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The Gospel Messenger.

"ELECTRO-PLATE CHRISTIANS."

"**I** AM one of them. My eyes have been opened to-night to see my real state," said the speaker to me excitedly, as well he might, in view of the alarming discovery he had made. What led to this honest confession is simply told.

Some years ago a gentleman, who had lately placed himself under my care for a very troublesome and obstinate malady, and had been cured thereof, came to my consulting room to report his happy condition, and at the same time to express his thanks. Just as he was leaving he turned and said, "Doctor, I have been told that you preach. Is this so?"

"Yes, I preach the gospel sometimes."

"Where, and when?"

"In Freemasons' Hall, 98 George Street, on Lord's Day evenings. I shall speak there next Sunday at 6.30 P.M."

"I should like to come, if I may."

Having assured him of a welcome he left, saying, "I shall certainly come next Sunday," and he kept his word, taking his seat close to the platform that he might hear well. In the course of my address, in effect I said, "I fear there are a good many electro-plate Christians going nowadays, possibly

there are some in this hall to-night. The term may be new to you, but it is easily explained. Every burglar knows the difference between solid silver and electro-plated goods. He goes for the real article and spurns the other. The plating sooner or later wears off and reveals the baser metal underneath. So is it with the mere professing Christian, unborn of the Spirit.

“A true Christian is born of the Spirit, washed from his sins in the precious blood of Jesus, is sealed by the Spirit of God, and hence knows that he is a child of God, and possesses eternal life as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. On the other hand, the mere professor of Christ, who has not passed through the new birth, though baptized, confirmed, a church member, a communicant, and possibly an active religious worker, is still what he ever was—‘dead in sins’—at a distance from God, unpardoned, and unsaved.

“All such may look right, but they are not right, for *ye must be born again* is our Lord’s statement to Nicodemus, and who was more religious than he? Religion without new birth leaves the professor thereof as he was; ‘for that which is born of the flesh is flesh’ (John iii. 6), and, though plated over by forms, ceremonies, and religious exercises, is still flesh. Of such it is written, ‘They that are of the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, for the mind of the flesh is death . . . because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. . . . So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God’ (Rom. viii. 5-8).

"We learn from the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv.) that the essential thing was the possession of the oil, not the mere carrying of a lamp, which sufficed the five foolish virgins. At the critical moment they discovered that 'no oil' on the journey meant *no entrance* with the bridegroom at the end. How solemn! How all-important then to have the oil—the Holy Ghost—who only falls on true and real *believers* in Christ, not on *mere professors* of His name.

"How to get the oil is very simply unfolded in the history of Cornelius. Commissioned of God, the Apostle Peter carried the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the awakened Roman officer in these words, 'To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word' (Acts x. 43, 44). How simple is God's way of salvation. Hearing the Word, believing in Jesus, receiving the remission of sins, and then receiving the Holy Ghost.

"As with those in Cornelius' house so was it with the Ephesians. To them Paul preached Christ, and then wrote, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise' (Eph. i. 13).

"Beware of resting on anything short of the knowledge of Christ. To do so is to be an electro-plate Christian. You are still 'in the flesh' though your

real state is covered over by 'a form of godliness' (2 Tim.), and accompanied by '*dead works*' (Heb. ix. 14). Of the real Christian, born of the Spirit, and believing in the Lord Jesus, it is stated: 'For 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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Eph. ii. 8-10). This is new creation, solid silver all through, so to say. Such is the true child of God.

"How different is it with the un-born-again formalist—unchanged in the very springs of his being, the base metal of his nature is only glossed over by a truly Christless profession of a Saviour absolutely unknown. Unbelieving, unrepentant, unforgiven, and unwashed, his true state is only hidden to his own eyes, while he is really treading his way to a lost eternity.

"If any of my hearers are only electro-plate Christians, may God wake them up and open their eyes ere it be too late."

The meeting had no sooner closed, and I had stepped off the platform, than my patient rose, crossed the hall, and earnestly said, "Doctor, I should like a word with you."

"What about?" was my reply.

"What about? Why, about these electro-plate Christians."

"Well, what of them?"

"I am one of them. My eyes have been opened to-night to see my real state."

"I am glad to hear that. What do you see?"

"See? I see that I am all wrong together. I have never been converted, never been born again, and yet I have been a church member for over forty years, taken much interest in its progress, and been an office-bearer therein for many years. Doctor, what am I to do?"

"The only thing you can do, my friend, is to go down before God, own your sin, your lost estate, and then simply, as a poor guilty sinner, cast yourself on His mercy. It will not fail you, for Jesus said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out' (John vi. 37). Go home, and have it all out with Him. You must take your real place before God as a bankrupt, undone sinner. He will then give you, I am assured, the joy of His salvation."

After further conversation, in which I urged him to come at once to the Saviour, he departed, evidently deeply exercised as to his state before God. The following Lord's Day he returned, and, when the preaching was over, at once came again to me, saying:—

"I've had the most miserable week of all my life, Doctor, and I'm no better yet."

"I am most thankful, my friend, to hear you say so, because it would lead me to think that God's Spirit is working in you, and that you may be passing through the throes of the new birth, of which I spoke last Sunday."

"My experience has been terrible," he replied, "I can scarce eat or sleep. What am I to do? I've tried praying, and seeking to live better, but it's all no use, and I'm utterly wretched."

After some conversation I passed him into the hands of another servant of Christ, who sought to meet his difficulties. Peace, however, did not come to him, and, ere he left, I again urged him to go to God and tell him everything. He left the meeting saying, "I'll not rest, I cannot rest, till this matter is settled," an assurance that gave me confidence in praying for him.

The next morning I had occasion to call at his house to see a sick member of his family. No sooner had my carriage drawn up at his door than out he rushed, and in a voice that rang over the neighbourhood, exclaimed, "I've got it! I've got it! Thank God, I am all right now. I am saved. I see it all clearly now."

Taking me into his dining-room he there related how, on returning to his house overnight, he had gone to his own room, got down on his knees and there owned to the Lord what a huge mistake and delusion his whole past pseudo-religious life had been, and then cast himself, as a poor lost sinner, on His grace and mercy.

The Lord revealed Himself to him then and there, gave him the sense of forgiveness on the spot, and filled his heart with "all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xiv. 13). Such was God's grace to a misguided electro-plate Christian.

Dear reader, may I now ask you, affectionately, if you are in this category? If so, do you not think it were better to start this year of grace, 1910, by getting out of that list once and for all? Surely! Then "go thou and do likewise."

It takes some moral backbone for a religious man to own he has been "all wrong," but if he do so he will very soon be "all right," depend upon it. Let the foregoing tale lead every reader thereof, who is an electro-plate Christian, to do as my patient did.

Then will 1910 be truly a happy year for you. God grant it, my friend. W. T. P. W.

A PHOTOGRAPH.

THE development of the popular art of photography in recent years has been very wonderful. During the past few years photography has made great strides, and it is now possible to discover what has been hidden and concealed under the skin for many years, so that much valuable assistance has been rendered to sufferers by this means.

But there is a photography which penetrates far deeper, and makes a discovery hitherto probably unknown to you; it displays the inmost recesses of your heart and mind. Have you ever seen a good old-fashioned interior portrait of yourself? It is full-length, but I fear you will be disappointed at it, and fancy there must be a mistake, and that it is not you after all, but very like some one else you know. Still

I am confident there is no defect with the photographer, nor with the camera, and the light is absolutely perfect, so that there can be no mistake.

The photographer is God, the camera used is His unerring knowledge, and the light is divine. "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God" (Ps. liii. 2).

May we see a print of this picture which God has taken? Yes, it is printed permanently, and can never be effaced. It is to be seen in God's Word, which abides for ever. Read Psalm xiv. 1-3. What a revelation!

Your mind is such that you do not understand.

You do not seek after God.

You do no good.

Your throat is an open sepulchre.

Your tongue speaks deceitful things.

Your lips conceal poison to yourself, and to others.

Your mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Your feet are ready to take part even in committing murder. See also Rom. iii. 11-15.

This is anything but a pleasing picture, I admit, but it is impossible for the Holy Spirit of God to draw any other picture of you than this. You can say nothing in reply, your mouth is stopped, and you stand guilty before God. No retouching or pencilling of any kind can improve it; it must be accepted just as it is, and should be hung where you can have an uninterrupted view of it.

Do not be offended or discouraged at this faithful

picture, but remember that He who draws such a portrait of you is not only *light*, but is also *love*, and in all the tenderness of His heart He presents to you a Saviour in the person of His beloved Son, who died for sinners, and "whom God hath set forth a mercy-seat through faith in his blood," and if you believe on Him you are "justified freely by his grace." This is, then, a further kind of photograph I want to speak about; the photographer, the lens, and the light are all the same as before.

The work of creation, man has spoilt, and it has been stained by the murder of Jesus. Now there is to be seen a far greater work, the *work of redemption*, which cannot be spoilt, and on the ground of this God is able and willing to convert you from a sinner into a saint. "What must I do?" said the jailer. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31), was the reply. Do nothing. "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exod. xiv. 13). Keep quite still, and look at Jesus, trusting Him and His work on the cross. "Look unto me and be ye saved" (Isa. xlv. 22).

Will that do? Is that enough? Yes, it is enough for God and enough for you. Would you like to see a print of this kind of photograph? Notice: it is as perfect as the other, but far more pleasing. Compare it with the former:—

"Then opened he their *understanding* that they might understand the Scriptures" (Luke xxiv. 45).

"Thy *face*, Lord, will I seek" (Ps. xxvii. 8).

"Doing the will of God from the *heart*" (Eph. vi. 6).

"Nor shall my *tongue* utter deceit" (Job xxvii. 4).

"My *lips* shall praise thee" (Ps. lxiii. 3).

"He hath put a new song in my *mouth*" (Ps. xl. 3).

"He hath set my *feet* upon a rock" (Ps. xl. 2).

What a change! a complete transformation, and all on the ground of pure grace. God grant, my reader, that you may know this, while the door of mercy is still open.

D. W. M.

TWO "JOHN THREE SIXTEENS."

IT was my privilege to be present at a large evangelistic meeting held in a tent in a crowded part of L—— one lovely evening of August last.

Glad I was of the occasion, for I had heard that the Spirit of God was working there, and that welcome drops of a spiritual shower had been falling in refreshment on God's weary heritage and in the salvation of many who had been strangers to Him. Such occasions are always precious to those who rejoice in the spread of the gospel.

This large meeting was addressed by the beloved Editor of *The Gospel Messenger*, and never shall I forget the rich simplicity and quiet power of the message that was delivered at that hour. I had spoken in the tent earlier in the day on the fourth of John, and had endeavoured to show the value of

evidence derived *first-hand*, from the well-known fact that the people of Samaria—with whom, in that wonderful chapter, the blessed Lord was dealing, and who had listened to the report of the woman's story concerning Him, that He had told her all things that ever she had done—had gone directly to Himself and had learned from His own lips the truth of His mission, and had then declared that, having heard Him themselves, they *knew* that He was "the Saviour of the world." They heard Him for themselves, and hence their conviction. The evidence was first hand and absolutely reliable.

How great the value of personal intercourse, by simple faith, with the now risen, and living, and loving Lord! We can never acquire the same measure of assurance or certitude by getting evidence second hand, or from the experience or preaching of others. "God is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him." All this I sought to press on my audience, as I would now urge it, dear reader, on yourself.

Let us remember that we have to do with a God who loves us and who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but who, in infinite love, has given His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and whose gracious ear is open to the feeblest cry of the poor sin-conscious heart. Such a God may well and fully be trusted. Thousands have done so; why not *you*?

Well, this earlier meeting over, the tent was, as I have said, filled for another address in the evening.

Pleasant it was to see the crowd of earnest, sober faces which eagerly turned toward the speaker as he announced his text. I confess to surprise when I heard it. I had expected something very profound, nor indeed was I mistaken, for a more profound statement could not be found than John iii. 16 ; *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

That text, blessed as it surely has been to the conversion of multitudes of people, bears endless repetition. It is unspeakably precious. It carries the good news of God's love to a guilty world—His gift and its present effect on the believer.

The preacher lingered on the sacred music of that wondrous statement in great simplicity—a simplicity gained from a very perfect knowledge of the truth it contained, and also from a very long experience in the work of the gospel ; for need I say that more than forty years before, I had heard him preaching from the same text in the same town, when, if such a calculation be allowed, some two hundred souls at that time confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. But the word was as fresh as ever, the power, I think, greater, and the result, in measure, as happy. The truth of God never grows old. "The word of the Lord endureth for ever."

So much for John iii. 16 ; but, strange to say, the preacher informed us that he wished to speak from another John iii. 16, a fact which, no doubt, must have caused some astonishment, for what other John

iii. 16 could there be? He referred us to the First Epistle of John, and read in chapter iii. 16 as follows:—" *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.*" A marvellous statement indeed! The speaker compared these two verses in the first he said we have the love *unfolded*, and in the second we *perceive* it.

The first is the great outward fact, the second is the inward perception. The first is the most blessed truth of the love of God for the world made known, the second is the perception, by faith and in the power of the Spirit, of the glorious effect of that love. "He died for us." In the first I learn that as a believer in the Son of God I have (not, hope to have) everlasting life, and this covers the very highest range of blessing, viz., "that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). The second shows me that He, the God-man, "died for us," and thus wrought atonement. This last settles the whole question of righteousness, and places the conscience before God in peace, just as the other furnishes, not only a sense of security, but of relationship with the Father.

What volumes of truth flow out of these two "John three sixteens"! How much for the world, and how much for the believer! How God is seen as the source and fountain-head of this beautiful stream of grace, and how suitable is that grace to the "whosoever believeth on him."

Such, in brief, was the charming story of that evening. The sweetness of it rested on my spirit

for many a day. I doubt not that others were blessed under that simple preaching. Indeed I heard, some weeks after, when at a place sixty miles distant, of a couple who left the tent, the wife saying to her husband, "What a grand meeting we have had!"

"Yes," replied the husband, "I have been converted to-night."

This testimony was unsolicited, and therefore all the more reliable.

I must repeat, "The word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." "Endureth for ever!" It is as living and operative as it was twenty centuries ago, when the gospel was first proclaimed. The persecutions of the early days failed to extinguish that word, nor shall the scientific infidelity of to-day destroy it. The truth remains indestructible. All that is needed is God-given faith in Him, and in it, together with courage to hold and confess it in its own native simplicity.

God grant that the old, old message may be understood and held in new and divine power, as the years fly quickly away, by both reader and writer.

"The gospel of Thy grace
My stubborn heart has won ;
For God so loved the world,
He gave His only Son,
That 'whosoever will believe
Shall everlasting life receive.'"

J. W. S.

THREE OLD MEN.

ON the north-east coast of England, within a mile of the seashore, we some time since came into touch with three old men. All were poor, each nearing the end of his days. One was toiling up the steps to his lowly cottage on the hill-side, when a child said, "Oh, father! look at that poor old man; do go and speak to him about Jesus. He looks so weak as he totters up the steps." We accosted the old man, and began to speak of the love of God in sending His Son to die for guilty sinners. The old man turned sharply round and said, "I have read about these things for a good many years now, and I don't believe a word of it!" Remonstrance was in vain; he walked into his house muttering unbelief in the Word of God, and closed the door.

The second old man was sitting on his donkey cart, eating his dinner, when we made his acquaintance. Anxious to discover whether he was resting upon the work of Christ for salvation, we spoke to him about his soul's salvation. He replied that he found it very difficult to express his feelings, but assured us of his sincere belief in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. "I believe," said he, "*every word that is in the Bible*; I do not understand it all, *but I believe* it. To explain to you, sir, what I mean, it is just like this; we sometimes have a fish for dinner, the nice soft parts we eat and enjoy, but the

bones, you know, we cannot manage. Now that fish is something like my Bible. I open it, I understand what the Apostle John says and such like; but all the hard parts that I cannot understand I just leave as they are, like the bones of the fish; but they *all be part of God's Word*, just as much as the bones are part of the fish." Sensible old man!

The third old man was leaning on his scythe by the roadside, having just left the hay field. The newly mown hay suggested the verse, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," so we quoted it, adding, "Is the last part true of you?"

A bright smile broke over his wrinkled but cheerful face as he answered, "No, thank God, for twenty years I have been able to say that I am saved."

