" by feelings or experience,
 It is, in fine, "*not*" by works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus iii. 5),

that any man can be saved!

"To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

You are called on to believe on "him who justifies the ungodly!"

God never justifies sin, but He does justify the sinner; He never justifies the godly, because, in truth, there are none, but He does justify the ungodly on the principle of faith. Otherwise none could be justified at all! Good works are only splendid sins!

You can be justified on the ground of absolute grace alone. You must renounce every meritorious claim, and own your personal guilt. Then your

faith is reckoned as righteousness. There is no other door of hope.

Suppose that you say that we are told in Philippians ii. 12, "to work out our own salvation"! Quite true, only you must remember that, in order to work out a problem, you must have it on your paper before you can work it out.

"Working for" and "working out" are very different things. Our blessed Lord, when on the cross, accomplished the former; the believer, already saved, should do the latter.

Good works do not carry one particle of saving value. We are justified before God by faith alone. We are justified before men by works; but it is God who saves.

J. W. S.

THE WAY OF BLESSING AND THE WAY OF WOE.

IT is remarkable how Luke in his Gospel brings these two ways together in the case of two people spoken of at the same time. He gives at least seven samples of this, and we do not doubt they will be of great profit as well as interest to our readers.

It is a simple principle that underlies each incident, but a principle that is of eternal importance to every one in God's universe. Those who go the way of blessing are those who go down to the place God in

His wisdom has provided, where He can meet them in Christ for blessing, and for His own glory. On the other hand, the way of woe is the way of the natural man, whether religious or otherwise; pride of heart is manifest in all his ways, and it is the same in rich and poor, high and low, for a ragged coat often covers a proud and, alas, a rebellious heart as to the things of God.

The first example of this is in chapter vii. 36-50, when Simon, the proud Pharisee, invites the blessed Lord to eat with him. This He does; and a poor woman of the city, hearing of it, comes to Him, sinner as she is, and brings all that is precious to her, an alabaster box of ointment, and, standing at His feet weeping, she washes His feet with tears, and wipes them with the hair of her head, and anoints them with the ointment.

What a picture, dear reader, drawn by the Spirit of God for us to look upon! How did it affect Simon? Listen to the reasonings of his heart: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that touched him, for she is a sinner" (ver. 39). Now note the answer. Jesus said unto him, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he said, Master, say on. 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.

And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which were many, are forgiven: for she loved much: . . . And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven" (vers. 40-48).

Reader, where are you in this? Debtor you are, but how are you treating the One who will frankly forgive you all? This woman took the way of blessing, and got it; but Simon, alas, in the blind reasoning of his own heart, missed it.

The next is in chapter xiii. 11-17. Here the blessed Saviour finds a poor woman in a helpless condition, bowed together; for eighteen years she has not straightened herself. Jesus had compassion on her, and loosed her from her infirmity; both love and power were at work for her blessing. But the ruler of the synagogue is there to hinder; he cannot take in such grace himself, and would hinder others: "And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath

day" (ver. 14). Listen to the Lord's withering rebuke: "Thou hypocrite . . . ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond?" Well might the people rejoice, and the adversaries be ashamed. How the Lord strikes at the root!—"whom Satan hath bound." What deliverance for the poor helpless woman! But who doubts that this blind ruler was left in Satan's power, on the way to eternal woe? Beware, reader, how you resist any workings of the Spirit of God.

The third is in chapter xv. 11-32, and is seen in the different dispositions of the two sons. The younger takes at last the way of blessing, by lowliness and dependence; he *is* nothing and *has* nothing, and owns it; but he is made much of, and gets everything to make him happy in his father's house: "They began to be merry." In the elder brother we see the actings of a proud heart; he will not fall in with the father's purpose to bless, hence he is outside, and note well that he is outside from choice. He will not bow down his proud heart for his father's pleasure.

Some have thought the fourth (xvi. 19-31) to have reference to the two sons in their eternal positions—he who was the poor dependent one, now in Abraham's bosom, the place of blessedness; and the other in hell, in torment. It is true that riches, luxury, and pride of heart often go together, and drown God's voice and call to repentance. Those who take a low place and go down, down at the feet

of Jesus in true humility, He will lift up. This we see in our fifth (chap. xvii. 10-14), where we hear the two prayers; first that of the self-righteous man, who has everything in himself and wants nothing from God, and then that of the poor publican, who had nothing, and was nothing, but must have all from God: "God be merciful to me a sinner." Listen now to what the Judge of all the earth says of these two: "I tell you this man (the publican) went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (ver. 14).

Our sixth is a very solemn picture (chap. xxii.), where Judas and Peter appear in contrast as to their latter end. Both lived and walked with Jesus, the lowly Man; both had a profession, like the ten virgins in Mark xxv. Here the test is put, and it brings to light the real and the unreal. Peter has godly sorrow, and true repentance, and finally gets restored. But Judas goes to his own place. Awful thought!

Our seventh and last is the case of the two malefactors (chap. xxiii. 39-43), on either side of the Lord of life and glory as He hung on the cross, the one a reviler and the other a receiver from Jesus. "Lord, remember me." "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (ver. 43). Even man's extremity does not alter the evil workings of the heart. The way of blessing is to take the low place before God, owning that we are poor, undone, hell-deserving sinners, and nothing but His salvation will do for us. We then

get a place in Christ, where there is nothing but joy and happiness, and the bright prospect of soon being with Him and like Him. As to the way of woe: I once asked a company of children, "What must we do to be lost?" Various things were suggested, and at last one little fellow put up his hand and said, "Nothing at all, but go on day by day as we are doing." This is so, dear unsaved one. It is not some great sin that brings judgment upon us, but the thinking and doing according to our own hearts. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Prov. xxviii. 26). May you be led to enter the way of blessing by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, for "there is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

J. L.

BLESSING FOLLOWS OBEDIENCE.

"Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." 1 SAM. xv. 22.

IT will readily be admitted that nothing can go on satisfactorily without recognised authority, and subjection thereto in affairs of every day life. Ready obedience is accordingly insisted on and given. This being the case in the affairs of time, how much more should not a supreme authority be recognised and a willing obedience rendered? But is it so? Men too often act as if there was no God, no

reckoning, no judgment, no eternity, doing that which is right in their own eyes.

God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). What is the consequence of refusal? Harken to what God says: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. i. 8, 9). Again: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

These scriptures show man's responsibility to render obedience. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Are you neglecting? This may lead to despising, and may end in rejecting on your part. How solemn: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom 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. 3, 4).

Unconverted reader, face the all-important question

without one moment's delay. Be not wise in your own eyes, but submit whilst it is called to-day, taking God's part against yourself, and accept that salvation which is now offered to you, free as the air you breathe. "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. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live" (Isa. lv. 1-3). "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). "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).

Eternity! Oh, think of it and let not Satan rob you through trifling with your never-dying, immortal soul. Only think of the infinite sacrifice provided. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3). "But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 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. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you,

which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts xiii. 37-41).

"Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. ii. 4-10).

And yet again, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23).

Have these words no voice for you, viz., "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was that God might be able, upon a righteous basis, to show

His mercy and loving-kindness to all who put their trust in the person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin." Faith accepts God's gift.

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25, v. 1).

E. F. M.

NO LOOPHOLE OF ESCAPE.

IF you are not prepared to face the righteous judgment of God, the supreme concern of your history and destiny is yet neglected. Be sure of this, that "God will render to every man according to his deeds. . . . Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil; . . . but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good: . . . for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. ii. 5-11).

There is nothing arbitrary, unjust, or partial in the judgment of God. It is according to truth, righteousness, and holiness. It is simply and eternally the working out of this law which, like that of the Medes and Persians, alters not—that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

But such a judgment as this—unbending in righteousness and absolute in holiness—*leaves no loophole of escape for a sinner.* It arraigns him at its bar; it

exposes every secret of his heart ; it finds him guilty in a thousand points ; and it passes upon him a sentence from which there can be no appeal. Weighed in the balances of divine judgment, the best of men must be found wanting, and the solemn yet certain issue of that judgment must be eternal ruin for all who come into it. Hence the Psalmist says, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant : for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2).

Oh, sinner, make haste to repent. Confess thyself guilty and undone. Justify God and condemn thyself. On thy knees acknowledge to God that thou deservest to reap what thou hast sown, but that to do so will bring thee into everlasting misery. Cast thyself upon His boundless mercy and grace, and verily thou shalt obtain mercy. c.

"THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON."

PART I.—INVITED.

"And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner : my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready : come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise : and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth : and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the

marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—MATT. xxii. 1-13.

THERE are two very different ways in which God has approached man since the Fall. The first of these ways is given to us in the parable which the Lord spoke to His hearers in Matthew xxi., where you have the parable of the householder, the vineyard, and the husbandmen. In chap. xxii., which I am touching particularly, you have a great contrast in the ways of God.

In the parable of the vineyard, out of which God looked to find fruit from the husbandmen who had it in hand, there is no doubt that we have the illustration of the way in which God had dealt with man under law and responsibility, up till the time of the coming of Jesus—until the moment of the incarnation of God's blessed Son in this scene. In plain language, chap. xxi. is law, and chap. xxii. is grace. In chap. xxi. God is seeking something; in chap. xxii. God is coming near and furnishing something. In chap. xxi. God is saying, "Have you got anything for Me?" In chap. xxii. He is saying, "I have a great deal for you." That is the difference. Law is what people like. Law makes demands upon man; therefore, we read that at a certain time the owner sent

his servants to get the fruit of the vineyard, but there was no fruit; on the contrary there was opposition and hatred.

Man is not different to-day; there is not a bit of change. Do you suppose that the incarnation of Christ has changed man? In no wise. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and whether it was man before the coming of Christ, or man since, it is *man*, the child of Adam. When God came claiming from man, what did He get? Nothing. And then the Lord shows what the end would be by-and-by—there must be judgment.

Now it is a day of grace, not a day of law; and God is approaching man on the ground of redemption, on the ground of that which His own blessed Son has effected for His glory and for your good and mine. God has come out now in the revelation of His heart, and grace is reigning through righteousness, on the ground of that which Christ is and what Christ has accomplished. Grace is the unmerited goodness of God. Righteousness, which is what the law demanded, is what you and I ought to have yielded to God, but we have not. Men like the law, because it makes something of them. You would rather listen to the law than to the gospel, because it addresses you, it recognises you, it appeals to you. The law says, "I expect something from you." That is why people like law. There is nothing people hate like being "cut" or being ignored. Do you understand?

The law said, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not steal." Thus by it I

am regarded as somebody, I am addressed, I am recognised; but the point of the gospel is this—it ignores me altogether. People have to learn that, and it is a bitter lesson, which none of us learn in a day. We think we must do something, and then, when we find we have not done it, we get distressed, but the last thing you will do is to fling up your arms and say, "I cannot do anything fit for God." Do you know how I know that? I know my own heart; and yours and mine are just alike, because Scripture says, "As face answers to face in the water, so doth the heart of man to man."