When asked if he were quite sure, he replied, "Yes, quite, but I feel we *do not praise Him enough*; the language of my heart is, 'Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.'" His face lit up, as only an old man's face can, when lighted up with the beauty of holiness and the joy of God's salvation, and tears of joy ran down his cheeks as he dwelt upon the grace of God in bringing salvation to his soul.

Is my reader an old man? Do the dim eye, the grey locks, wrinkled brow, bent back, and tottering steps give him warning that the sands of time have nearly run out—that life's milestones are almost passed—the journey nearly ended?

Let me ask you, dear friend, with all the respect due to your age, "What are your prospects for eternity, and what is your present condition?" Are you, like the first of these three old men, closing the door of your heart upon the gracious invitation of God's Word? If you have hitherto done so, let me beseech you to do so no longer, lest those solemn words, "Because I have called, and ye refused, . . . I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh," should be true of you.

Do not say you are too old or too ignorant to understand these things; learn a lesson from our second old friend and receive in all simplicity the gracious words of God. Believe this plain, simple statement, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever*" (old as well as young—for "*whosoever*" means anybody and everybody now inclusive—that *whosoever*) "believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

This is one of the "nice easy parts" that our second old friend enjoyed. Instead of cavilling about things hard to be understood, like our first old man—things, which Peter tells us, they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction—do take God at His word, and although your life has been one long chapter of neglect of God's salvation, His Word says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Come then now, just as you are, and instead of looking forward to a dark future you will be able to rejoice, as did our friend of the harvest field, and praise and adore, as

you dwell upon the great love and rich mercy of God, which saves and satisfies now, and gives us glory hereafter.

H. N.

“A WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.”

MY first acquaintance with dear old V—— was in his ninety-first year, when there was not a ray of divine light in his soul.

He had no concern about his sins, his conscience had never been brought into the presence of God. He had had one great sorrow, the death of his wife, some twenty years before; but the only effect upon him, religiously, was to lead to his taking refuge in a kind of fatalism, not uncommon among men where there is no real concern—if he was to be saved he would be saved; if not, it was not his fault.

Even at his age he had never known sickness, or the most ordinary pain, nor was his natural force abated—able still to wield his axe with his son as a wheelwright. This seemed to minister to a light and trifling disposition, and he was like a young man boasting in his strength. He had no ear for the tidings of a full, and free, and everlasting pardon, proclaimed to him, once more, on the ground of the person and work of the Son of God (Acts xiii. 38).

His case appeared very hopeless, save that he had a praying son and daughter, who never ceased to count on God for his conversion. As things were I left him with a sad heart.

Two years later being in the neighbourhood, and hearing that he was yet alive, I made my way out to the farm. He was alone in the house, and opened the door for me himself, with a kind welcome. Recognising me at once he bid me come in, saying, "I have long wished to see you," and, hesitating a moment, "to tell you what the Lord has done for me. Did you hear of it?"

"No," for I had met no one to tell me, and such a greeting came upon me with delightful surprise. With no time wasted in preliminaries he went on to tell me how the momentous change had come about. And the burden of the story was, as he put it in his own simple way: "I am a great sinner, but I had just to come as a little child and take Him at His word, and I found it was all for me," referring to God's salvation and the heartless reasonings of his past unbelief.

The old man's heart was very full. As he spoke of the long life wasted away in darkness, a shade came over his face, but it soon passed and all was bright again, as he expatiated on the mercy that had spared him, so long beyond the average term of human life, to bring him into all this blessing. Physically he was not what he had been when I saw him last.

Wonderful to say, not until after his conversion had his health begun to break down. "I don't know how it is, but my legs shake under me so," he said; and I could but reply, "Man alive, the only wonder is to see you on your legs at all." But his

mind was as clear and as active as ever, and I shall never forget the brightness of his old face as he said, in course of conversion, "I have made a wonderful discovery lately."

Thinking he was recurring to the theme that had been so much before us, I said, "Indeed I think you have." But he replied, "I don't mean my conversion." What then could it be? Standing very near to me—he was much below the ordinary height—and becoming very impressive in his manner, he said, "I have found out that I am as dear to the Father as His Son."

"How did you make such a discovery?" I asked.

"It is in the seventeenth of John," was his answer. "I am always reading that chapter," and sure enough there it was, as we together turned to it: "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me *and hast loved them as thou hast loved me*" (John xvii. 22,23).

Thus the world is to know it in another day, when it sees us in the displayed glory of Christ. But before that day He tells us how He makes provision for our hearts being brought into the enjoyment of it now. "I have made known unto them thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (verse 27).

I never saw my old friend again, but I learned that he lived to his ninety-fourth or ninety-fifth year,

in full possession of mind and speech, though confined to his bed by weakness the last few weeks. According to his wish every one that called to ask for him was taken to his bedside to hear from his lips the wonderful story of God's grace to him. And there were many attracted by his extreme age and vigour of mind, to whom he was thus able to bear witness. His Christian life and testimony were thus necessarily brief, but very bright to God's praise.

V——'s case left a lasting impression on my mind. Cheated out of blessing for ninety years or more, through unbelief, the moment he was brought by grace to believe the word of God as to the work of Christ, he was prepared to believe Him whatever He said, and thus by his simple faith he entered into the enjoyment of the most exalted blessing. For what could go beyond being loved by the Father, as He loved His Son, either now or for ever? For him faith came "by a report, but the report by God's word," as Paul says in Romans x. 17 (New Trans.), "For if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater" (1 John v. 9). And so he being dead yet speaks to us.

How far do we, who have believed the glad tidings of God's salvation, know what it is, in simple child-like faith, to take up our place in the Father's love, as the Son has made it known to us—His own place in that love—and He himself to conduct it into our hearts as a present reality, by bringing home to us the revelation of the Father's name, even as He is Himself new life and capacity to enter into it?

FIRST THINGS FIRST.

GEORGE BRUMMELL at sixteen held a commission in a regiment of Hussars; at twenty-two, succeeding to property worth £30,000, he became the leader of fashion, and was widely known as "Beau Brummell." The Prince Regent (afterwards George IV.) would occasionally spend an hour in his dressing-room to watch the grace with which he discharged the duties of his toilet.

Intimate with royalty, received into the highest circles of the land, the dictator of fashion, some might think he had found satisfaction.

But no; let me carry you to a French provincial town a few years later. See that old man with ragged clothes and tottering steps, jeered at by the children in the street. He is Beau Brummell, who had to fly from England to escape his debtors. A little later look into that madhouse, and see that poor, demented creature turn on his side and die. Why was his end so disappointing and sad? He had neglected to put *first things first*.

Napoleon Bonaparte's name rises before our minds at once. By an extraordinary series of leaps and bounds he rose to fame. An obscure artillery officer in the French army, the Revolution gave him his first chance of distinction. General in the French army in Italy at an early age, victory after victory made him the master of a large country and brought

powerful rulers to his feet, suing for peace. From step to step he advanced till he became First Consul in France, then emperor, the imperial crown placed on his head by the Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, who travelled from Rome to Paris for the purpose. With the exceptions of Britain and Russia all Europe was his. He made and unmade kings. The idol of the French nation, the dictator of Europe, he seemed above reverses.

But see the retreat from Moscow, his defeat at Waterloo, his death as a prisoner on the lonely island of St Helena, and tell me what ambition did for him. It disappointed and deceived him. It utterly failed to satisfy. He had neglected to put *first things first*.

Whitaker Wright's career is fresh in the public mind. The tale of his wealth reads more like a chapter from the Arabian Nights than reality. He manipulated enormous sums of money, and appeared to be immensely wealthy. His home in Surrey was a palace, his grounds a park, his liberality unbounded. He seemed to have reached satisfaction.

But the bubble broke. Financial difficulties had to be faced. In the witness-box he protested his innocence to the last. The opposing counsel fastened upon him the stigma of crime, and the jury found him guilty. The most celebrated trial for fifty years was over. All thought a few years spent in prison, and Whitaker Wright would again face the world. But, lo! suddenly, within an hour of judgment being passed, he died by his own hand. Spite of the

vigilance of warders he had poisoned himself; death released him from the power of the law of the land, but not from the hand of God. He had neglected to put *first things first*.

But what are *first things*, the reader may ask? To answer correctly, to answer fully, to answer briefly, "*God's things.*" "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things*" (viz., what we eat and drink, and wherewith we clothe ourselves) "*shall be added unto you*" (Matt. vi. 33).

It needs but a moment's reflection to give this answer, for we are God's creatures and must give an account of ourselves to Him.

To answer as to what are *first things* from *our* standpoint we should reply, things that affect us most and affect us longest. For instance, George Brummell's, Napoleon Bonaparte's, and Whitaker Wright's efforts all related to *this* world and *this* life, and, mark you well, were all equally and essentially foolish. It may seem a greater waste of time to tie a bow with grace than to march at the head of victorious troops and plan brilliant victories, or even to manipulate millions of money as Wright did. But, after all, when the bow was tied Brummell was pleased, but the field was not strewn with the dead and dying, nor the homes of many made miserable by bankruptcy and failure and the pinch of stinging poverty. So perhaps Brummell's folly was less mischievous as to *this* world than Bonaparte's or Wright's. But if, after all, Brummell had died the

leader of fashion instead of in a madhouse, what would he *really* have gained? Or if Bonaparte had died with the crown of Europe on his head instead of in shame and exile, how much would he *really* have been better off? Or if Wright had died the benevolent multi-millionaire instead of in disgrace and by his own hand, would he have been *essentially* successful?

A thousand times no. Judged by the standard of *first things first*, they each miserably and eternally failed.

But to return. *First things first* from our standpoint are the things that affect us *most* and affect us *longest*.

Moral things and not *physical* affect us most and longest. It matters little if our coat gets threadbare, but it matters much that we are sinners. One is for a little in *this* world, the other is for eternity in *that* world. It matters really little if we are possessed of houses and lands, or crowns and thrones in this world, if we shiver in the next, poor, empty naked sinners who have earned God's frown for ever.

Tell me not how your plans will affect you forty or fifty years hence, that is utterly too paltry. But tell me, how will they affect you for eternity? Knowing that you may live here a few brief years more or less, and then pass into *eternity*, how utterly foolish and worse it is to be concerned about secondary matters and fail to make *first things first*!

And how very secondary secondary matters are after all, granted that it is necessary to have food

and drink and clothing, and that much of our time may be spent in obtaining these necessary things, yet God has promised to add these things to those who seek first His kingdom and righteousness. Even David in the rough-and-tumble days of old, when might was right could say, "*I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" He could add, "*For the Lord loveth judgment and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.*"

Yes, how very secondary secondary matters are. Better far be Lazarus with the dogs licking his sores in this life than the rich man with his purple and fine linen and daily sumptuous fare, if, in the next, the rich man is in Hades begging for one drop of water to cool his parched tongue and Lazarus is comforted in Abraham's bosom. How very secondary riches are in this life to poverty in the next! It is very much like the graphic description of some contests: "The first was first and the rest were nowhere."

But let me give you two examples of those who put *first things first*. Let the first be taken not from the ranks of the cultured or refined, but let a poor dark heathen, illuminated by the grace of God, saved and rejoicing in his Saviour, testify.

A missionary in India tells of a Brahmin convert he met two hundred miles north of Ongole. He says: "As he talked of his work, and urged me to

labour hard in the interests of heathen evangelisation, I felt that it was not he but Christ speaking through him. Last month a Cocanda brother wrote me of his death. He had just officiated at a wedding. A sudden sickness came on just before he had signed the marriage certificate. Never was marriage certificate more pathetically or beautifully signed. 'Just your name, brother,' they said, as they put the paper under his hand and the pen between his fingers. 'Name,' said the dying Brahmin, 'there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.' 'Yes, but we want *your* name. Quick, write it.' 'My name? I have none other than the Lamb's name written in my forehead!' And the pen moved, and the hand dropped, and the spirit was gone, and they looked, and he had written 'JESUS.'"

Again, in the strength of uncommon mental powers, well equipped by a university training, in which brilliant success had been gained, a young man of good family, with every prospect to stir ambition, had a proposition made to him by a friend, whereby he might readily "make a fortune." The quiet answer was pressed, "*For which world?*" Last year, at the end of a long and strenuous life spent in the service of Christ, he passed away to be with Christ. His last words, filled with rapture and devotion were, "*Oh, my Saviour! Oh, my God!*" The ignorant heathen and cultured scholar were alike wise in making *first things first*.

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In conclusion, let me urge upon you, reader, that it is impossible for you to put *first things first* till you are RIGHT WITH GOD. How can a man put the kingdom of God and His righteousness first, if he is a sinner in his sins, unconverted, unsaved, on the broad road leading to destruction? Impossible! The first step upon the right road is "repentance towards God"; the second, "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Repentance toward God," is necessary, for we have sinned against Him, and we cannot seek His kingdom aright till we take this first step. "Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ" is indispensable, for only through Him can salvation flow to us. He died on the cross to satisfy all God's claims against sin, and how God can be "*just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" (Rom. iii. 26). He is the only way to God, for He said, "*No man cometh to the Father but by me. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*" (John xiv. 6).

In the historic Mohawk Valley in America a sign has been erected, which reads as follows:—

"*Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life'*"
(John xiv. 6).

Without THE WAY there is no going.

Without THE TRUTH there is no knowing.

Without THE LIFE there is no living."

May the reader pay heed to the plain statements of Scripture, and see to it that he gets RIGHT WITH GOD, and then, saved and forgiven, through faith in Christ, puts *first things first*.

MISDIRECTED.

A TERRIBLE blizzard was raging over the eastern part of the United States, making more and more difficult the progress of a train that was slowly forcing its way along.

Amongst the passengers was a woman with a child, who was much concerned lest she should not get off at the right station. A gentleman, seeing her anxiety, said—

“Do not worry. I know the road well, and I will tell you when you come to your station.”

In due course the train stopped at the station before the one at which the woman wanted to alight.

“The next station will be yours, ma’am,” said the gentleman.

Then they went on, and in a few minutes the train stopped again.

“Now is your time, ma’am; get out quickly,” he said.

The woman took up her child, and, thanking the gentleman for his kindly interest, left the train.

At the next stoppage, to his surprise and alarm, the brakesman called out the name of the station where the woman had wished to get off.

“You have already stopped at this station!” he cried to the official.

“No, sir,” he replied, “something was wrong with the engine, and we stopped for a few moments to repair it.”

"Alas!" cried the passenger, "I have put that woman off in the storm at that halting place!"

Afterwards they found her with her child in her arms. Both were frozen to death. It was the terrible and tragic consequence of *wrong direction being given*.

Still more terrible are the results of misdirecting the *souls* of men. Yet it must be evident to all that amid the babel of contradictory voices which are heard to-day, many of the directions given must be false and misleading, even when given by well-meaning men. *All cannot be true.*

It behoves us then, one and all, to be on our guard against being misdirected for eternity.

Thank God, there is no need for us to depend upon doubtful counsel. In His own sure Word, He has Himself given the plainest directions as to the way to heaven. The way He indicates is not the way of "doing our best," or of "observing the golden rule," or of "trying to be good."

We are assured, at the outset, that none of these ways will lead us to the desired goal. We have, all of us, wandered too far astray from God, for any such directions to help us.

The Word of God, addressed to sinners in the form of the Glad Tidings, points to *Christ* as the only way. He suffered at Calvary not merely as a martyr, but as the Sin-bearer, making atonement by His blood. Risen from the dead, He is proclaimed to all as the Object of faith. The way to present blessing and eternal glory, lies in *trusting Him*.

But what says the Scripture itself? "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, *whosoever believeth in him* shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Could words be plainer?

The course of true wisdom 'is to give heed to the sure directions of the Word of God, and thus escape the awful peril of being *misdirected*.

H. P. B.

IMPOSSIBILITIES.

"**I** TRAMPLE upon impossibilities," said a celebrated minister of State in the House of Commons one day, when, during a debate on a difficult problem, another member had pronounced the thing to be "impossible."

This memorable utterance was, I believe, characteristic of the man, and served to indicate the strength of his indomitable purpose, when face to face with the social and political questions of the day.

No doubt, what appears impossible to some in such matters is quite within the range of accomplishment by others possessed of greater resource and power.

But there came a moment in the history of this great man, when despite his colossal strength of will, he found himself engaged in an unequal struggle, and faced with an impossibility that even he could not trample upon.