Further, it is no good to *mix* law and gospel. Law is the demand that God in righteousness makes upon me, but then I have not answered to the demand. What comes next? The condemnation that must of necessity fall upon me because I have not answered to law. What an immense comfort to know that God is not now coming near to us commanding us to bring anything, to do anything, or to feel anything. He is coming near and presenting something to us that is the outcome of His own heart, and is wrapped up in the person of His own blessed Son, and that is pressed upon us for our acceptance.

Well, you say, people will receive Christ surely. Stop, have *you* received Him? Are you saved? Are your sins forgiven, are you perfectly certain? "Well," you say, "I am a professing Christian." We shall have a look at you presently. Profession won't do. I don't ask, "What do you profess?" but "What do you possess?" We get in the end of this story the

folly of the man making a profession without reality, the man who went in without a wedding garment. He had not learned his own state—what was wrong with his own clothes—and, in he went, only to be turned out.

There are many people—usually Church members—dreaming they will go to heaven, who have never been converted, never got on the wedding garment, never knew they were lost, and, of course, never went to Christ to be saved. They are decent, respectable, religious—not what they ought to be, of course, for nobody would take that ground—but what they had failed in, Christ would make up. That is exactly what Christ will not do; He is not an up-maker. That is not His way at all. He is the blessed, living Saviour of the lost.

The day of the law has gone by. “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Have you been struggling and striving to present to God that which would give you a title to the wedding feast? That will not do.

Let us ponder this parable carefully. “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.” The king says, “I am going to have my son honoured. Who is prepared to go with me in honouring my son?” That is very simple. It is really making much of Christ. That is the point. God will have a marriage feast for His Son (the beloved Son was to be the object of every eye), and the Father's thought was, “Let Me get a company that will share His happiness, and that will

enjoy that which will be a great joy to His heart. Let Me get people that will share My feelings and His feelings." It is a wonderful thing that God should want to bring you and me into communion with Himself in His own thoughts about His blessed Son.

You say, "I thought the gospel would save me from going to hell"? So it does, but that is the negative side of the gospel. I do not make light of that, and I want you to understand that, if you are not a participator in the joy of Jesus in heaven on the ground of redemption, you must spend eternity with Judas in hell. Friend, make no mistake, you are under notice to quit; you are not going to be always on earth; you are going off very shortly. What does God want? He wants your company. The gospel saves a man from eternal judgment, but that is not God's great thought. God says, "I should like that man's company in eternity with My blessed Son, and not only do I want his company, but I will send him an invitation."

You will stand before the Lord by-and-by, but unsaved reader, you will never say you were not invited. Memory will tell you you were invited over and over again, and it will tell you that you "made light" of the call of grace over and over again, and then you will be speech-less. •

Christian, what will you be then? Be speechless? Not you. If you do not find your tongue here on earth, you will then, to join that holy, happy song that ascribes glory to the Lamb.

God made a feast, "and sent forth his servants to

call them that were bidden to the wedding" (ver. 3). The idea is His own. This gospel—the glad tidings of God—is that you should be the companion of His Son in everlasting glory; it was His own thought. "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been his counsellor?" Who has said, "Lord, wouldn't it be nice if You were to invite sinners, and save them and bring them to glory instead of their going on in their sins and being damned"? Nobody ever said that. Paul might well say, "Who has been his counsellor?" God is God, and He has taken His own way. He has ordained this wedding feast for His Son, and He is going to have guests there, and, blessed be His name, He sent me an invitation.

You inquire, "What did you do?" I took it; I accepted it. What will *you* say? "I never knew I was invited?" Then, know it henceforth. You say, "I never was invited before." I guess you were, but your heart was engaged with things down here, hence the Lord says, "He sent forth his servants to *call* them." It is a knock at your door. What does it mean? God calls you; God invites you. What to? The company of His blessed Son for eternity. "He sent forth his servants to *call* them." A preliminary invitation had gone out, but see how God pursues men.

God did not leave me alone when I did not reply. He sent another messenger after me. God has saved me, and He wants to save you. Are you going to let Him? "He sent his servants to *call* them." You know you have been a very civil person, but do

you know that you have not been civil to God? You know you have not been, but there is something underneath deeper than civility. Do you know what that is? I will read it, "They *would* not come." Why have you not been converted hitherto? It was not, "They *could* not come," but, "They *would* not come." That is will. Oh, that wicked, awful will that is in man's heart. What way has your will taken you? What way did my will take me? I read, "He (Pilate) delivered Jesus to their will," and what did they do? Put Him on the cross. When your will works, how does it work? Against God? Yes.

"Well," you say, "one would think, to hear you speak, that I was an awful sinner." So you are. You ask, "Worse than you?" Not so bad, but cast in the same mould. You have a will, and you have used it against God. "They would not come." You say, "They must have been terrible people!" They got an awful doom. Beware. The lessons of these parables are Christ's beacons to immortal souls like you and me.

The invitation goes out, but there is no attention. The servant went and knocked, and said, "Supper time has come, are you coming?" Are you coming to Jesus now? Not just yet? "Well," you say, "I should take good care never to send another invitation to people who treated me like that!" I believe you are right, but, thank God, He is not like you and me. What do I read? "Again he sent other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my

fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come ye to the marriage." What grace is in the heart of God! What guilt is in the sinner's heart that needs to have this message pressed on him again and again!

But I hear you say, "Who is that sinner?" Don't you know him? Will you tell me *you* have received the invitation? If you have not received it yet, I am very glad to have the chance of telling you this precious news. God says, "I have prepared my dinner; all things are ready; come to the marriage." You say, "Of course they came"? Listen, and see a page of your own heartless life, because you know you have heard this again and again. "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." I should like to ask you, When do you expect to taste grace? Do you think you can play fast and loose with God for ever? Do you think you can trifle with mercy right into eternity? Stop! Beware! Do you know whose words these are? They are the words of the incarnate Son of God. They are the words of the One who, on the cross, agonised in blood and sorrow and shame till death closed His eyes, that you and I might be saved and redeemed and brought to God.