Death, like a trained wrestler, stepped into the

arena of his life, and, seizing him with relentless grip, ruthlessly flung him from the scene of his popularity and applause into the solemn realities of *the great forever*.

How fittingly, then, might the dying words of Lord B——, another of England's statesmen, have escaped his lips also, when with his hands covering his face, as if to hide from himself his own defeat in the final struggle, Lord B—— said, "I am overwhelmed! I am overwhelmed."

Such is the creature impossibility to evade the hand of death, for God has said, "There is *no one* hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, *neither hath he power in the day of death*" (Eccles. viii. 8).

"I *will* not die! I *will not* die," cried a farmer—an acquaintance of the writer—as he sprang from his bed in a frenzied condition on hearing the doctor's verdict that he could not last much longer.

But how painfully impotent was *his* effort to *trample upon that impossibility*, and how empty was that boast made to appear in the presence of the fact that within a few short hours his poor body was still in death!

Satan's lie uttered in Eden—"Ye *shall not* surely die"—is obviously too patent to gain common currency to-day, though it is true the "Christian Scientist"—falsely so-called—is trying to revive it.

Surely it needs no proving that WE CANNOT STAY ON EARTH for ever! By God's just decree it is that sin's penalty is death, for "it is *appointed* unto men *once to die*, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

As a sinner, my dear reader, you are under notice to quit; and death may at any moment execute your ejection order, and will neither accept excuses nor receive bribes. Go you **MUST**, though it may be sadly against the grain to have to do so!

But this is only one part of the appointment. The same sentence which so plainly assures us that we are under notice to quit this world, just as plainly intimates that there is a destiny beyond, an "After this,"—a great "Post-mortem"!

The writer once overheard some medical students discussing their likes and dislikes for the various branches of their work, when one of them remarked, "Above all things I detest the *Post-mortems*!!" Yes, thought I, I can easily understand that, young man, even if it is only a corrupt body that is in question; but if you are *not right with God* I think that detestation will be considerably intensified when it dawns upon you that you are under notice to attend a "post-mortem examination" of a *corrupt life*, and *that life your own*! (Eph. iv. 22; Rom. xiv. 12; Eccles. xii. 14).

It is in the natural recoil from this that men are so ready to embrace Satan's second deception, viz., "After death you are done with."

All this flippant, infidel talk of after death annihilation, is a lie, and is but the offspring of a wish to avoid the dread "post-mortem" of a life spent far from God. It is the "*after this*" that gives death's arrow its sting and smart. There are a thousand ways in which death may overtake us, but there are only two ways of dying.

You must either "die in your sins" (John viii. 21, 24), or "die in the Lord" (Rev. xiv. 13). The ambition of the great Napoleon was to die in his military boots—like a soldier! A celebrated dignitary of the Church is said to have died in his ecclesiastical robes! What matter such paltry trifles?

Your destiny is the same whether you die at the Communion table, or at the card table, whether in the Church or in the theatre—if you die in your sins.

You may possess wealth, pleasure, and friends, but you will die *out* of them, *i.e.*, you will *leave them behind*! Not so your sins. You die *in* them. You take them with you to the terminus—and the grave is not that, for where death leaves you the resurrection will find you.

The Lord Jesus made this perfectly plain to the religious unbelievers in His day.

No one could fail to be struck by the solemnity of those words that fell thrice repeated from the Saviour's lips in John viii., "Ye shall die in your sins"—to which He added those hope-withering words, "Whither I go *ye* CANNOT come."

Can you not, dear reader, see couched in that solemn utterance another *divinely pronounced* "IMPOSSIBILITY"?

Surely if such words convey anything at all, they declare plainly that to reach heaven, whither Christ is gone, is a hopeless impossibility for those who die in their sins.

He who says to His own in John xiv. 3, "Where

I am THERE YE MAY BE *also*," says of those who *die in their sins*, "*Whither I go ye CANNOT come.*" Thus perishes for ever all hope of heaven for such ! Who is there in heaven, earth, or hell that can twist the "*cannot*" of the Son of God and make it mean "*After a time you CAN*" ?

Mark it well, dear reader. "*Die in your sins*"—and as the Son of God is true, your hope of heaven is blighted for ever !

To hope for heaven in the face of such a declaration, spoken on such authority, is to hope against hope and expect *the impossible* to happen.

Nor is this all the truth. Sad as it is to die bereft of all hope of heaven, there is yet another destiny that such cannot fail to reach, and from which there is *no escape*.

These two destinies are referred to by the Lord Jesus in one solemn verse (Mark ix. 45): "*It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched !*" Reader, note well those *two destinies*, one of which must be thine for eternity ! "*Enter into life*" or "*Cast into hell*," and that *without an alternative*, aye, and *without alleviation* too, for the Lord adds, "*Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*,"—and "*never shall be*" ! (vers. 45, 46).

In Luke xvi. 19-23, the Lord solemnly describes the case of one who reached that awful terminus—"*cast into hell*."

He says a certain rich man "*died* and was

buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" !

"Oh, but this is only a parable," some will protest at once. "There is really no such place as hell, and no such punishment for sin as this."

Does it not strike you, dear reader, that this is remarkable language for the Lord to use in order to convey to His hearers that there is *no hell and no eternal punishment*?

The rector of a North-country parish, writing in his parish magazine some time ago, assured his readers that "such punishment for sin *can no longer be entertained*, being out of accord with the *more intelligent and more enlightened idea of the all-comprehending love of God !*" This is as false as it is plausible. But what does it mean? If it means anything, it is a slight upon Him who spoke in Luke xvi. and Mark ix. of hell's torments, a fixed gulf, an undying worm, and unquenchable fire as the portion of the lost; since, in this critic's judgment, those who talk thus are sadly wanting both in intelligence and the knowledge of the love of God.

To hear the Rev. Dr Popular talk, one would imagine that if God had only waited till to-day, the twentieth-century theologian could have told Him that sin is not nearly as serious as He thought it to be, and that something far less than death and judgment would have met the case. And if God is to maintain His character as a *God of love*, all thought of hell and its torments must be abolished, and all idea of punishment for sin must be obliterated

from the sorrows of Calvary, since such ideas outrage the feelings of the modern and fashionable theologian.

When sin is taken account of by God, other features of His glory come into prominence besides His love. God is not a one-sided Being, all love and no holiness, all mercy and no justice. It is written, "The Lord is *righteous* in all his ways, and *holy* in all his works" (Ps. cxlv. 17). If in Isaiah lvi. 5, 6, it says, "*His arm brought salvation,*" it also adds, "*His righteousness it sustained him.*" (See also Rom. v. 24.)

Was there ever a place where *the love of God* for the sinner, and His righteous judgment and holy intolerance of sin found a more emphatic expression than at Calvary?—

"Holy claims of justice finding
Full expression in that scene;
Light and love alike are telling
What yon woe and suffering mean."

Every awful feature of hell had its counterpart in the woes of that dark hour. *As at Calvary, so IN HELL! Sin and its curse are there! Sorrows, like sea billows, roll there! God's wrath and Satan's rage meet there! Distance, darkness, and death are felt there! And out of their awful depths rings the cry of the God-forsaken one! "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Matt. xxvii. 46).

As the shadow of that cross fell upon the Saviour's spirit, we cannot be surprised that He cried: "Now is my soul troubled. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour" (John xii. 27). Nor, at a

later moment, when in Gethsemane, He pleaded, "with strong crying and tears," "Oh, my Father, *if it be possible*, let this cup pass from me!" (Matt. xxvi. 39).

But what happened? Was that prayer answered? Could the Saviour be spared and the sinner saved? Impossible! On to the cross He went in devotion to the Father's will, and in love to the sinner He drank to its last dreg the cup of judgment, and cried in holy triumph, "It is finished" (John xix. 30).

Thus beneath the dread solemnities of that hour, we can read in terrible characters another *divine IMPOSSIBILITY*. There it was plainly declared to be *absolutely impossible* for God's will to be done and our salvation secured apart from Christ exhausting, in His atoning death, that cup of wrath against sin.

Why should it be said, "Christ Jesus *came into the world to save sinners*" (1 Tim. i. 15) if by our religious observances we could save ourselves? Why should it be necessary for Christ to have *suffered for sins*, the just for the unjust, to bring *us to God*" (1 Pet. iii. 18), if some other way, *either here or hereafter*, could have been righteously found to do it?

God would certainly have answered Gethsemane's bitter cry, and spared His Son the curse and judgment of Calvary, had such a way been possible, but it is written, "*He spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all*" (Rom. viii. 32), who was "*delivered for our offences*" (Rom. iv. 25).

Even Christ risen pronounced its necessity, saying, "Thus *it behoved Christ to suffer* and to rise from the

dead . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name" (Luke xxiv. 46, 47).

Nothing, therefore, is more plainly declared in the Word of God than that

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A SINNER

To stay on earth for ever (Heb. ix. 27; Eccles. viii. 8);

To die in his sins and go to heaven (John viii. 21);

To be cast into hell and reach heaven at last (Luke xvi. 26; Mark ix. 45); or,

To be saved from the judgment of God except through the atoning death of Christ (Matt. xxvi. 39-42).

With these stern and solemn facts before us, let us urge you to listen no longer to the devil's lie of "a larger hope," and despise the sinner's *only* hope—"The precious blood of Christ." Bow at once to God's righteous sentence against sin, and take prompt advantage of the salvation that is offered you in Christ, for "neither is there salvation in any other." Put the simple faith of your soul in Him—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved*"—for *without faith* IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to please Him (Heb. xi. 6).

"Thy death, not mine, O Christ,

Has paid the ransom due;

Ten thousand deaths like mine

Would have been all too few.

To whom save Thee, who can alone

For sin atone, Lord, shall I flee?"

“MY FIRST COMFORT.”

THE blood was my first comfort, and I believe it will be my last comfort. . . . I feel as though the Lord were leading me from earth to heaven, by the steps of the 23rd Psalm, ‘The Lord is my shepherd, . . . and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.’”

The words came slowly from the lips of a dying man—a doctor—passing away from a loving wife and children, in the prime of life, with a rest and joy in the Lord I have never seen surpassed. A few days later he passed away, with “Bless the Lord” on his lips.

Many physicians are infidels. Why, I cannot say. I would that all such could have seen the dear friend of many years patiently pass through months of weakness, always rejoicing in Christ, and then, at the last, bear witness to the comfort of the despised blood of Jesus. God calls it “the precious blood of Christ,” and so indeed it is.

Yes, there is no real foundation for the soul apart from the blood of Christ. That blood cleanseth from all sin, removes every stain, purges the conscience, purifies the soul, relieves the distressed and sin-burdened heart, and sets the one who trusts it perfectly free in the presence of God. Death is robbed of its sting, the grave of its victory, and “judgment to come” has no meaning for the one

who rests only on that which the Holy Ghost delights to call "the precious blood of Christ."

What folly can exceed that which despises God's only way of salvation—Jesus' blood? No solid real comfort is found apart from Christ and His blood.

What a portion is that of the Christian! He has a title to glory without a flaw, and a prospect without a cloud. His title is this "precious blood," his prospect eternal association with the Lord Jesus.

Reader, what comfort will you have on your death-bed?

W. T. P. W.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

"**I** CAN'T be a Christian; the cost is too great," said a young woman to me, as she shook her head despondently. She had night after night been present at some tent meetings held in the north of London. She had been convicted of her sin, felt drawn to the Saviour, would, indeed, have liked the relief of conscience and heart the gospel brings, but she knew that to be a Christian in her particular case would cost a good deal, for she was living a life of shame.

I replied: "*If it will cost you a good deal to be a Christian, IT WILL COST YOU MORE NOT TO BE A CHRISTIAN.* It may cost you your living, your friends, your prospects FOR TIME to be a Christian;

it will cost you outer darkness, wailing and weeping FOR EVER, *not* to be a Christian."

I believe she longed to break her chains, would have given worlds to do it, but sin had made her captive hand and foot.

But to turn to *you*, Are you a Christian? If not, why not? You have everything to gain by becoming one, and everything to lose by not becoming one. Suppose you sit down thoughtfully and earnestly and ask yourself the question—

"What will it cost me to be a Christian?"

1. I shall have to give up the world, or what is worse, the world will give me up.

2. I shall have to take up my cross daily, and follow the Lord; yet He says His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

3. I shall have the frown of the godless and the laugh of the pleasure-seeker.

4. In short, it will cost me a little trial and discomfort *in time*, but I shall have joy *for eternity*; aye, and inward joy *in time* that the world cannot take away.

What will it cost me NOT to be a Christian?

1. I shall have to give up all hope of heaven, for only *true* Christians go there. The alternative is *hell*, and that is a serious thing.

2. I shall get no crown. "No cross, no crown," is true on the face of it.

3. I shall have to face God's frown and endure

His laugh, for has He not said of those who refuse His counsel, "I also will laugh at your calamity"?

4. In short, I may gain pleasure in this life, but then God calls them the "*pleasures of sin* for a season," and it will cost me *everything for eternity*. No heaven, no Saviour, no joy, no happiness, no hope. It is a serious choice *not* to be a Christian.

Many more contrasts might be made, but surely if you weigh over the above carefully, you will not be wise unless you decide to become a *true* Christian.

And what will you *gain* by being a Christian? Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour, the following blessings will be yours :—

1. The personal knowledge of the Lord as Saviour.
2. The forgiveness of sins through faith in Him.
3. Salvation by believing.
4. Justification from all things.
5. The care of the Good Shepherd.
6. His appearing in heaven for you as High Priest and Advocate.
7. God as your Father.
8. The Holy Ghost as your power.
9. The Word of God as your guide.
10. Eternal life.
11. The hope of the Lord's second coming.

Many other blessings will be yours, all possessed in Christ. To be the possessor of such blessings will give you an easy conscience, a satisfied heart, and a sure and happy prospect.

And still you consider what you will have to give

up! Better far consider what you will get. A child clutching a knife in its chubby hand has more philosophy than you, when the wise mother holds out a golden orange for its acceptance. He is not occupied with what he loses but by what he gets. Indeed it is his great desire to get which makes him drop without regret or consideration the dangerous weapon.

A man who has shivered in his greatcoat through a cold winter does not complain when the summer's sun makes him discard it; nor does the Christian complain when the enjoyment of God's love makes him give up the pleasures of this world which he tried in vain for satisfaction. The Apostle Paul could say, "For what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Some years ago a young gentleman went to a smoking concert in the Cannon Street Hotel, London. There happened, unknown to him, to be present at some missionary meeting in a smaller hall in the same place, an elderly Christian lady who was a neighbour of his. It happened, likewise, that they both left the building at the same time; it was late, the streets were empty.

"Ah!" said he to himself, "here's a fine mess. Politeness demands that I shall offer to take that religious old lady home; she will talk to me about religion, but it can't be helped, so here goes."

He advanced to her politely, lifted his hat, said how fortunate it was they had just met, might he escort her home? They went by bus, train, and on

foot to the suburb where they lived. To his surprise the lady did not say one word on religion to the young man. He could stand her silence no longer, so he blurted out:—

“I say, Miss So-and-so, I can’t stand your religion; you want a fellow to give up so much, and become melancholy and unhappy.”

“On the contrary,” she replied, “the gospel does not ask a man to give up, but receive, and it makes him very happy.”

Her door was reached, and with many thanks for his kindness, they parted. But this one remark, provoked by what he had said, stuck to him till he was brought to receive Christ as his own personal Saviour, and found out its truth for himself.

Perhaps some reader exclaims, “I have been anxious to be a Christian, and tried to be one! What is a Christian?”

Tried to be one! Does a man try to be a soldier in order to become one? No, he enlists and becomes a soldier by so doing, though he may know nothing as to drill and regulations. And when he knows all about the drill he is not more a soldier than when as a raw recruit he first signed on, though he may be much more soldierly.

And so to be a Christian, the first step is to bow to the Lord Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour. Many people think that you can become a Christian by trying to be one. Never! They think that to belong to a church or chapel is to make them a Christian. Yes, a Christian by profession, not in

reality, and it is the real article that is the only thing worth talking about. For, after all, to be a nominal Christian is to be at most a *white-washed* sinner on the road to hell, adding to sins already committed the hideous one of hypocrisy.

There are three steps necessary for a true Christian.