Then we have recorded the most dreadful thing possible, "They made light of it." You hope to be saved some day, I have no doubt, but in the meantime what are you doing? Jesus says, "They made light of it." But you say, "I am not frivolous." Have you accepted the invitation? Have you tasted the grace of God? Are you justified by faith in Jesus? Has

the Holy Ghost led you to say, "Abba, Father"? These are parts of the feast.

Alas! "They made light of it." I think there is not a more awful word in all the Scriptures. What was the reason? They were pre-occupied; governed by sin; held in the chains of lust most likely—"divers lusts and pleasures," as Scripture says. You say, "What is the harm?" What of? A thing that hinders you from receiving Christ? It ruins you for eternity. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." All these things were very good in themselves.

The business man says, "I have my business to attend to." You want to make mency, and you will do it, and—and pass into a lost eternity, and if from your wretched God-forsaken soul a bitter cry should come, "O God, why am I forsaken?" an echo will come back from the caverns of hell, "Lord, he heard the gospel and 'made light of it;' he got the invitation over and over again, but he '*made light of it.*'" The merchandise was too much; the money was too much; the drink was too much; the cards were too many; the yellow-backed novel had the day; the pleasures of sin have sunk you into the pains of everlasting perdition, and you will recollect this—you made light of it. Made light of what? Grace, mercy, God's salvation, God's Son, God's Spirit, God's company, pardon, peace, life, forgiveness. Those were all flung aside.

Alas! "they made light of it." Don't imitate this action; it is an awful record.

W. P. T. W.

THREE LINES AND A BIT.

IN the spring of 1884 I was in America, holding missions in and around New York City. At M—, I was one morning accosted by a tall, thin, cadaverous looking fellow in the street, with, "Is your name S—?"

"Yes, that is my name. What is yours?"

"There's my name over my store," pointing to his place of business.

"B—, is it? I knew that name in the old country well enough. Yes; I think my brother knows your brother."

"Well," said he, "I am in the dark—my mind is much distressed, and I thought possibly you might be able to help me. Perhaps I had better tell you a little of my history. I have been over here for about ten years. I left home to free myself from all restraint. I just hated religion, wasn't inclined that way a bit; and like many other foolish young fellows, I determined to have a fling on my own hook, and off I came. I am practically an atheist, though I haven't publicly avowed myself as such. I have blotted God out of my thoughts, and have gone ahead as if there were no God—in fact tried to persuade myself there was none! I didn't get on very well—had to push my way against tremendous difficulties, and at length settled here into this business. I have a good wife, and have done pretty well, considering; but somehow, lately, I have been awfully

troubled in my mind. In the dark—can't see my way a bit. Somehow the thought will force its way in that there *is* a God—that I shall have to do with that God, and I have been all these years practically denying Him."

"No wonder you are in the dark," said I; "it's the usual thing when a man denies God, and lives without Him, he can't get anywhere else but into the dark."

"Well, can't you help me at all?"

"I'm afraid not. When a man has gone right away from God, with his eyes wide open, it's pretty hard for him to turn round again and get into the light. When a man has been practically saying, 'I don't want God,' he often thinks that God doesn't want him."

"The great trouble is that I can't believe a single word of the Bible—not a word."

"I am sorry for that," I said; "but if you can't—why, you can't, and there's an end to the matter."

"But can't you help me?"

"No, I'm afraid not; I don't know how I can."

"It does seem hard that I can't get some light. It's awfully dark."

"How long has this been troubling you?"

"About three or four weeks."

"Can you account for it at all? Have you been reading anything, or hearing anything that has stirred your mind?"

"No, nothing at all; it came all of a sudden—night after night—so that I couldn't sleep for thinking. Can you account for it in any way?"

“Yes, I think I can. Does your brother ever pray for you?”

“He has never left off since I left England; I’m sure of that.”

“Then what you are now feeling is merely the beginning of the answer to your brother’s prayers. He believes in God. He knows God; he has been mentioning your case to God, and now the answer is coming. You are getting a bit squeezed, and the truths of past years are coming to the front again. How do you like it?”

“Oh, it’s awfully dark, and I’m miserable! I can’t get light anywhere. My health is beginning to suffer. I have no appetite. Can’t you help me?”

“No,” said I; “I’m afraid I can’t; it’s not so easy to get back to God when you have been going away from Him for ten years. You’ll have to find your way back the best you can, if you ever succeed at all; and I’m afraid you’ll find it pretty hard and very difficult. Jesus Christ says, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me!’ You can only get back to God by Him. But then you said that you could not believe a word in the Bible, and what I have just said comes out of the Bible, so that won’t help you at all.”

“No; I can’t believe that.”

After further talk we parted. A few weeks passed, and I saw him coming into the service one night at a place four or five miles from his home. At the close he came up to me saying, “Will you try and help me to-night? I am worse than ever, and if I

don't get help soon I shall die. I can't sleep, eat, or attend to business. It does seem hard."

"Not hard, my friend, by any means. The Bible says, 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'; but then, I forget, you can't believe a word in the Bible."

"No, I can't believe a word in the Bible; but can't you help me, somehow?"

"No, I don't see how I can. I have no other resource but the Bible; and that's no use to you."

"What shall I do? I am all astray. I have got far away from God."

"What did you say just then?"