1. To believe on the Lord Jesus as Saviour.
2. To confess Him as Lord.
3. To follow Him day by day.

Let me explain these three steps.

1. *To believe on the Lord Jesus as Saviour.*—A Christian is a follower of Christ. To be a follower of Him you must make His acquaintance. At first He will not receive you as a friend, but as a penitent sinner. There is a serious question between you and God to be settled, and that is the question of your *sins*. There is only one way of settlement. Not by your work, or tears, or aught that you can say or do, but through the atoning death of the Lord Jesus, through the efficacy of the precious blood shed at Calvary. The Lord Jesus has done the Saviour's part, and your first step must be that of a penitent sinner at His wounded feet.

Lord Nelson once captured a French flagship. When the conquered commander came on Nelson's ship he offered his hand. "Your sword first," was the reply, "then your hand." And so it is with the Lord Jesus. We have to own that we are sinners needing forgiveness and pardon. When once the inquiry honestly comes from the heart, "What must I do to be saved?" the divine answer is

blessedly simple and sufficient, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

2. *To confess Him as Lord.*—"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). This is what tests the reality of a Christian. Many are ready to profess religion, but shrink from confessing a Person, ready to talk about the Church but not about Christ. Yet all those who really take the Lord as their Saviour are bound to confess Him sooner or later. If I take Christ as my Lord, that is, as my Master, it must come out. Such a change cannot be hid. The world has rejected and cast Him out, and those who trust the Lord will find themselves joining issue with the world. It must be either Christ or the world. There is no middle ground. If we refuse to confess Him here, He will refuse to confess us before His Father and the holy angels.

Confession, too, is the only path of safety for the believer. When a soldier enlists he is called upon to put on the uniform of his regiment, and all know what he is and what he is attached to. Now the Christian is not called upon to don a uniform, but he is called upon to confess Christ.

I come across many who have trusted the Lord for some time, but have been ashamed or afraid to confess Him. They have been weak, feeble believers, but when they have taken a stand for the Lord, by confessing Him, it is wonderful how they have got on. Opening the mouth to confess His name will bring joy and power into the soul.

3. *To follow Him day by day.*—A soldier is a soldier the moment he enlists, but by attention to regulations and drill he becomes more soldier-like. So once we trust Christ as Saviour and Lord we become Christians, but it means that we must follow and obey Him day by day, to be kept in the path of safety, and to be able to glorify Him and become more Christ-like.

It is only in this world that we have the opportunity of serving Christ where He has been rejected. Whilst He can do without us, He does not wish to do so, and it is *our* great loss if He has to do so. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21). But let it never be forgotten that we can never follow Him unless we first receive Him as Saviour, and follow Him as Lord, and that we cannot work for our salvation, though once saved, faith and *works* go together, for faith without works is dead.

" Who is on the Lord's side ?
 Who will serve the King ?
 Who will be His helpers
 Other lives to bring ?
 Who will leave the world's side ?
 Who will face the foe ?
 Who is on the Lord's side ?
 Who for Him will go ?
 By Thy grand redemption,
 By Thy grace divine,
 We are on the Lord's side,—
 Saviour, we are Thine ! "

"RIGHTED AT LAST."

"**I** AM happy to say I am righted at last." Thus wrote a dear young woman who had been troubled about her sins, and who had at last entered into joy and peace in believing.

She had been brought by a Christian relative to some gospel meetings, where she came under conviction of sin, and a deep desire sprang up in her soul to know that her sins were forgiven. Like thousands of others, she was trusting to her feelings for the "assurance of salvation," which can only be obtained through resting in simple faith on the unchanging Word of God, which 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, 39). Our young friend finally got peace by it being pointed out to her from God's holy Word, that "whosoever believeth in him (not whosoever feeleth) *shall* receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43).

And now, dear reader, what about you? Are you "righted"? In other words, Are your sins gone? and are you in the enjoyment of "peace with God"? If not, why not? A person can never be "righted" in this world until he has come to God owning his lost condition, and has accepted that precious Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the believer can say, "Who his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24).

Everything in this world is out of course through

sin, topsy-turvy, as we say ; and this state of things (in spite of all man's efforts for the alleviation of his fellow-men) must continue till the Lord Jesus is manifested in power (see Ezek. xxi. 27).

Depend upon it, everything will be "righted" soon ; man will find his place, either with Christ in glory, or with the damned in despair ! The devil, that arch-enemy of God and man, will meet with his righteous doom in the "lake of fire," which will engulf him and his emissaries for ever and for ever.

May God, in His infinite grace give you to get right with Him now. Then will you rejoice in His presence, throughout eternity, in company with His Son and all the redeemed.

F. W. B.

THE RESULT OF KNOWING WE ARE JUSTIFIED.

THAT every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is justified or made righteous in the sight of God is plain from many passages of Holy Scripture. That God has become our justifier in Christ is also clear.

Yet all believers are not in the consciousness of what it is to be justified or made right before God ; the consequence is that peace—settled peace with God—is not enjoyed by a great majority.

Doubt and uncertainty as to God's present attitude in Christ to men bring clouds and darkness into the

mind, and disturb the peace which ought to be the constant portion of every believer.

False teaching accounts for a good deal with not a few. Many apparently sincere people think that it is the sign of humility not to be too certain at all times. Some even go so far as to say that "doubts" are an evidence of being a child of God.

Weakness of mind in some must be taken into account. We once said to a person who often consulted us about her state of soul, "Your state of soul is as right before God as ours, but your mind is weak and Satan works upon it." It was true; and that same person proved it to be true.

Scripture recognises the "feeble-minded," and exhorts us to care for such. Satan (who, like Amalek, smote the weakest in Israel's march) harasses and worries such into morbidness and despair. At times he tempts them to believe that they have committed the unpardonable sin, and they are filled with all sorts of evil forebodings, especially in the wakeful hours of the night, and "fear hath torment." But the knowledge of the perfect unchanging love of God to us in Christ casts out all fear.

In this paper we shall look at—

1st, How we are justified.

2nd, What it is to be justified.

3rd, What is the result of knowing we are justified?

HOW WE ARE JUSTIFIED.

The unmerited favour of God, which is His love undeserved by us, is the fountain or source of our

justification. We had no more claim on God than the fallen angels had. If God act toward us in this blessed way, it must be because He wills to do so sovereignly and for His own good pleasure.

God's pleasure, then, is the source of our justification. His love found delight in justifying us for His own gratification. Marvellous and most soul-establishing thought ! It gratifies the heart of the blessed God to set Himself forth in this wonderful way of richest grace on our behalf.

The death of God's Son, who expressed all His love to us, is the righteous basis of our justification. If His love be great His righteousness is equally great, and His claims upon us we could not escape, nor He, in justice to His righteous throne, ignore. The deliverance of Jesus for our offences was the measure, the only measure of the love of God to us. His bearing the awful judgment of those offences set forth the measure, the absolute measure of God's righteousness against sin and His holy abhorrence of it.

Righteousness and love came into the fullest display in that terrible death of agony, when Jesus was forsaken of God. The claims of the throne have all been met, and in consequence Jesus sits as man in all the majesty of God's throne in heaven.

All this shows the greatness and glory of the Person who died for our sins. How great He must be who could set forth God in this wonderful way and lay the basis in His death and blood-shedding of our present peace, our eternal blessing and God's everlasting glory. Only the Son of God come into

manhood could effect so much. "When he had by himself purged our sins he for ever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 7).

The righteous claims of the throne of God having been met and God fully glorified in the cross, He can now maintain the justice of His throne and justify, or make righteous, all who believe. "In him all who believe are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the evidence not only of our complete and eternal clearance from every charge of guilt, but in Him risen we are made righteous. "He was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25).

WHAT IT IS TO BE JUSTIFIED.

Justification is a great blessing to those who are under the sentence of guilt and condemnation. It involves not only clearance from all that lay upon us, but also our being made righteous—so righteous indeed that we can stand before the righteous throne of God and live in the presence of His holiness without fear or misgiving. The fierce light of divine holiness has no terror to a righteous man. "The righteous are as bold as a lion."

The risen Christ is our righteousness as well as our life. God has made Him all that to us. "Who of God is made unto us wisdom, *righteousness*, sanctification, and redemption."

If He is our righteousness, and we are made by

God the righteousness of God in Him, we must be fit to stand in the unsullied purity of God's holy presence. Christ as man, who is our righteousness, is perfectly suitable to be there. He is our fitness or suitability for that place.

It is important to press and make clear that it is not in ourselves that we are made righteous, but in Christ. People look inside to feel all this, and because they cannot feel it they get discouraged and downcast. If you are to be brought into the realisation or enjoyment of it, you must look away from self to Christ in heaven. All our blessings are in Him. "As he is, so are we, in this world."

"God's righteousness with glory bright,
Which with its radiance fills that sphere ;
E'en Christ, of God the power and light,
Our title is that light to share."

The knowledge of this gives boldness before God, and displaces all terror from the mind and sets our souls in the perfect peace of His unchanging love, who, has, through His blessed Son, effected it all for us.

WHAT IS THE RESULT OF KNOWING WE ARE JUSTIFIED?

The first effect is that the burdened conscience is relieved and set free from the sense of guilt, and hence from the dreaded thought of meeting God, whose claims we had been made to feel we were unable to meet. The second is that every element of disturbance is removed from the tormented mind, because

every enemy has been laid low in death, never to rise again. The third is that peace is fully assured.

All this flows from divine knowledge, imparted to us in the Holy Scriptures, and made clear to us by the Divine Teacher, the Holy Spirit: hence it is said in Job, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." To acquaint yourself with others you must get to know them and learn their mind. As you learn their mind you get the knowledge of them.

If we are content to learn from God we must accept, in the simplicity of children, what His Word says and believe it, so as to rest with all certainty upon it. Peace comes to us through believing the good news of the salvation He sends to us. Hence the apostle said to the Romans, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing*."

Believing the testimony of God brings the light of God into our minds and hearts. "The entrance of thy Word giveth light." The light of all that God has wrought for us in Christ's death and resurrection is presented to us, and as we receive it into our souls it dispels the darkness peculiar to our minds and banishes the torment inflicted by the darkness. "Fear hath torment."

Peace we then enjoy, but though we enjoy it we must not trust to our enjoyment but to the One by whom it was made on the cross, and through whom it comes to us in resurrection. It is after the storm that we enjoy the calm, so it is after soul-trouble we enjoy the peace Christ made for us.

Christ made the peace, and the Spirit of God ever

points the eye of the anxious soul to His work already accomplished—finished. (“It is finished.”) People are often kept out of the enjoyment of peace by looking within themselves for evidences of the Spirit’s work. This is a grave mistake. The work of Christ made peace, and now the Spirit has come to proclaim to all that He is in the glory as man, as the result of what He accomplished for the good pleasure of God here. “He is our peace.”

If the eye is turned inward it will find every element of disturbance is there. No good thing there, and hence nothing to rest upon or give assurance. “In me, that is my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” Indeed, we find at times the flesh is like a burning volcano or a boiling cauldron, but outside and above, where Jesus is, all is perfect peace. We find our peace in looking at Him. In Him God rests and will rest for ever. If we rest in Him we rest in the One in whom God’s rest is.

What can be more simple and plain? “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Oh, joy of the justified, joy of the free,
I’m washed in that crimson tide opened for me!
In Christ my Redeemer rejoicing I stand,
Being saved by His grace and held by His hand.
O sing of His mighty love, sing of His mighty love,
Sing of His mighty love, mighty to save!”

"WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING."

(Read Daniel v.)

THIS is a remarkable scene. It was one of the most idolatrous and blasphemous gatherings that could be imagined, and "Belshazzar deserved his fate," you may say. Well, so do you, and so do I. If you come to what man deserves, there is nothing for you and me but the just judgment of God. Mark that what God here said came true. You may be indifferent, but what God says will come to pass.

You have in this chapter a very simple principle, that God warns before He judges. God warns you, dear unsaved reader. If you are wise you will heed His warning, and escape the judgment that His warning indicates. The sentence of death is upon you, and you cannot escape it, but the glorious truth of the gospel is that a Man, who knew no sin, and did no sin, a Man on whom death had no claim, has died for us.

Belshazzar was an utterly godless, careless man. Very likely you have been like him, most certainly I was, until God converted me. I got His warning, heeded it, and Christ saved me. He will do the same for you, if you will let Him.

Now, look at this scene. Babylon was ruling the world at that time. Nebuchadnezzar, the king to whom God entrusted world-wide dominion and power, had died: I trust, a converted man. You have a remarkable account of this in the fourth

chapter of Daniel. "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations and languages, that dwell in the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me," are the opening words of this remarkable proclamation (Dan. iv. 1, 2). In plain language, he wrote his conversion and scattered it all over the world. Have you ever done similarly? I recommend you to do it. This man went through seven years of chastening under God's hand, and at last, when his reason returned, he wrote and told all the world what he had learned of the character of God.

His godless grandson was now reigning. Belshazzar's father was really the King of Babylon, and he joint King, and that is why he says Daniel should be "the third ruler." He, like many a man, thought he could do what he liked, and, in the impiety of his heart, he made a great idolatrous feast, invited a thousand of his lords, and "drank wine before them." The devil knows not only how to puff men up, but he knows also how to excite them. They drank wine. Whisky will do just as well, or beer, if you take plenty of it. Anything will do that will excite men.

Then while Belshazzar tasted the wine, he conceived an idea, and commanded that the golden and silver vessels that his grandfather had brought from Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem should be brought, that they might drink therefrom. Not only did the King and his guests drink from these sacred vessels, but they praised their gods of gold, silver, brass,

iron, wood, and stone. He thought it was a fine opportunity of showing that his gods were greatly superior to Jehovah. He had forgotten that God had said that He would chastise His earthly people, the Jews, because of their sin and idolatry, and Nebuchadnezzar was His rod of chastisement. What a senseless creature an unconverted sinner is in relation to God! Belshazzar thought that because the golden cups of God's house were in Babylon, he could use them for an idolatrous feast, and he did it.

God is long-suffering, but do not forget this, that there comes a time when His patience becomes exhausted. God has put up with your sin and unbelief till this hour, and you may think that tomorrow will be as this day, and more abundant. Friend, God will give you an awakening one of these days. Good would it be for you if you were awakened now.

However, the wine goes round, and the idols are worshipped. Belshazzar pulls off his gauntlet, so to say, and flings it down, as if to say, "My gods are superior to Jehovah." God stooped to pick it up. He says, "I will try conclusions with you, Belshazzar." He died a blasphemous infidel. When God, through Daniel, told him that his kingdom was numbered and divided, he said, "This clever man Daniel shall share the kingdom with me." That really meant, "My kingdom is going on."

At that moment the fingers of a man's hand and some writing on the plaister, over against the candlestick, so that he should see, arouse him. He

does not understand the warning. The writing upon the plaister meant this: "You will not do for God. Your days are numbered, and you are unfit for God."

Belshazzar was impressed. He saw the part of the hand that wrote. His countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled him, and his knees smote one against another. You say, "He was a coward." Was he? He trembled in the sense that God's eye was upon him, and knew his sins. It is a grand thing when a man's countenance is changed. I like to see it. God grant you may be thus affected by the sense of your sin. Will you go on in your sins or get peace. There is always a prelude to peace—the tribulation which is illustrated in Belshazzar's case.

Then we read that "the King cried aloud." He is in earnest for the moment. Would to God you were. He wants an interpretation, yet mark you, the warning is in his own language. That was a remarkable thing. He was so deadened by drink and idolatry that he could not understand the language which was his own. The spirit of blindness was upon them all. If you do not understand the gospel it is because the spirit of blindness is upon you. There is a living Saviour in glory for sinners. He is my Saviour, and He may be your Saviour, and yet you do not see it, because there is a blind down. The variety of the devil's blinds to hinder sinners seeing the gospel is absolutely infinite. "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). Perhaps your blind may be novels. It may be dice; it may be cards; it may be the racecourse; anything under the sun will suffice to keep out Christ. If you are not a Christian, one who knows that blessed Saviour, Scripture has but one word for you. It is the solemn word "lost." But do not forget it was for the lost that Christ Jesus came.

Well, now, the King brings in the astrologers, but they could not read the writing. The wisdom of this world will never meet your case. Presently the effect on the King is greater still. He was "greatly troubled" (ver. 9). Were you ever greatly troubled about your sins? You will be greatly troubled if you pass with them into a lost eternity. Hell is an awful reality. You do not believe in it? I do. Our Lord Jesus Christ believed in it. He passed through the awful judgment, and forsaking of God on the cross, that you and I might never pass into it.

Next the queen-mother comes on the scene, saying, "O King, live for ever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee" (ver. 10). She illustrates what one sees on every hand to-day. If you get a person thoroughly roused about his or her sins, I guarantee you will find plenty of people who will say, "Do not put' yourself about. Why should you be troubled about your soul?" Here the queen comes and says, "O King, live for ever." Don't forget, he died that night.

Then Daniel is brought in. Babylon had known Daniel very well in days gone by, but now he is

forgotten. There may be a man of God who lives in your street, and you do not know him. Perhaps you do not want to. Godless sinners do not like to come in contact with the servant of God. Why? Because they fear, and say, "He will speak to me, and try to convert me." What a wonderful thing is it to get converted and write it. Nebuchadnezzar was not ashamed to write his conversion. Can you write yours? If so, publish it. I will tell you, unsaved reader, what will be published by-and-by. The universe of God will know, when you stand before the great white throne in your sins, that you are lost for eternity. They will learn that you were the person who heard the gospel and did not believe it. God save you now.

Daniel comes in, and he addresses himself straight to the King's conscience. He relates what happened to his grandfather. He learned what God was, and he learned what he was, a guilty sinner. Now he adds, "And thou, Belshazzar, his grandson, hast not humbled thy heart though thou knewest all this. Thou hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven, and thou hast taken the vessels of his house and drunk in them to the gods of silver and gold, of wood, brass, iron, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know." Do not forget that God has eyes. Psalm xiv. tells us when He looked down, what He saw. Read it. These gods did not hear; God hears the sighs of the sorrowful, and the groaning of the prisoner. Is there one who says, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? He will hear you. You need not

be afraid of God. He hates your sin, but He loves you, the sinner.

Daniel's charge against Belshazzar ends thus: "The God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, *hast thou not glorified*" (ver. 23). You too may trifle with God one day too long. Be warned by God's word now. You have not glorified Him. I do not charge you with impiety or sacrilege, but there is nothing in you suitable to God. I will tell you what Christ can do. He will do for you what he has done for me. He will convince you of your utterly lost condition, and then He will save you, through faith in His own blessed Person, and His accomplished glorious work.

Unsaved reader, "The God in whose hands thy breath is, hast thou not glorified." Is not this true? You know it is. You had better own your sin, confess your guilt, and repent of your deeds, ere it be too late. Now hear Belshazzar's sentence: "MENE: God hath *numbered* thy kingdom and *finished* it." Belshazzar's day was over. You say, "Are my days numbered?" Do you know when you will die? Are you ready to die? Settle that to-day.

More than that: "TEKEL: thou art *weighed* in the balances and *found wanting*." There was nothing in Belshazzar suitable to God. Is there one thing in you or me suitable to God? No, we too have been *weighed in the balances and found wanting*. There was only one who was weighed in the balances and found full weight, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ put Himself into the balances and went into death

for us, and the full weight of that blessed, holy Saviour's death and blood-shedding avails for poor sinners like you and me, who will trust in Him. But clearly understand, Christ is not going to be a make-weight for you. You are *good for nothing*, Christ is *good for everything*. He died for you and bore your judgment. Belshazzar did not hear this. You have heard it, and you are responsible to God to believe it.

Then the next word was "PERES: Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Did he believe it? Not he. Was he affected by it? Not at all. The next moment he has the scarlet robe placed on Daniel, and the golden chain wreathed round his neck, while he sends out to proclaim him the third ruler, *i.e.*, he affirms that his kingdom was to go on.

"That night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain," is God's short comment on his infidelity, while Belshazzar's bloody corpse is a witness that God's word is always true. While he was having his banquet and drinking himself drunk, his enemies outside were getting into the city. Babylon looked impregnable. Nobody tried to take her in the way the Medes did. Darius tapped the river a few miles up out of sight. He cut a sluice at the bend up there and when the fitting moment came opened his sluice. The river took the short cut, and underneath those gates of brass, of which Isaiah xlv. speaks so distinctly, in came the Persians, and while this drunken infidel was proclaiming his edict about

his kingdom going on, the news came suddenly that his city was taken at one end. Then consternation and slaughter followed, and the corpse of this godless monarch on the floor of his palace declares that God's word never fails of fulfilment.

If Belshazzar could again speak to-day, I will tell you what he would say—"Men and women, you believe God. His word never fails." Let me urge you, my reader, to turn to the Lord now, and He will save you.

W. T. P. W.

ROTTEN RAILS.

LONG ago, in New Zealand, my father had in his employ for many years, a simple trustworthy man named P——, who was rather self-righteous.

Many a time one and another tried to awaken him to the fallacy of trusting in his own good works for salvation. But he would always reply in the same strain, viz. (to give it in his own dialect): "I allus goes to church, and pays everybody their own, and I never does any one any harm, and I lives at peace wi' my neighbour; and I thinks I be all right when I does the best I can."

During some special evangelistic meetings, we succeeded in getting a promise from P—— to come. He did so; and that evening the preacher likened a

sinner, trusting in his own good works, to a man climbing a mountain path with a heavy burden bound to his back. On, on he stumbles, feeling the weight heavier as the way grows steeper; but he does not give in.

Presently he notices some rails, fencing off a precipice. He turns to them for a rest; leans on them:—but, alas! they prove to be but *rotten rails*, and cannot bear the weight of his burden. They give way:—and, lo! he plunges headlong into the chasm below.

The speaker explained that, in the *rotten rails* we see a figure of the sinner's self-righteousnesses which God's Word calls "filthy rags" (see Isa. lxiv. 6). The burden which they cannot support is his *sins*.

Then he asked if there were any present who were trusting to *rotten rails*; if so, they would find their mistake when the final testing moment arrived. Then he pointed out God's way of salvation, which is through Jesus alone. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . ." (Titus iii. 5).

This was enough for P——. He saw his mistake, and instead of holding on to his self-righteousness, he wisely turned to Christ *alone* for salvation. From that night until he died, which was about two years later, we never heard a word about his "doing the best he could"; but he would say, "Ah! it's no use trusting to *rotten rails*." And his face would beam. When my father visited him during his

illness, he said, "Well, P——, what is your hope now?"

"Only Jesus, sir," he answered. "I trusts only in Him. It's no use trusting to *rotten rails*; they deceive. I'm going to heaven to be with Jesus soon."

A few days later he peacefully passed away to be with Jesus, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

Dear reader, can you say, "Only Jesus is my trust and my hope"? Forget not that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

"When the Saviour said 'Tis finished,
Everything was fully done—
Done, as God Himself would have it,
Christ the victory fully won.

All the *doing* is completed;
Now, 'tis *look, believe, and live*:
None can purchase his salvation,
Life's a gift that God must *give*.

Grace through righteousness is reigning,
Not of works, lest man should boast;
Man must take the proffered mercy,
Or eternally be lost!"

Oh, how sweet, and simple, and *sure* is God's way of salvation. He is the GIVER—we the *receivers*.

“A GREAT LOAD LIFTED.”

TRAVEL in thought to the bedside of a soldier in a military hospital in Egypt. He has discovered that Satan is a hard taskmaker, and, though he had served him faithfully and well, all he had in return was a sick body, a sin-burdened conscience, a troubled mind, an unhappy soul.

He writes : “ I seemed to feel the very flames of hell around me, and hear the awful cries and groans of those already there. How should I bear the punishment of burning for *ever and ever* in that awful lake of fire ? I wondered how long ‘ ever and ever ’ was ? Oh ! the terror and agony of soul I passed through, whilst in this state, was more than I am able to tell ! I was so certain I was going to hell that I not only told others, but wrote to my mother, and told her I was sure I should go there.”

Sceptical reader, these were not the ravings of delirium, not the imaginings of a diseased mind ; they were the outcome of an awakened conscience, looking into the unseen world. The Bible is plain, positive, and emphatic that there is a hell, and its torments are for *ever and ever*. “ *Fire* ” is a symbol of that which causes pain and sorrow ; “ the *worm* that never dies,” of that which gnaws unceasingly ; “ *blackness of darkness*,” of the light of God’s countenance eternally withdrawn ; and “ *unquenchable fire*,” of the endless duration of the misery of the lost

—a misery increased according to the light and privileges enjoyed in this world, for the cities where our Lord laboured, and was rejected, will be visited with penalties more severe than Sodom ; but though more terrible, there will be no difference in duration.

Repent therefore, and be converted ; this is the only way you can escape the judgment to come. A God of infinite mercy waits to be gracious, but He cannot show mercy at the expense of holiness ; therefore Jesus died that mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace might harmoniously dwell together. Now God can show the greatness of His love, and the depths of His mercy to hell-deserving sinners like the young soldier.

God had His eye on G. A. B—— ; and his letter goes on to tell how He sent help to his sin-sick soul. Mark his words :—

"I could not find any one into whose ears I could pour my story, until I met Mr R—— in the hospital gardens. He listened to all I had to say, sympathised, and talked with me ; and, as drowning men catch at straws, I caught a gleam of hope from his words, and hung on to them. He then said, 'Shall we pray ?' Down on our knees we knelt, and Mr R—— prayed. I clung to that prayer because I had read in the Bible, 'The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'"

This was the first link in the chain of blessing. We will leave B—— and R—— in the hospital garden and speak of the second link of the chain. Some Christian women in England, desirous of spread-

ing the blessing which had reached them, had sent some tracts and books to Mr R—— and followed them with their prayers. He handed two of them to B——, and we hope the result will encourage others to go and do likewise.

B——'s letter continues: "Mr R—— gave me two little books. After I had read the books I shouted for joy, 'Praise God!' The sun started to shine in my soul. It seemed to me as though the writer of these books knew all about me and had written them for me. I ate every word, and on the last page wrote 'Praise God!' for they lifted a great load off my mind. After this I read another book on the troubles of the soul which greatly helped my faith."

Like many other troubled souls, B—— had not really reached the bottom, or definitely cast himself on God, and rested his soul on the work of Christ for salvation, apart from inward experiences. Through not resting on a Saviour *outside himself*, he was often tempted to doubt, and though his friend R—— warned him not to be swayed by his feelings, or judge of his salvation by his fluctuating experiences, he still continued to do so, and as a consequence was often miserable and unhappy, until at length he resolved to cast himself wholly on God's mercy.

He says: "I knelt down and told God I was an awful sinner, and it was right He should send me to hell, but would He have mercy on me since Jesus had died for sinners like me, though I felt I was worse than all. I did not think God heard my

prayer, because I thought He would only hear good people ; but, bless His holy name ! He did hear me, and, one day as I was walking in the hospital gardens the whole blessed truth flashed upon me, and something seemed to speak inside me and say, 'Not for your sake but for Christ's, your sins are pardoned.' Then came such a flood of light that I have never doubted since. I seemed like one who had awakened out of a strange and awful dream, and instead of going to hell, I seemed to have turned right round and was on my way to heaven. Instead of crying and mourning, I burst out singing, and clapped my hands for joy, and the very trees seemed to be doing the same, and the birds seemed brighter and happier, and everything seemed suddenly to have changed, all things seemed to have become new, and myself new too, and so it has been ever since. My gloom is all passed, I am rejoicing at last. My Lord, I could see, in His love *died* for *me*. Praise Him ! I will praise Him for what He has done for me throughout eternity !"

B—— had now got his eye off self and fixed on Christ. This proved an abiding source of joy, and he now found the secret of unalloyed happiness. Fix your eye on Jesus, troubled reader, cast yourself on the merey of God. None ever came that way and were cast out. You will also find that loving Him that begot, you will love those who are begotten of Him. Your wisdom will be to turn your back completely on the world and identify yourself with the Lord's people. This B—— did. He says, "We meet

each morning at six for half an hour's prayer before we go to our different duties. (This is a good start for a day, and it is at a throne of grace we get help for the difficulties of the day and way.) The Lord is with us, enabling us to fight the evil one and overcome him. We have to fight very hard at times to keep him out, and it means much humbling of ourselves, and much praying for one another, but we thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ who giveth us the victory. Through Him we can overcome all things, and He says, 'Fear not I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' Bless His holy name for that !

"He is blessing me wonderfully ; I am enjoying such sweet peace and rest I never thought would be mine. I am seeing things in a different light to what I saw them before. Glory be to Jesus ! we are all one in Him. In HIM WE ARE COMPLETE ; glory ever be to God !"

Anxious reader, God forgave this young soldier, saved him, blessed him, and filled his heart with joy. He will receive and bless you too. Be encouraged to cast yourself on the mercy of God, He is rich in mercy, glorious in His grace, great in His love. Though your experiences may be similar to G. A. B——'s, rest assured, if God has thus opened your eyes to your lost conditions, it is with a view to making known His great salvation. He troubles consciences in order to purge them, breaks hearts to bind them up, wounds to heal, loves thee too well to let thee go carelessly to perdition. Turn, then, to Jesus. He invites the labouring and heavy-laden

to come for rest. He alone can give it, but He *does give it to all who come.*

Christian reader, there is a message in B——’s letter *for you.* He urges those who sent the books to continue this way of reaching souls, and adds, “We always remember you in our prayers, and ask the Lord to bless you and the books and tracts, and abundantly make them a real blessing to those who read them, and lead them on until they have found—as I have found—a never-failing friend in Jesus—blessed Jesus!”

Is not this a voice to you to redeem every opportunity? Why not send the *Gospel Messenger* you are reading to an unconverted relative, or a copy of *Simple Testimony* to a Christian friend not fully established? In this way you will become a connecting link between editors, writers, and those for whom they labour.

Who knows what results in blessing shall accrue from such a simple act of service to your Lord. How, in a coming day sower and reapers shall rejoice together; and how glad you then will be, that the bread cast upon the waters has borne fruit unto life eternal.

Start now, go on until Christ comes; your labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

“Oh! where are the reapers that garner in
The sheaves of the good from the fields of sin?
With sickles of truth must the work be done,
And no one may rest till the ‘harvest home.’”

SEED SOWING.

THERE came into the carriage in which I was travelling, a middle-aged man and three young women. The man had a bandage over his eyes on account of cataract. They took their seats and began to speak energetically about a law-suit in which a friend had lost his case, and had been sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Their feelings were very hot, and their condemnation of the law and the judge was severe. Every one was wrong but the friend.

Whether justice had miscarried I could not say, nor was my opinion sought. I only listened to the loud words of disapproval which passed between them, feeling, I admit, heartily sorry for their evident disappointment.

I allowed the storm to subside, and, turning to the poor afflicted man, I said kindly and gently, "Is there any meaning in the words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?'"

"What did you say?" asked the man.

"Is there any meaning in the words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,'" I repeated slowly and clearly.

"No, I don't think there is," was his unhappy reply.

Poor fellow, I had the conviction that these more than golden words were of peculiar applicability to

such as he. He was blind, and under a heavy load. He needed rest, a thing which cannot be purchased by millions of money, nor by anything that man can do, but which may be had, as a pure and priceless gift, from the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He thought that these words had no meaning! He could never have put them to the proof! He could never have come in faith to Him who gives rest to the weary.

Yet what untold numbers of weary and heavy-laden souls, burdened by care and sorrow and sin, have heard the music of these words, and in coming to Jesus have discovered their suitability.

“Welcome they all have been,
None are denied.”

And at once the load had departed! They have proved that He who spake them keeps to his promise; and, instead of the burden, they obtain the rest. My friend said no more. What his thoughts may have been, I cannot say. Two of the young women seemed to pay no special heed, but the third asked—

“What of the backslider?”

“Are you one of them?” said I.

“Yes,” she replied. “I was four years that way, the happiest in all my life, and I tried to bring others into it too, but all is now darkness, and I am unable to pray.”

What a sad confession, thought I, a backslider! How easy to backslide! How easy a thing to give up

prayer and feeding on the Word of God ! How easy to yield to temptation, and join the rank of Christ's enemies, and thus to plunge your soul into darkness and despair and to bring great dishonour on the name of the Lord and Saviour.

Alas, alas, how many such there are on every hand ! And, yet, what an "evil and bitter thing it is to depart from the Lord !" In such a course there is none of the "rest" of our lovely verse—no, but the very opposite. There is misery !