"Why, that I have got far from God, and gone astray altogether."

"Well, I think I could find one line that you could believe now. Shall I try?"

"Do! I shall be so glad to get one line that I can really believe."

Turning to Isaiah liii. 6, we read together, "All we like sheep have gone astray."

"Is that true?" said I.

"Why, yes; that's true."

"How do you know it is?"

"It describes me! I've gone astray! That's me, and no mistake! Why, there's one line that I can believe! I never thought that you'd find a line like that."

"Well," said I, "you've got what you wanted now—one line out of the Bible that you can believe; so good-night, friend."

"Stop! stop a bit. True, I've got a line that I can believe; but it don't seem to do me any good. I'm no better for it. I'm just as much in the dark as ever. That line hasn't helped me at all!"

"No," said I, "it wasn't meant to. It merely states a fact that you knew before. It never does help a man to read that he's 'gone astray,' when he knows it already."

"Would you mind trying another line?"

"I don't mind trying another, but do you think you ought to? Isn't one enough at a time?"

"Well, you see, I don't feel that *one* line has helped me at all; and I'd much like to try a second."

So again we turned to Isaiah liii. 6, and read the second line, "We have turned every one to his own way."

"Why, that's true too; you went your way from God—I went my way. That line describes us both."

"Yes, I can believe that line."

"But observe," said I, "it is a line *and a bit*—a little more than you expected. So now you have *two lines and a bit* out of the Bible that you can believe, and can know they are true. Isn't it strange, now! Just think—out of this Book of God, there are two lines and a bit you can believe. You never expected that, did you?"

"No, I never did. It is wonderful that I could believe those two lines. And yet somehow they don't seem to have done me any good. I don't feel any better. I'm just as dark. I feel no nearer God."

"No," said I, "they are not meant to bring you into the light, because they merely describe us two; and we know they are true, because they are our experience."

"Well, would you mind trying the third line?"

"I don't mind trying any number, because I can believe all the lines in the Bible; but I wouldn't advise you to try a third. You see two lines and a bit are a good deal for a man like you to swallow all at once; and I am pretty sure you would find the third line one too much. You wouldn't be able to believe it."

"I think I might; I think perhaps I might."

"I feel very sure you will not be able to," said I; "still, if you very much wish it, I will let you see it."

Once more we read together. "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "There now," said I, "this third line is more than you can believe, isn't it?"

"Well, yes. I must confess I can't take in that at all. I can't believe that."

"I thought you would not be able to. I told you two lines and a bit were all you could manage at one time."

"But how do you account for it that I cannot believe this third line?"

"I could tell you, but you would not much like me to say."

"I wish you would; for it seems strange that I can believe two lines, but not three."

"Well, then, the reason simply is, that *you are the*

biggest fool out! And I can prove it in five minutes if you like."

"I wish you would, then, for you are hitting me rather hard."

"Suppose that, instead of this Bible in my hand, I was holding a photograph album, and we were looking at the pictures, the first one would be a picture of John M——. Yes, you would say, I knew that man well; and it's a capital picture of him. The next one I might say is that of William H——. Do you know him? Yes, you reply—I know him well. Is the picture like him? Yes, exactly; a speaking likeness. Now we will turn over to the third picture. That is Thomas N——. Did you ever see him? No, you reply—I never saw him. But I have, I say, and I can vouch for that being a first-rate picture. Now the fourth is James B——. Is he a stranger to you? Yes, I never saw him. But, say I, I know it is as good a picture of him as are the others we looked at. And then you reply, I can't believe that those two are a bit like the men you say, because I have never seen them; and until I *do* see them, I shall never bring myself to believe that those are their pictures, even though they are taken by the same artist. Wouldn't you be a fool to reason that way?"

"Why, certainly I should, but I have not done that."

"Yes, you have," I replied. "I have shown you four pictures in that one verse, Isaiah. liii. 6. The first one was yourself—which you immediately recog-

nised. The second was mine; and that you said, you recognised also. Those two lines showed us ourselves. Now, the third line shows us just as plainly the Lord Jesus and God: and you turn round and say, I can't believe that third line. What right have you to impugn the accuracy of the Holy Spirit, in describing to you the Lord Jesus and the Living God, when you have seen His accurate drawing of us two?"

"Let me have the whole verse again. I see! I'm a fool after all! You are right!"

We read the verse over, and once more I tried to explain to him the meaning of the statements in three lines and a bit.

"Do you mean to say," said he, "that my safety and life depend upon my believing that third line?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Then I'll stake my whole existence, for time and for eternity, on that third line. I put my finger on it, and declare that I believe that every word of it is true."

Solemnly we dropped on our knees, and I repeated his words to the Lord Jesus. He then followed in humble and broken confession of sin; and ere he rose again the light had entered his soul. The three lines and a bit had accomplished the purpose of God. They had found entrance through the door of faith, and he was rejoicing in salvation.

"ALL we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6).

THE CRISIS OF YOUR LIFE.

THE year 1909 draws to a close—a wonderful year it has been to many, a year of joy and one of sorrow.

We have had to bid a long farewell to some near and dear, at whose grave side we have wept.

We have had many a joy in many a way for which we can and do thank God.

To myself the year has been fraught with deep and unexpected exercise.

It was on 20th March that my beloved friend, the editor of this magazine (the *Gospel Messenger*), sat by my bedside in a private hospital and kindly asked me whether I had set my house in order; because, said he, “the surgeon has resolved to operate in two days; the operation is very serious, and no one can tell what the result may be.”

I valued his frank and brotherly counsel and told him that everything was “in order”; nor could I say that the possibilities which he suggested caused me any alarm.

I thought of the severance of many a tender tie, and a definite end to all labour here. I remembered how often he and I have stood together on the same platform in the preaching of the same precious gospel; and of how frequently, during the eight and thirty years of its existence, I had been permitted to contribute to the pages of his magazine; as also other labours of love in various spheres. All this was possibly coming to a close.

But what of the immediate future? The two days passed swiftly and peacefully away. The moment of the operation came. Fear there was none. I had had plenty of time to anticipate everything, and now the crisis had arrived, and I had to face death or the possibility of dying.

I wish to place on record for all who may read this paper that I proved the divine and perfect solidity of that foundation which, in a feeble way, I have endeavoured all along to lay before my readers.

I found Christ enough for the supreme crisis! I found His atoning death a perfect substitute and His resurrection the pledge of victory. The sting of death was gone. Thanks unto God filled my heart. The truth of the Epistle to the Romans was the pillar of my soul. The rod and staff of the Good Shepherd not only supported but comforted me. I know and sweetly felt that He was with me, and I feared no evil; and then . . . "I laid me down in peace . . . I awoke, for thou sustainedst me."

The ordeal was safely overcome, and its lessons were most profitable. "God was my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

My only object in writing the above is to urge others, with all the earnestness and sincerity which one man can use in dealing with his fellows, that they should unhesitatingly and most absolutely build on this only foundation.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid—Christ Jesus." Sweep to the winds, I beg of you, any and every thing but Christ. Your works,

merits, doings of any kind whatsoever, are not of the very least value in the matter of atonement.

Fling them all away, and stand on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus as your only ground of confidence.

The day will come, dear friend, when you must face this crisis—perhaps sooner than you think.

Are you ready? Is your house in order? Have you let 1909 slip away without the settlement of this greatest of all personal questions?

Oh! whatever your age, position, rank, or name, build assuredly and now on God's only foundation. You will never regret this; nay, you will praise God for ever for such a Saviour!

J. W. S.

“JESUS DIED FOR ME, AND I TRUST IN JESUS.”

IN the year 1790 a trading vessel left the port of Bristol for the Pacific Islands, and, after many weeks of sailing, anchored off one of those beautiful sea gems, for the purpose of bartering with the natives.

In those days the light of the gospel had not made its benign influence felt, so that it was almost a common occurrence for a ship's crew on landing to be attacked, killed, and—eaten.

J—— H—— was in command of the ship's boat which was launched to barter for pearls with the

natives. He was a sincere Christian, whose life on ship board commended the gospel.

All went well until the boat neared shore, when the natives sent up a wild howl, rushed into the sea, and began to drag the boat ashore, wildly gesticulating. A fierce fight ensued, guns were freely used on one side, while clubs, spears, and axes were used on the other. It was an unequal contest, but after a fearful experience the boat was again in deep water, making for the ship.

Amongst the mortally wounded taken on board was T—— C——, a fearful blasphemer and profligate, whose closing moments were spent in frequent and earnest cries for, "MERCY."

It was painful to hear his ejaculations, among which was, "To die thus! No time for repentance, with hideous crimes weighing down upon my soul!"

J—— H——, the second mate, knelt by the poor fellow's side and prayed earnestly that God would have mercy upon the prodigal. In simple words he spoke of God's great love to sinners, and told how Jesus came to earth to live a life of suffering, that He was crucified, and His precious blood was shed, that it might wash away the sins of all who trust Him. How that He was buried, rose again as victor over death and the grave, and went on high, that those who trust in Him may be presented pure and blameless before the throne of God.

"But that could not be for such a wretch as me," said C——. "If God would only let me live I would repent and lead a different life and do all

kinds of things to please Him: He may then think me more fit for heaven." How like the thoughts of thousands to-day, ever ready to turn away from the *only* Saviour to some fancied 'good works and merit of their own.

"[Oh, shipmate," said J—— H——, "do not think of such folly. You never can do anything to make you more fit for heaven than you now are, vile, sinful, guilty wretch as you may be." He then read to the poor fellow that lovely story from John iii., and bade him, like the bitten Israelites, to "look only to Jesus."

"What, sir! you really do not mean to say that the great God in heaven, who made the stars, the earth, the heaven, did all that for me, and such as me—that He says all that to me?" asked poor C——.

"Yes," said J—— H——, "all that is for you. You have nothing to do, but as a helpless, sinful, guilty sinner to look to Jesus—to His blood as the only means of cleansing, and the Word of God says, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.' 'By faith are ye saved.' Shipmate, if you feel your guiltiness, it is you He invites to come to Him; it is *you* He will present faultless before the throne, and *you* who will be welcomed as a son."

"This is news indeed, glorious news. I wish I had known it before, but I know it now, and that's enough: Jesus died for me, and I trust in Jesus."

What a sight for angels to look down upon—a

poor, vile blasphemer, now through God's grace and the work and worth of Jesus—

SAVED, FORGIVEN, HAPPY,

soon to be transported into the very presence of Jesus.

A few minutes more and the spirit had departed to be "with Christ which is far better."

"Strange!" said a shipmate. "What did he mean? I never heard the like before—'Jesus died for me, and I trust in Jesus.'"

Beloved reader, do *you* know what it means? Have *you* ever trusted this blessed Saviour? If not, let me plead with you to trust Him NOW.

J. W. H. N.

"PLENTY OF TIME."

A YOUNG man accosted a clergyman with the following question: "How long before I die need I become a Christian?" "Five minutes," was the reply. Very satisfied, he was going away with the thought that he would have his fling with the world, and turn to God for salvation on his death-bed.