"You may have forgotten Him," I said, "but He remembers you ; His love is unchanging ; and, if only you would confess your sins to God you would find that He is faithful and just to forgive you, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."

"I seem unable to pray, I don't know what to do," she replied. The station was reached, and we had to part company.

How varied the grounds in which the seed falls ! Wayside and carelessness ; little depth of earth and the seed withered up. Thorny ground, and pleasure and care choking it. Some fruitful and thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold of blessed patient result. But in every case responsibility rests upon the hearer.

See to it, dear reader, that you allow the Word of God to sink into your heart, and keep it tenaciously as your very life. Listen not to the enemy. Harken only to the rest-giving words of our Lord Jesus. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him. This is the only path of peace in a world of sin and sorrow.

"COME UNTO ME."

"**C**OME to Me, all ye who labour,"
 And by care are sorely pressed ;
 I will bear your heavy burden,
 And will give you perfect rest.

Be that burden what it may be,
 Sin or sorrow, grief or pain,
 Only lay thy load on Jesus,
 Full relief shall be thy gain.

Who is He that bids thee do so,
 Bids thee cast on Him thy load ?
 He it is who knows thy sorrows,
 Son of man, and Son of God.

'Tis for thee He died and liveth,
 Now He sits on yonder throne ;
 He can feel thy deepest anguish,
 And can hear thy feeblest groan.

Cast thou all thy care upon Him
 Who, in pity, cares for thee ;
 Then thy heart shall lose its burden,
 And thy weary soul be free.

Now relieved of sin's oppression,
 And of every load of care,
 Thou wilt love and praise thy Saviour
 Till thou meet'st Him in the air—

Meet'st Him on the coming morning,
Day of endless jubilee,
When, in full and blissful union,
Thou with Him shalt ever be.

J. W. S.

THE GROUND AND ATTAINMENT OF PEACE.

PEACE with God is not the result of a work done *in us*, but of a work done *for us*, and outside of ourselves altogether. We cannot be too explicit on this point, or insist on it too strongly.

Nothing has misled sincere people more than the teaching that insists upon evidences of the Spirit's work in us, as giving assurance and peace with God.

The first evidence of the Spirit's work is to bring people into unrest and misery. It is the light the Spirit brings to bear upon our past history and present state that awakens conscience.

When conscience is awakened, and the eye is turned inward to find nothing but corruption, and a perverse will, and the heart unsatisfied, but ever yearning for what it is not in the power of the world to give, it is a most miserable plight to be found in.

Though it is a miserable condition, and the soul is to be pitied that is found in such an experience,

yet it is the favour of God to us to work this state in us by His Spirit.

It is in this condition that the soul longs and really yearns for and strives, by legal effort, to obtain peace. All the striving to effect a better or a happier state only teaches us how utterly helpless we are, and leads us into greater misery, until we are almost in despair, and ready to give up the effort. That is properly coming to an end of our own efforts, and hence our own strength.

At this point it is not the work of the Spirit to turn the eye of the soul to His work which is inward and subjective, but to Christ and His work which is objective.

There are two points helpful for consideration for those who have not peace, but who are seeking it :

- (1) HOW PEACE WAS MADE.
- (2) HOW PEACE IS ATTAINED.

HOW PEACE WAS MADE.

It was sin that brought in all the disturbance between us and God. Sin is unlawful in a creature who was made subject to God and who is entirely dependent on him for existence and sustenance. Sin is acting independently of God's will and pleasure. The State would not tolerate for a moment lawlessness in its subjects, especially in those dependent upon it for support.

The State must for its very existence maintain its lawful authority by punishing lawlessness, and can

we expect God, who is the moral Governor of the Universe, to act otherwise? Impossible! All the suffering and sorrow in this world is the result of sin, and *that is man's fault, not God's.* Sin is a defiant challenge to the throne or rightful authority of God Himself.

If we were ever to be brought into peace or harmony with God so as to be happy in His presence, He could not allow sin to pass unchallenged. He must deal with it in a manner consistent with His righteous character as a moral Governor.

If in righteousness He did not deal with the guilty, where would His justice be seen? If in love and mercy to the guilty He did not provide a substitute, where would His love have been manifested? Righteousness must be maintained, yet love must flow out to man, and love flows out in the maintenance of righteousness.

The Person who could be the channel of divine love in the maintenance of righteousness must be a great Person—must be equal with God Himself. No mere creature could be found great enough even if he would have volunteered to do such a work.

“No good in creatures could be found,
All, all is found in Thee.”

In the first chapter of Colossians, where we have a fully drawn portrait of the personal glory and greatness of Christ as the Son and as Creator of all things, we have this sublime and simple statement made of this same Person: “And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things

unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."

That is a great statement made of a great Person, and of what that great Person has done and yet will do on the basis of what He has done on the cross. Unreconciled people are lawless people. Reconciled people are peaceful people who live in the harmony of God's nature and character—who live in love. The ground of this reconciliation of individuals who were once wicked but now brought into the peace of a reconciled state is the blood of the cross. It is through or in the power or virtue of that precious blood shed for us that peace has been made with God. The blood of Christ shed means that His life was given up in atonement. No person of sound mind can make it mean otherwise.

In the judgment of the cross we get the judgment of sin, the lawless principle of life in man. In the judgment of the cross we get the judgment of our sins. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree."

The peace of reconciliation to God is the result of the work of Christ on the cross. The peace of reconciliation in the world to come, when thrones and principalities—which are now lawless, but will then be brought under the rightful authority of Christ as sovereign Lord—will all be effected on the ground of the work done on the cross.

What unspeakable glory that cross, on which Jesus bore the deepest suffering and shame, has now brought, and will yet in the future bring to Him! His brow that was once crowned with thorns is now encircled with glory, and the glory of this world will yet be laid at His blessed feet.

Peace is not made then by our prayers, however earnest, or by our tears, however plentiful, or by our endeavours, however strenuous, but by the work of Jesus the Son of God. We had no hand in that whatever. It was accomplished and perfectly finished outside of us. It was done for the vindication of the rights of God and, at the same time, to express His love. Our peace rests upon the fact that the rights of God are vindicated. Knowing now that justice is satisfied, we rest in the justice of God. Our peace is secured, not at the expense of righteousness, but by the vindication of it. The great evidence of this is that Jesus sits upon the throne, the rights of which He upheld.

HOW PEACE IS ATTAINED.

While it is important to see the ground of peace is the accomplished work of Christ, it is quite as important to see Him now in glory as the result of what He did for God's glory and our peace. Does it ever occur to our minds to ask the question why there is a man now in heaven in the highest place of power and love which it is possible to be? Christ was not seen as man in heaven two thousand years ago.

He was there in the glory of the Godhead as the

Son, dwelling in the light whom no man hath seen or could see, but He was not in manhood until He became man to suffer and die for our sins. Though He became man and thus veiled the glory of His Person, He was never less than "God over all, blessed for ever."

Whilst He in the full glory of His Person could not be seen, He became man that the glory of God might shine out through Him. We can now look on the glory of God without a veil in the face of Jesus Christ. "The law was given by Moses, but grace (love) and truth (light) came by Jesus Christ." Light and love were perfectly expressed in Jesus, and that was the full expression of all God is in moral excellence.

Why is Christ there now as man in the glory of God—this wonderful place of power and love? Do not His own words in John xvii. supply the answer? "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

The place of exalted glory in which He now sits as man proclaims aloud the value of the work He did for the good pleasure of God on earth. His glory as the Son is now seen without a veil or covering. He demands, on the ground of the work He did, to be put back into the place of supreme glory which He ever had as the Son with the Father before the world was. This one verse is an unmistakable proof of His

unique place in the deity, as well as the righteous answer to all He accomplished on earth.

It is to Him, exalted, that the Spirit of God directs the eye of those who believe. "He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and show it unto you," said Jesus. The Spirit delights to hide Himself behind the glory of the exalted Jesus, Son of God, who is now there the complete expression of all God's satisfaction. The all-complacent delight of the Father's heart rests in Him, not only as the eternal Son, but as man.

As He now lives in heaven's glory it is said of Him that "he is our peace." In this way His presence in heaven gives permanence or stability to the work He did—to the peace He made. As we by faith look up at Him in that place of supreme power and delight, the love of God shines out through Him into our hearts, and fills our hearts with "all joy and peace in believing."

This lifts us above our worldly surroundings, and makes us abound in the hope of seeing Him as He is, and thus being fully conformed to His image. When our eyes behold Him now by faith the sweetest peace fills us, which enables us in some measure to display His spiritual likeness now. When we behold Him in actuality, as he is, we shall be perfectly like Him as to our bodies. "When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him *as he is*." P. W.

"BLESSED JESUS, I SEE IT ALL!"

A MAN came running for me one night to go and see his wife, who was thought to be dying. She was in a terribly awakened state of mind, and wished to see me. I went with him at once. They lived up a stair on which, as I was ascending, I heard what I never heard before nor since, and I hope I never shall again. I heard what made me tremble. I heard this awakened soul crying out, at the top of her voice, "I'm damned! I'm damned! I've forgotten God, and He has forgotten me! I'm lost! I'm lost! I'm for ever lost! Oh! it's no' death I'm feared for: it's judgment! It's no' my body I care for: it's my soul! it's my soul! It's a' true! it's a' true!"

By this time I had got to her bedside, and had her by the hand. I asked her what she meant by "It's a' true." She exclaimed at once, "It's a' true what you used to tell me about my soul and my sins, and heaven and hell, and Christ, and a' that."

"You never denied that," I said. "No," she said, "but I never saw't to be *true* till now"; and here she began to break out again, crying terribly, "It's a' true! it's a' true."

I got her pacified in a moment or two by saying, "It's not all true." And then I went on to say, "What you say of yourself is indeed true—too true; but what you say about God is NOT true. You say that God has forgotten you, for instance. Now, *that*

is not true : you are still in the land of the living, and in the place of hope. Listen to this : ‘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). ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief’ (1 Tim. i. 15). ‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out’ (John vi. 37). ‘The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*’ (Luke xix. 10). ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s son, cleanseth us from *all* sin’ (1 John i. 7).”

I dwelt also a little upon the cases of the prodigal son and that of the dying thief ; in short, I presented to her a full, free, present salvation, through what Christ had done for her “on the tree,” and very thankful I was to have such a gospel to preach to one in her agonised condition. As I went on, she became very quiet, listening most eagerly ! By-and-by I could see despair giving place to hope, terror to joy, until she at last clapped her hands over her head, exclaiming, “Blessed Jesus, I see it all !”

From that moment she became calm and happy ; and so far as I could judge from the state of mind she entered into at the time, and her subsequent walk (for it pleased the Lord to raise her up, and she still lives), she passed from death unto life.

Reader, do you *say* you believe merely, or do you *really* believe ? Take care, lest after all, like this woman, you are a sceptic at heart, only *assenting* to

truth for decency's sake. When God shook her over the grave—when she was obliged, as it were, to look down into it, and see how deep and narrow it was, and when she had to feel the very cold clay, as it were, she shrank back from it, as unfit to die; so it may be with you yet—you may be terribly awakened, when ill one day, but you may not recover like her, nor be brought to rest on Christ like her—*now* is the time to get the great matter of your soul's salvation settled for eternity.

But perhaps you say you believe sincerely enough—you are not conscious of any scepticism at least. Well, but after all you may be only believing *about* Christ, not *on* Him—you believe the gospel story, but you do not *rest your soul, with all its sins, on the finished work of Christ—not on the person of Christ*. "I know *whom*," says the apostle (not what, merely), "I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12).

Beloved reader, let me press this matter most solemnly upon you *now*. You have trifled long enough with your *one precious soul*. Few, few are saved, I fear, on a deathbed; and in these days many have no deathbed at all. We live in times remarkable for sudden deaths. You are almost certain any morning if you lift a newspaper to read of the sudden death of either a relative, or an acquaintance, or a public man. But supposing you were to be taken away by a long illness are you quite sure you will be able to grasp the truth that saves then?

May your conscience not be "seared, as with a hot iron," by that time, "past feeling" (Eph. iv. 19). We read of some who "have no bands in their death, and their strength is firm" (Ps. lxxiii. 4). How dreadful! I have too often seen people die as if dosed with the very opium of hell. M'Cheyne said he had seen them die like lambs, and slip quietly away into an unknown eternity!

Oh! reader, do this very moment close with Jesus. Believe *now*, when you have all your faculties unimpaired, that Christ has suffered the *full penalty for your sins*. Such good news are at times too astounding for a sick, frightened man, to take in. Hence generally sick people can only pray, and seek others to read and pray with them. They seem penitent, and if they die, their friends are hopeful of them that they have gone home to heaven; but if they recover, they generally prove to have been frightened a little about their sins for the time being, but have never really received Christ and salvation, because not having been able to "understand" it (Matt. xiii. 19), partly owing to their very illness. So frequently have I known this to be the case, that had this woman died I should not have told the case, so little confidence have I in deathbed conversions.

A man was drowned one Lord's Day afternoon in a small Scotch seaport town last summer, where I was labouring, by falling into the docks. He did not perish for want of crying, for he cried "Help!" when he came up the first time, with all his might; nor was it for want of help, for a rope was thrown to him,

wholesome ran for a boat. But he did not grip the rope, and thus avail himself of the help, though the rope was within his reach, because he was blinded with the water and confused. So it is with too many in their last moments; they perish, not for want of crying for mercy, not for want of mercy or love, but for want of being able to apprehend the gospel—they die *seeking* instead of *taking* mercy. May you, ere you rise, be able to say, “Blessed Jesus, I see it all!” and so pass from death unto life.

J. G.

ARE YOU SATISFIED?

ALADY said the other day, “I can have all I want as far as money is concerned,” and a big tear rolled down her cheek as she said it. “I can have my delights, my fine clothes, my carriage, my box at the opera and the theatre, I can have my fashions and fashionable society”; and then she shook like a tired bird, and added, “but I am weary of it all. I want Jesus. These things do not satisfy me.”

All seek satisfaction in some way or other. Do they succeed? Wise will the reader be, if he listen carefully to the testimony of some who have succeeded in the path, which he, maybe, is bent on pursuing.

DOES MONEY SATISFY?

Multitudes worship at the shrine of Mammon. If money could satisfy, why did Barnato, the South African millionaire, fling himself off the Cape liner in which he was travelling and commit suicide in mid-ocean? Or why did Jay Gould, the American millionaire, exclaim when dying, "*I suppose I am the most miserable devil on earth?*" Or why did John D. Rockefeller, when a deputation of prominent business men waited upon him to congratulate him on attaining his jubilee as a business man, exclaim impressively, with the tears running down his cheeks, "Gentlemen, the chief aim of life is *not* to make money"? Money cannot satisfy.

DOES FAME SATISFY?

Lord Beaconsfield had more than his share. The son of a literary Jew with no advantages of birth, he became the leader of the Conservative Party, the Prime Minister of England, an earl of the United Kingdom, the favourite of his aged sovereign. What had he to say of life? Listen, for his words are weighty, "*Youth is a mistake, manhood a struggle, old age a regret.*" We see him at the end of his life sitting in the glow of his study fire at Hughenden, burying his head in his hands, murmuring "*Dreams! Dreams!*" And he died with the words on his lips, "*I'm overwhelmed.*"

Mary, Queen of Scots, beautiful, married to the Dauphin of France, might claim satisfaction if exalted position could give it. The historian

describes her execution thus: "At once a metamorphosis was witnessed, strange as was ever witnessed by wand of fabled enchanter. The coif fell off, and the false plaits; the laboured illusion vanished. The lady who had knelt before the block was in the maturity of grace and loveliness; the executioner, when he raised her head to show it to the crowd, exposed the withered features of a grizzled, wrinkled old woman."

Czar Paul, sleeping in his palace in St Petersburg, was awakened by a noise. Leaving his bed, he hid behind a screen. The door opened. Four officers of his army entered, who forced him to sign his abdication. Lest he should revoke it in the morning they struck the Emperor dead with a letter-weight.

In April Richard Cromwell sat on the throne of England; in May he wandered homeless, his trunk filled with congratulations from the crowned heads of Europe. At a great ceremonial in which Queen Anne was the central figure an old man, wearing the plain dress of a country farmer, was in the throng. "Have you ever seen such a sight before?" asked an onlooker, and the throng was startled to hear the old man say, "Never since I sat in her chair." He was Cromwell's son. Position and fame cannot satisfy.