"Half a minute," said the clergyman, calling him back, "when are you going to die?" Ah! he had not considered that question. Like the man we read of in the 12th chapter of Luke's Gospel, he had left God out of his calculations.

Now, dear reader, let me ask, is that what you are doing? Is it your intention to go in for all the paltry

pleasures of this life, and then turn to God at the “eleventh hour”? Not that He would not save you even then. No, blessed be His name, He would; but listen to what He has to say to the man in the 12th of Luke—“Fool, *THIS NIGHT* thy soul shall be required of thee” (ver. 20).

“Oh, but I am young. There is plenty of time for me. It is all very well for people with grey hairs to talk about these things. I am going to enjoy life.” Are these your thoughts, dear youthful reader? Oh, be careful how you treat God’s gracious offer of pardon! That little “Plenty of time” is the devil’s express to hell. Mind you do not find yourself among his passengers! You talk about enjoyment, but how can one who is under the judgment of God be happy? And that is where you are, dear reader, if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour (see John iii. 18). There are no real pleasures, and there can be no real happiness apart from God. But the Psalmist says, “In thy presence is **FULNESS** of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for **EVERMORE**” (Ps. xvi. 11).

Let me tell another story for those who say “Plenty of time.” When I was at school there was a boy in my form named George A——. He was not quite sixteen years of age, but he was not too young for death to snatch away. He was with us at school on Friday morning, and was, to all appearances, in the best of health, but at six o’clock on the following Monday morning he was summoned to appear before his Creator, with barely forty-eight hours’ notice. Such is the uncertainty of life, dear reader.

No, dear friend, whoever you may be, old or young, rich or poor, you have no lease of life down here ; your life is " Even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away " (see James iv. 14). Death is very busy everywhere, and is no respecter of persons ; it takes the old, it takes the young, the king on his throne, and the beggar in the gutter. And " It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the JUDGMENT " (Heb. ix. 27).

Now, dear reader, let me urge you to face these questions as before God. You have an eternity to spend, but where will you spend it ? You have a God to meet, but how will you meet Him ? There can be only one of two answers to each of these questions. You must either spend your eternity with God, or else you must spend it with the devil. There is no other alternative. You must either accept the Lord Jesus as your Saviour in this God's day of grace, or you must meet Him as your Judge at the Great White Throne (see Rev. xx.). Let me urge you to consider these questions NOW, dear reader, for the time is short !

God offers you a full and a free salvation through faith in His Son, and you are alone responsible if you reject the proffered blessing.

" ' Too late ' you'll feel your lost estate,
Which now you don't believe ;
' Too late ' you'll see the grace of God,
Which now you won't receive.

" Oh, sinner, pause, ere yet ' too late,'
Now is the day of grace ;
Now Jesus calls, oh, do obey
His pleading, loving voice ! "

F. J. W.

“THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING’S SON.”

PART II.—REJECTED.

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—MATT. xxii. 1-13.

THE man who “makes light” of God’s mercy does not stop with that act of folly. Indifference and neglect of the gospel will later lead to its absolute rejection, coupled with contempt, and even violence, against God. These are serious considerations for readers of the *Gospel Messenger* who began 1909 unconverted, and are yet so as it dies away.

Those invited to the marriage in this scene began by “making light of it.” They ended by murdering

the king's messengers, and of necessity retributive judgment fell on them.

Notice what happens here. "And the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them." I have no doubt this had its historical fulfilment in the history of Israel. They first made light of Him, and then they slew the Lord Himself. As a consequence divine judgment fell on the nation and on Jerusalem, for we are distinctly told—

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Such is the history of the Jew.

But God's purpose is not to be thwarted. If the Jew despises grace, the Gentile shall taste it, for God's Son must be honoured. Hence you and I get our opportunity of receiving the gospel.

Do not think, beloved friend, that if you will not have a seat in God's house He is going to have any vacant seats there. There will be vacant niches in hell; Scripture says so. "Hell and destruction are never full" (Prov. xxvii. 20). God likes a full house, and He is going to have it. Satan will be disappointed; there will be much emptiness in hell, and there will be misery in hell; oh, the sense of awful hopelessness that is there! and, I will tell you something else, there will be no company in hell. Will there be many there? If you reject Christ *you* will be there, and experience utter isolation in eternity. What can describe the dread isolation of a lost soul that might have had the presence of Christ, but who

cast the die irrevocably on earth, and now has but the isolation of his own misery.

“Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.” Am I to get into heaven because I am worthy? Oh, dear, no. There is only one place I am worthy of, and that is the lake of fire. Our sins demand judgment, and, if God were to judge us for our sins, what could it be but the lake of fire? You don’t believe in hell? “Oh, no, no; that is exploded theology.” Indeed! but when bombs explode they often kill a lot of people. This exploded theology about no judgment, and no hell, has killed a lot of people. Do you know you are going to be converted some day? Not through my preaching, I can’t say that—but when it is too late, you will get your eyes opened to the truth of God’s Word. The Lord Jesus is here telling the plain truth, on the one hand, of the folly and sin of man, and on the other hand, of the mercy of God, when, after having His Son rejected, He says, “I will send the invitation world-wide.”

“And he said to his servants, Go ye therefore into the highways, and *as many* as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both *bad* and *good*: and the wedding was furnished with guests.” What a commission! What a message! It is from God to you. I know the joy of the feast, and I would draw you right into its circle if I could. Could anything be more lovely than the activity of this grace of God and the

universality of its manifestation? "They gathered together *all*, as many as they found." They urged them, sweeping them in, saying, "Friends, there is a most wonderful feast up yonder."