DOES INFIDELITY SATISFY?

Voltaire, an infidel of the most pronounced type, wrote, "*I wish I had never been born.*" What a confession!

Colonel Charteris, an infidel, offered on his death-bed a reward of £30,000 to any person who would prove to his satisfaction that there was no such place as hell.

An infidel watchmaker lay dying. A steady, skilful workman, a sober, moral man, respected because of his orderly conduct, he declared he was "too wise to be frightened about hell." He was too upright in his own estimation to need a Saviour. But suddenly in middle life he was laid low with a fatal paralytic stroke. His last forty-eight hours were spent uttering one dreadful sentence, "*I'm going, I'm going, I don't know where.*" At first he spoke the words with dreadful rapidity, so as to scare away his friends from his bedside, but gradually, as his strength declined, the same sad words were uttered in slower tones. And so he breathed his last. Infidelity cannot satisfy.

THE SUMMING-UP.

What you have read is but the faint echo of thousands of such testimonies. Solomon, the wisest of men, began the Book of Ecclesiastes with the summing-up of life, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." He had unrivalled opportunities of finding only the best in life. Richer than the multi-millionaires of America, more autocratic than the Czar of Russia, wiser than any, long life, too, was his. If any man had opportunities of fully testing things Solomon had, yet this

is his deliberate summing-up after having drunk freely of all the pleasures of this life.

Not merely "*vanity*," but "*vanity of vanities*" twice repeated and clinched with "*ALL is vanity.*"

A STRIKING CONTRAST.

Byron, poet, philosopher, and voluptuary, wrote at the end of his life :—

*"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The fruits, the flowers of life are gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone."*

Paul, apostle and preacher, wrote at the end of his life :—

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

What a contrast! Byron disappointed and despairing, Paul triumphant and exultant; one passing into utter gloom, the other into fulness of joy.

And yet Paul had given up earthly position, the happiness of hearth and home, brilliant prospects, for what? For stonings, shipwreck, perils of waters, of robbers, of his own countrymen, of the heathen, of the city, of the wilderness, of the sea, of false brethren, for weariness and painfulness, vigils, hunger and thirst, fastings, cold and nakedness.

Nay, he was ready to go through these things, but

for what? What fed a zeal that such dangers and difficulties could not extinguish? What satisfied a soul that pressed on through all? Let him answer for himself. *"I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win CHRIST"* (Phil. iii. 8).

WHERE IS SATISFACTION TO BE FOUND?

In *Christ*. So the Apostle Paul testified. And the Apostle Peter answered our Lord's question, "Will ye also go away?" by the emphatic reply, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and *are sure* that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Does Christ satisfy? A loud affirmative answer is given by every Christian of all time. The catacombs of Rome, the Inquisition's cells in Spain, the flames of Smithfield, the dusky martyrs of Madagascar, and myriads more, all furnish abundant testimony to the reality of the salvation and satisfaction which are to be found in Christ alone.

A ROYAL INVITATION.

"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. xi. 28, 29).

"Come unto Me," that is the first thing. Come to the Saviour. To Him who died upon the cross,

shedding His atoning blood, exclaiming with His dying breath, "*It is finished.*" Come to Him who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, a proof that He is eternally satisfied with what Christ has done, for the settlement of the sin question, on the cross.

A ROYAL TEXT.

"*The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John i. 7). Who are the "US"? All those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And seeing He invites all the heavy laden, if you feel your need of Christ, your need of pardon, trust Him, and then this verse can be taken up by you in simple faith.

Captain Hedley Vicars, whose body lies in a lonely grave in the Crimea, was once waiting for a brother officer. Captain Vicars at that time was a daring leader in sin. He picked up a book to while away the time. It turned out to be a Bible, and his eye lit upon this verse. He had sinned and sinned deeply, but by this Scripture God told him how *all sin* could be washed away. It sent him to bed to toss about all night, but before morning broke he was enabled to say calmly and confidently, "*It is true for me.*"

John Wesley quoted the same text to a highwayman who robbed him of his purse. Many years after he confessed to Mr Wesley that the verse had followed him till it was the means of his conversion.

Bishop Butler, author of the famous book, "Analogy

of Religion," lay dying. His chaplain was reading to him, and in the course of his reading repeated the same text: "*The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*" Butler said, "I have read those words a thousand times, but I never felt their meaning as now."

Dear reader, do you know their meaning? They are for you. Just as the sun in the sky is for the king and the beggar, for all alike, so is the gospel. Christ died as much for you as for the Apostle Paul. You are as welcome to Christ as the dying thief. You will find that God will welcome you, if you return as a repentant sinner, as surely and as fervently as the Father welcomed the prodigal in the parable.

Why will you continue in indifference and neglect of such love? Augustine's great saying, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee," is true. There is no satisfaction out of God, revealed in Christ. Moreover, what of eternity? What of eternity? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3).

"Oh, what rest of soul in viewing
Jesus on His Father's throne!
Yea, what peace for ever flowing
From God's rest in His own Son!
Gazing upward into heaven,
Reading glory in His face,
Knowing that 'tis He, once given
On the cross to take my place.
Yes! 'tis rest in looking upward,
Gazing on His face so fair."

"YOU WILL HAVE TO ACCOUNT
FOR THAT."

A LADY was once distributing tracts on board a steam-packet; and, amongst others, she handed one to a gentleman. She passed along the deck, and as she returned she was deeply pained to see him tear the tract in fragments and fling it overboard. She simply said, as she walked past him, "You will have to account for that."

The gentleman thought no more of the matter. The tract was flung upon the waters, as he imagined, and he forgot all about it. But not so the living God. He had not forgotten either the tract or the man who had torn it up. He caused a little scrap of that torn tract to be blown by the breeze into the gentleman's bosom; and that very night, as he was undressing to go to bed, the fragment of the tract fell out of his bosom. He took it up. It was but a very small scrap; but it was just large enough to contain two words of immense weight and deep solemnity, namely "GOD" and "ETERNITY"; and, along with these two words, the lady's pointed utterance came back to his memory, "*You will have to account for that.*"

Thus, then, this gentleman had before his mind those three grand and solemn realities, God—Eternity—Judgment. Tremendous words! He lay down, but not to sleep. There was no sleep for his eyes or

slumber for his eyelids that night. He was full of tossing to and fro till the morning. The words "God," "Eternity," and "You will have to account for that," rang in his ears, and sounded deep down in his heart.

He arose from his couch and sought to drown his anxiety in the cursed intoxicating cup. But it would not do. He awoke from his wine only to feel with augmented force these solemn words, "God!—Eternity!—Judgment to come!" In short, an arrow from the quiver of God had entered his soul.

He had thought to get rid of that little tract—to drown that silent messenger. But no; God had His eye upon him. God sent the breeze and caused it to blow that identical scrap of the torn tract into his bosom. Of the scores of scraps into which the tract had been torn, not one would do but that very one, because it contained the very words which the Eternal Spirit meant to use as an arrow to pierce his soul.

How marvellous are God's ways! Who, but an atheist, could doubt that the hand of God was in that breeze which blew that little fragment into the gentleman's bosom? Blessed be His name. He knows how to reach the soul; and when He begins to work, nothing and no one can hinder. He had His eye upon that precious soul, spite of all his enmity and all his efforts to turn aside the arrow which sovereign grace had aimed at his heart. The gentleman thought to get rid of the tract; but God was determined that just so much of the tract should

lodge in his bosom as contained the arrow that was to be lodged in his heart.

In vain did the gentleman seek to get rid of his impressions, to stifle his convictions. His misery increased, his anxiety became more intense. There was but one thing which could heal his wound, and that was the precious balm of the gospel, the soothing virtues of the blood of Christ. He was brought under the sound of the gospel, and his troubled soul found rest in the finished work of Christ.

And now, reader, what sayest thou to these things? Hast thou ever felt aught of the awful solemnity of those words, "God—Eternity—and Judgment to come"? Remember, we earnestly pray thee, thou hast, sooner or later, to meet God—to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Do think of this! Think of what it will be to meet God out of Christ—to stand, in all thy sins, before the great white throne, where every man will be judged according to his works—to spend a never-ending eternity in the dreadful flames of hell. We confess the thought is perfectly appalling.

Eternity! What an overwhelming word! Say, beloved reader, art thou prepared for it? If not, why not? Why delay another moment? Why not flee now—just now—to the arms of a Saviour-God who stands ready to welcome thee to His bosom? Oh! do come, we earnestly beseech thee! come to Jesus, just as thou art. Trifle not with thy precious immortal soul. Suffer not the god of this world any longer to blind thine eyes and deceive thine heart.

Let not the pleasures of sin and the fascinations of the world any longer detain thee. Flee from the wrath to come. Time is short. The day of salvation will soon close, the acceptable year of the Lord will soon pass away from thee. The door of mercy will soon be closed upon thee for ever.

Do, oh ! do listen to the warning note once more sounded in thine ear. God calls thee. Jesus calls thee. The Eternal Spirit calls thee. Turn not away thine ears. Say not "Time enough." Thou knowest not what the next hour may bring forth. Believe in Jesus and thou shalt be saved. May this paper prove to thy precious soul *an arrow* from the quiver of God !

ANON.

"WHAT MORE COULD A COUNTRY DESIRE?"

"**P**ROVIDENCE smiled on Manitoba during the year which has just closed," writes a correspondent at Winnipeg to a London newspaper. "The value of crops and beasts produced was £16,913,529. The dairy products are estimated to have been worth at least another £300,000. The value of the wheat was £10,201,806 net to the producers.

"All this wealth . . . has created a remarkable commercial buoyancy. Trade is expanding rapidly ; credit is good ; there is plenty of money for improve-

ments; a spirit of the utmost confidence prevails; the flow of immigration is steady, and of the best class of settlers. WHAT MORE COULD A COUNTRY DESIRE?"

The London paper sets this question before its readers as if it carries its answer upon the face of it. With all its increasing wealth and material prosperity, surely the country's cup of happiness is full! What more could be desired?

Before we take for granted that there is really nothing more to be desired in that very prosperous country, we should inquire *whether people ever die there?* Are there no cemeteries in Manitoba? Is not death as busy there as in less fortunate lands?

If so, then it is clear that the men of Manitoba will have to leave their wealth and prosperity one day. When a bowl of sack was offered to Sir Walter Raleigh on the eve of his execution, he exclaimed, "*How good a drink is this if only a man might tarry by it!*" Yes, that is the drawback. Men cannot tarry by the pleasant things of earth; they are under notice to quit; they have to go, one by one, and leave everything behind.

Everything? Nay, I recall the word. Not everything, for when unsaved men leave the world they carry *their sins* with them. I do not mean that in the next life they are able to sin, as in the present life. But the *guilt* of their many sins remains.

Here is a prospect appalling enough to stagger the bravest man, even though he be an inhabitant of a country whose wealth and prosperity is unprecedented.

He has to go, and his guilt will go with him. Death, like a stern bailiff, will eject him from his present abode, and his sins will accompany him and will track him up to the judgment throne.

But is there no escape from this? Thank God there is. Of the way of escape the gospel speaks. The gospel is God's glad tidings to men of salvation through Christ. Poor indeed is the country, even if its material wealth is to be reckoned by tens of millions, where the gospel is not widely preached.

If the newspaper correspondent, whose letter we quote, were to tell us of Manitoba's prosperity and ask, "What more could a country desire?" our immediate reply would be as follows:—

"The thing most to be desired in any country is the preaching and reception of the gospel in its cities, villages, and scattered habitations."

Woe to the land where the voice of the gospel is hushed, and where the notions of men are proclaimed instead of the good news from God! Alas! In many a place where the gospel was formerly preached, it has given place to the proclamation of mere human ideas.

If any be disposed to inquire more particularly as to the terms of the gospel, we invite him to turn with us to the Holy Scriptures for an answer.

"The gospel of God" is "concerning his Son, Jesus Christ," "how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again." "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever

believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "And by him all that believe are justified from all things." Thus, "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared," and "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Christ died for the ungodly." He "came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Here in the very words of Holy Scripture we have the gospel unfolded. Whether or not *you* live in a place where it is clearly and faithfully proclaimed, this magazine comes to you as a preacher, preaching the glad tidings. By this printed page we entreat you to give heed to it.

"What soul is more happy than I,
Who am for eternity saved?

Made nigh to my God, through Christ's precious blood
In whom, through His grace, I've believed.

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

In Christ, then, I stand all complete,
Whose name be for ever adored;
And now, while I live, all glory I'll give
To Jesus my Saviour and Lord."

THE GOSPEL AND ITS POWER.

NOTHING is so little understood or entered into, even by its professed adherents as the gospel, of the blessed God. In the gospel God has made Himself known, by express revelation, as seeking the blessing of man for His own pleasure and delight.

How differently men would regard the gospel if they could view it in this light! It imputes no charge to, makes no demands upon us, meets our low and helpless state, and brings us out of our moral darkness into the glorious light of God's unchanging love in Christ.

The power of the gospel works by displacement. It comes to us in its own inherent power (for it is *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*), lays hold of our affections, and gives us new objects, new pursuits. In this way it breaks the power of corrupted love in us, which is what Scripture calls lust, and sets us free to love God and serve Him as our joy and delight.

Three simple facts constitute the gospel Paul preached: Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

(1) THE DEATH OF CHRIST FOR SIN.

It is in the agony and death of God's own blessed Son, as an atonement for our sins, that the first inlet of divine light shines upon us to reveal that love in

all its greatness. Our sins are our liabilities to God. We have all been put in the place of responsibility, but have shamefully failed in the trust committed to us. We have truly done that which we ought not to have done, and left undone the things which we ought to have done. When conscience is awakened it closes in with this verdict as truth, and by it we are condemned and put to silence and shame.

What depth of infinite love on God's part moved Him to give His own Son to meet that for which we were justly liable? Does it not amaze us to see the Son of God bow His holy head in death on a cross, between two felons, after suffering the deepest agony of soul and body?

Note it well, my reader! All that deep unspoken anguish was for our sins—our wilful disobedience to God and self-gratification. Instead of the just judgment of God coming down upon us, it all came upon the Son of God's love.

Why was this? Because though God so loved us, He could not sacrifice His righteousness. The just claims of a sin-hating God *must be met*. In all the ways of God righteousness must be upheld. His governmental throne is based upon the upholding of righteousness.

That His throne or His rightful authority might be maintained before the highest created intelligences in heaven, He sacrificed His own Son. His Son, be it said, willingly came. "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Remember, the Son who became Man to suffer and die was "God over all blessed for

ever." He was infinite in Person ; His sacrifice was infinite in value, and able to meet all the claims of the throne of God and our deepest need.

So the love of God has been manifested to meet the claims of righteousness, that we guilty sinners might be cleared of our sins, and thus brought back to God.

The death of Christ is therefore the foundation of all our blessing and of God's eternal glory. The knowledge of this clears the guilty conscience, and sets the troubled mind at perfect peace with regard to all the past.

(2) HIS BURIAL.

Christ's burial is the positive proof that death had taken place. In His death we learn from Scripture that not only was He made sin for us, and bore sin's awful judgment, but that "our old man is crucified with Him." Our old man is that state of existence in which we lived as men in the flesh. Crucifixion was a slow, shameful, and torturing death, but it was death nevertheless. If our old man has been crucified, that is the end of us before God for faith.

Crucified and dead people must be buried out of sight. In the burial of Christ our old man was buried, and thus put out of God's sight for ever. That life of flesh is for ever ended, because it could not be mended.

It gives peace to the soul to see what God in His love has effected in the removal of the old man in the death of Christ. It has been said that "the man who

was under judgment has been removed in judgment." If we see that it has been removed in the death and burial of Christ, out of God's sight, it will enable us to get it out of our sight. We do not then look at it in its stagnant corruption. Hence it does not disturb our peace. Though our old man has been crucified with Christ, and thus been put out of God's sight, the flesh as an active principle remains unchanged in us. But that need not disturb our peace. We cannot mend the evil propensity of the flesh, but while in the enjoyment of the love of God we shall live above it. It will then not have power to drag us down spiritually.

We cannot forbid its lusting (desiring what is contrary to the Spirit), but we can in the power of the love of God, enjoyed by the Spirit, disallow it having the mastery over us. "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

(3) HIS RESURRECTION.