But the invited guests might say, "What about our clothes?" Don't talk about them, you will have garments fitted on you when you get to the door. Are you willing to come? "They went out and gathered together all." Yes, those servants *went out*. Sometimes we Christians are apt to stop at home, and we think God will do His own work, and He does not need your help and mine. That is quite true, but at the same time, I should not like to come in for the curse of Meroz. Now, if you are a sleepy Christian, a worldly Christian, converted, but going on, with only a name to live, beware lest you get under the curse of Meroz. ("Curse ye Meroz, . . . curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Judges v. 23).) God gives every believer the privilege of going out and inviting people to His feast. Never trouble as to whether you are a preacher or not. If you know the joy of the feast, you can say to another, "Won't you come in to the feast?" You could do that, dear saved reader, couldn't you?

"They gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good." Bad ones first. Gather both if you can, but I have more hope of the bad ones. They know they are all wrong, and the good ones are in great doubt as to whether they are

wrong. You say, "Aren't we all bad?" Yes, in one sense.

In the 16th chapter of Acts, when the gospel first came into Europe, Paul wanted to find the man whom he had seen calling, "Come over and help us." He looked for this man, but could not find him. What he saw was a lot of women at a prayer meeting. He talked to Lydia; her heart was opened and then her house was opened. I think she was a *good* one. Who was the bad one? The jailor, poor, wretched, hardened brute that he was. We see Paul with his back all bleeding, wounded, and hungry, given into the hands of that jailor. The magistrates had said, "Take great care of them," and the jailor, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks; then he went to have his supper, and then to his bed. You might have seen him that night sleeping in his sins, but, all of a sudden, there is an earthquake, and he is waked up. I think he was the *bad* one; any way he was the first man in Europe to get saved.

I have got saved, and you can get saved. The gospel has now travelled to where we live, and it has come to your ears now. The wedding is rapidly being furnished with guests. The jailor is among them; I am among them, and I would like you to be among them. Make up your mind ere 1909 pass away; you have halted long enough.

A striking picture of an intensely solemn nature the Lord next paints.

The wedding was furnished with guests, and then the king came in to see the guests. "And he saw

there a man that had not on a wedding garment." Why? Was there not a wedding garment for him? Of course. In the East for every invited guest the bridegroom always provided a suitable garment, with which he was invested. At the door there were servants, and as each guest came to share the nuptial joy, this garment was put over him.

I think I see that motley crowd, bad and good, on their way up the hill to the feast. Among them a very well-clad man goes up too. Some of the people are very poorly clad, with nothing to recommend them.

I say to this well-clad man, "Where are you going?" "To the feast." "Had an invitation?" "Oh, yes." "Accepted it?" "I mean to be there." "You seem very well dressed." "Oh, yes, no fear about me, my clothes will do; I have been very religious all my days, but where are all these people going?" "To the feast." "Clad like this?" And he draws off by himself; he has no sense of grace, but on he goes.

Now, we will follow the motley crowd. They reach the door, and we hear the servants' "Welcome, welcome, welcome," and then the word, "Here is your wedding garment." I need hardly tell you the name of our well-dressed friend who now comes up. He is Mr Do-the-best-I-can. The servant says, "Here is your garment, sir." "Oh, no, thank you. My own will do for me quite well." But the servant says, "The lord of the feast has comnauded all to have a wedding garment, and you must have on this wedding garment; you *must*." "Ye *must* be born

again,” you *must* have the Holy Ghost, you *must* have Christ, you *must* be washed in the blood, and you *must* have the wedding garment. Scripture says, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And as the crowds go into the feast, they all have on the wedding garment except one. See this man slip through, he does not want another garment; his own fairly good, religious, and respectable life will do for him. Then the king came in to see the guests, and he saw this man which had not on—not “had not,” but “had not *on*”—a wedding garment. I think I see the king come in, and he casts his eye over all the guests. “Every eye shall see him,” and His eye will see you. Will this be your case, my dear reader? “He saw a man which had not on a wedding garment.” You may have kept the garments of self-righteousness on here, and you may have kept out of the reach of the gospel, but by-and-by the light will come in and reveal your utter unfitness for the Lord’s presence.

“Friend,” and everybody looks at him, “how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?” And he was speechless. What will *you* say? You may think the people wicked who refused the feast, but what about the wickedness of the man who would dare to go into God’s feast without a suited wedding garment? “He was speechless.”

Then said the king to his servants, “Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” What a moment! To-day, what is it? Bring them in, bring them in. Then, what will it

be? Bind him hand and foot. Take him away. What happens him? His sins, that were never pardoned, bind him hand and foot. The unclothed professor of Christ is rejected.

Christian, you and I are going to dwell in everlasting light, but the man who has not Christ goes into outer darkness, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. It is only a parable, a picture, I know, but what is the interpretation? What is the application thereof, the effect thereof? Tell me, where will you spend eternity? Shall it be inside with Jesus in eternal joy, the guest of God, and the companion of His Son? or outside in darkness, outer darkness? Which? I cannot make a choice for you, but I entreat you, do not lay your head upon your pillow until you can say by the grace of God, "I do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ—Christ for me."

Christ is the wedding garment. His blood is shed, atonement is made, and God's invitation is sent out, and you need not doubt about the welcome Jesus would give you. He would save you where you are. Take care lest you be *searched, silenced and sentenced* in a day to come.

You had far better turn to God this very day, and go on in joy serving the Lord fully till He come, and then you will be in God's presence for ever.

Where will you spend eternity? I ask in all affection. You have been INVITED, beware lest you "make light" of God's call through sin and folly on the one hand, or, through making a Christless profession, awake to find yourself REJECTED. Receive Jesus now and confess Him boldly. W. P. T. W.