In the resurrection of Christ the power of death is broken, and man in the flesh is displaced for God. In the power of life which was inherent in Christ He was raised. He now lives to the full delight and satisfaction of God. "In that he liveth he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon (or take account of) yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the resurrection of Christ we have the most unmistakable proof that all that Christ did was to

the full delight and satisfaction of God. It is the standing witness that believers are no longer in their sins. It is the proof that all who believe in Christ shall share in the out-resurrection from amongst the dead, even as to their bodies. "The dead in Christ shall rise first."

Though Paul had known Christ for a long time, his burning desire still was to know Him in a fuller way, and the *power* of His resurrection, by which he would be delivered more and more from this sphere of moral death and corruption. To walk in the power of resurrection life, is to walk in constant spiritual victory. It is a triumphant life. If we live to God we can only live in the power of the risen life of Christ. This is the power that frees us from selfishness and the world. That is, doubtless, the true secret of a devoted life. In this way our bodies are yielded to God *as those who are alive from the dead*. Hence they become a living sacrifice without legal strain or effort on our part. It is all the spontaneous result of the new life, which is a new affection in principle, having for its propelling power a new object—Christ. He is our life. "Christ liveth in me" was the secret of Paul's victorious life before men and angels. Christ lived on account of the Father, so we live on account of Him; that is, the Father was His object, and hence the power by which He was sustained. In like manner, if He is our object we shall live on account of Him and be constantly sustained by Him.

P. W.

"WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?"

THE Christian has the life of Christ. He is born of the Spirit, and indwelt by the Spirit. He has his sins forgiven, and blotted out by the work of Christ. What he was, in the flesh, as a responsible child of Adam, has been ended on the cross. He is now in Christ, and Christ is his life. He is quickened with the very life of Christ. It is pre-eminently resurrection life, and on the other side of sin, death, the judgment of God, and the power of Satan. It is life in victory! Hence we can understand the meaning of what the Lord says in John x. : "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (ver. 10).

Clearly the disciples had eternal life, as they walked with the Lord here below, before the cross. Undoubtedly they had it objectively in Him, who is the eternal life. Now they are to have it subjectively and consciously in their souls by the Holy Ghost. Thus the Christian has it now. But apprehension of the liberty and joy of eternal life could not be till redemption was accomplished, the veil rent, the Son of man gone on high, and the Holy Ghost come down. Till then life was not known "abundantly."

The day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and came amongst His disciples, He said "Peace be unto you." Note carefully His next words.

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 22). There is another part of Scripture that

the spiritual mind instinctively turns to, in connection with a statement like that, and you will find it in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis.

There we have the record of Scripture, as to the way in which man was started on his course in this world. You have the detailed history of the creation of the first man, the first Adam. We learn in Genesis i. that God had simply caused other creatures to be produced as the result of the fiat of His word—the mere expression of His power. He had said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind; and it was so" (ver. 24). Thus creation was furnished with the lower animals by the simple expression of the word of God—the power of God. But when man was to be placed on the earth, over which he was to be lord, God goes into solemn counsel over His creation. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. i. 26, 27).

In chapter ii., where the Lord God comes into relationship with man, His creature, fuller details are given. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (ver. 7). God breathes the breath of life into his nostrils, and man is immediately a responsible creature. I know very well that there is a theory abroad that man has been developed from a lower

organism. Such a theory is truly dishonouring to God, and equally dishonouring to man. Far be the thought. It is but the sophistry of the devil, using man's unregenerate heart to introduce a theory that will account for man's progress, and get rid of God altogether. *The* lie of the devil was, “Ye shall be as God.” That lie is being repeated to-day.

Let us turn from man's theories, and listen again to the inspired record of how man was formed. “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” That is why, in Scripture, man is called the son of God. Here you have the source of his immortality. Man, as the offspring of God, is immortal. Wicked man is immortal. Immortality is connected with the origin of man. Eternal life is that which can only come from, and be found in, the Lord Jesus Christ. I know perfectly well about another fatal, latter-day theory, called the “Larger Hope.” It is only infidelity, gilded infidelity if you like, but sheer infidelity, and an attempt to blot out the testimony of God, as to the immortality of man, and the eternity of the punishment of the wicked.

Any who have been led aside in this way have failed to see the analogy between Genesis ii. and what John xx. brings out. You have in one passage the perfect analogy of the other. In Genesis ii. you have the first man starting in life here below, where he was to be head and lord, but where he has failed, sinned, and fallen. In John xx. you are

introduced to another, the second Man, the last Adam, God's eternal Son, come into this scene, and become man. In His death and grave has closed, for God and for faith, the history of the first man. The history of the first man ended in the cross of the Saviour, and now the ground is cleared for the display of "the last Adam, a quickening spirit," as 1 Corinthians xv. puts it. When risen from the dead, and first addressing His own disciple, "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

"He breathed on them" His own resurrection life communicated by the Holy Ghost. Although symbolising the gift of the Holy Ghost, He was not yet sent, for Jesus was not yet ascended on high, but He was indicated as the power of life, by the risen Saviour. Believers are to live in the life of the risen Saviour. The divine life that has been communicated to them by the action of the Holy Ghost, through the Word, in the new birth, now takes its full Christian character. The Holy Ghost is here viewed as life.

It is as if the Lord had said, You have come to, and have Me for your life. You are quickened with Me. You have life in association with Me. You are alive from the dead, in association with Me, in all that I am risen into, and are to possess it in the power of the Holy Ghost. This is the unfolding of the true character and position of the Christian, who is a man in Christ, through the indwelling and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Dear reader, are you a Christian? W. T. P. W.

COMMANDER PEARY'S STORY.

He writes :—

“As I watched the flag fluttering in the crisp air of the Pole, I thought of the twenty-three years of my own life, which had been spent in labouring towards that goal, and realised that at last I had made good my most impelling desire. . . .

“To attain it I had dedicated my whole being, physical, mental, and moral ; had risked my life a hundred times, and the lives of those who had been glad to take the chances with me ; had given all my own money and the money of my friends. That last journey was my eighth into the Arctic. I had spent in those regions eighteen years of the twenty-three between my thirtieth and my fifty-third year.

“It is not easy to write about such things, but I knew that I was going back to civilisation with the last of the great Earth stories . . . a story the world had been waiting to hear for nearly four hundred years.”

ONE cannot but admire the tremendous pluck and dogged perseverance of Commander Peary. At the same time, was it worth so much effort to be able to say he had discovered the North Pole, that he had set the Stars and Stripes fluttering in the breeze on that particular spot, which had hitherto baffled every previous attempt to reach it?

Commander Peary says that to attain his end he had dedicated his whole being, he had risked his life and the lives of others a hundred times, he had spent all his money, and endured eighteen long years of toil in pursuit of it.

I repeat, Was it worth it? After all, the world is unaffected in any material way by the discovery. Men sleep and eat and drink and marry and die just the same as if the North Pole had never been discovered. Its discovery does not give to us one comfort, nor add to us one responsibility.

Commander Peary will be a name eventually in history, and nothing more.

What a contrast is his earnestness to attain a nine days' wonder, with the carelessness of most men and women about their soul's eternal destiny. If Peary has dedicated his whole being to discover a small, barren, inhospitable spot on the surface of the globe, and forgets the vast eternity to which he is hastening, his folly is more than great. Words fail utterly to describe what he is guilty of. And if, my reader, you are straining every nerve to attain success in business, to gain fame or pleasure, and are forgetting the interests of your soul, words again utterly fail to describe your folly.

What will the discovery of the North Pole be compared to discovering the vast domains of a lost eternity? If Peary had been knowingly doomed to remain at the North Pole, when once he had reached it, he would never have devoted eighteen short seconds, let alone eighteen long years, towards its discovery. Yet if once you reach a *lost* eternity, you will be doomed to remain there for ever.

During a Scotch revival, at an after-meeting, a man sat under deep conviction of sin. His whole frame was agitated, and the tears coursed their way

down his cheeks. A Christian felt impelled to cross over to where the man was sitting, and whisper in his ear, with deep solemnity, one word, and only one—the word

“ETERNITY.”

If I could whisper that one word into Commander Peary's ear I would. I whisper it into yours, dear reader. You *must* enter eternity. You must be for ever and for ever and for ever somewhere.

Remember, not in heaven, unless you are fitted therefor, *i.e.*, converted, and saved by the Lord Jesus, your guilt cleansed away by His precious blood, and your sins forgiven through faith in Him. Your own efforts cannot win heaven, for your best is defiled with sin and unsuited to the holiness of that place.

And further, Commander Peary dedicated his whole being, imperilled his life, spent all his money, and freely gave eighteen long years to the finding of the Pole. The blessed Lord Jesus, the Creator of the North Pole and of Commander Peary too, dedicated His whole being, became a Man, not only imperilled His life, but freely gave it. Rich beyond words, He became poor for our sakes, and gave Himself—all for what? To perform a work which would satisfy God as to sin and meet the holy claims of His throne, so that He could offer righteously to poor unworthy sinners pardon, salvation, and eternal life. God is “*just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*” (Rom. iii. 26). “*The gift of God is eternal life*” (Rom. vi. 23). Was it worth it?

The Lord Himself thought so. We read, "Jesus . . . *for the JOY* that was set before him endured the cross." "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." How surprising it is that He thought it worth His while to do so much for such as we.

*"His errand to this earth was love
To wretches such as we."*

We could not say so, but the Lord of glory thought it was worth His while. And yet multitudes do not think it worth their while to receive Him as their Saviour. What folly and blindness!

Commander Peary, at great cost to himself—the best portion of his life, his money, privation, and tremendous perseverance—attained his most impelling desire. But we may receive all the wondrous blessings of the gospel without any work or cost at all on our part. Indeed Scripture emphatically tells us it is "*to him that*

WORKETH NOT,

but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5). And again: "*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. 9). The reason of this is very plain. The Saviour has done *all* the work of salvation, and left *nothing* for us to do, but to put out the empty hand of faith, and

receive forgiveness and salvation. More than that, He has done it *all*, because we, as sinners, are "without strength," and "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," and we can do *nothing* towards our own salvation. Reader, accept the gospel on God's terms.

Commander Peary was full of enthusiasm. He came back to civilisation, he tells us, "with the last of the great Earth stories . . . a story the world had been waiting to hear for nearly four hundred years."

But our story—the greatest of stories—the old, old story—will never grow old. Commander Peary's story, wonderful as it is, will grow old and stale, and some day will be forgotten. But our story will never be forgotten, not even in the bright glory—it will be the one story of earth that will never grow old, never lose its lustre and its beauty. It comes with a message of love and light; it can relieve the conscience of the dreadful load of unforgiven sin, it can attract the heart to Him, who is its theme and central object. Has it attracted your heart yet, dear reader? If not, I pray God it may as you read these lines.

A. J. P.

ETERNITY! ETERNITY!

OUR attention has been called to the following solemn and alarming sentiments, which we give here, hoping that by the Divine blessing they may awaken some careless one to the consideration of eternity.

"Suppose," says an eminent writer, "some little insect, so small as to be imperceptible to the human eye, were to carry this world by its tiny mouthfuls to the most distant star the hand of God has placed in the heavens. Hundreds of millions of years are required for the performance of a single journey.

"The insect commences upon the leaf of a tree, and takes its little load, so small that even the microscope cannot discover that it is gone, and sets out upon its almost endless journey. After millions and millions of years have rolled away, it arrives back again to its second load. Oh, what interminable ages must pass before one leaf be removed! In what period of coming time would the whole tree be borne away? When would the forest be gone? And when would that insect take the last particle of this globe, and bear it away in its long, long journey? Even then, eternity would but have commenced. The spirit then in existence would still look forward to eternity, endless, unchangeable, illimitable, rolling before it.

"Oh! the mind sinks down perfectly exhausted with such contemplations. Yes! our existence runs parallel with that of God. So long as He endures, so long shall that soul which He hath breathed into our bosom glow and burn; burn in the brilliance and beauty of heaven, or burn with lurid flame and unextinguishable woe!" "These shall go away into *everlasting punishment*, but the righteous into *life eternal*."

"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*." ANON.

THE THREE KNOCKS.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock !”—REV. iii. 20.

DURING a journey from Dublin to Belfast in a train recently, I got into conversation with a Christian, who gave me an outline of his conversion, which was such a remarkable instance of God's grace that I think it ought to be recorded.

From his childhood he was brought up religiously, and was considered a Christian by his friends. When he became a man, however, he developed a strong passion for horse-racing, and was led into all the evils which usually attend the love of this sport. The passion for it became so strong that he was constantly dreaming about it.

All this time he was a regular church-goer, and took the Communion. His friends pointed out the inconsistency of this, no doubt hoping that he would give up “The Turf.” Alas! it had such a hold on him that he decided to give up his church-going instead.

No longer burdened with a condemning conscience for such inconsistency, he plunged deeper still into his favourite pleasure, and pursued it to the fullest possible extent.

“But God, who is rich in mercy” (Eph. ii. 4), had His eye on this poor sinner, with a view to his salvation, and subsequent use in the service of that Saviour whose grace had saved him.

One Saturday, after an exceptionally busy day on “The Turf,” he returned to his lodgings, and went

to bed. About two or three o'clock in the morning he heard a loud, distinct knock at his bedroom door.

"Come in," he shouted.

No reply.

Presently another knock came at the door, louder and more distinct than the first.

"Come in," again he shouted.

Again no answer.

After another pause came a third knock, exceeding in loudness and distinctness the two preceding ones.

Naturally disturbed at such an unusual occurrence, he shouted once more at the top of his voice.

"Come in," but again there was no reply.

The knocking ceased, but he lay wide awake all the remainder of the night: he was so troubled by what had taken place that he could not even close his eyes.

At breakfast time he asked the landlady if she had knocked at his door about two or three in the morning. She declared that she had not.

"Well," said he, "somebody knocked at my bedroom door three times this morning. It has troubled me a lot, and I must find out who it was."

His landlady asked the other lodgers, but they all assured her that they had not been near his bedroom door that morning.

This only troubled him all the more, and he began to be exceedingly anxious as to what it all meant. Was it a message from God?

He became so troubled that he went to church

that morning, but there was nothing in the service or the sermon that helped him—rather the opposite.

In the evening he went to church again, and sat in the gallery, opposite the pulpit. In due time the clergyman ascended the pulpit, and gave out his text—

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock” (Rev. iii. 20).

Terror seized hold of my friend at once. He felt he was face to face with God, and immediately all the sins of his life passed before him with vivid reality. He was a convicted sinner in the presence of God.

Was there mercy for such? Would God forgive such a sinner as he, who had so deliberately given Him up, in order to be the more free to serve sin and Satan? Such were the agonising questions which flashed with lightning rapidity through the mind of my almost demented friend.

The preacher went on with his sermon, little knowing what a tremendous effect his text had already had upon one of his congregation. Solemnly he dwelt upon the importance of “opening the door” when the Saviour knocked. It was not enough to say “Come in.” The door of the heart must be opened, so that Jesus may “come in.”

“Again,” he urged, “Jesus may have knocked once, twice, aye, even *thrice* at your door, but you have not *opened* it to let Him in.

“Open it now,” he continued, “or He may cease knocking, and your last chance be gone for ever.”

“In vain,” said my Christian fellow-traveller, “did I try to keep from making a scene in that vast and orderly congregation (it was in St Paul’s Cathedral!). I collapsed—broke down utterly, and wept like a child. There and then I opened my heart to Jesus, and He came in and took possession of it, and has remained in possession of it ever since—bless His name!”

After the service, my friend hastened to his lodgings, and told his landlady that he knew now who it was that knocked at his bedroom door that morning. It was God preparing the way for the knock that was to come at his heart later on. And with joy he told her that he had opened his heart to Jesus, and that all his sins were forgiven.

“And,” concluded my friend, “ever since it has been my joy to tell sinners of that blessed Saviour who saved *me* by His matchless grace.”

As we parted I could not help thinking of the many millions who will surround that blessed Saviour in glory—eternal exemplifications of that beautiful scripture, “Where sin *abounded*, grace did *much more* abound” (Rom. v. 20).

Will *you* be among that number, my reader?

Jesus may have knocked at *your* door *once*, TWICE, THRICE. This may be His *last* knock at the door of your heart. Beware, lest He knock no more.

“Swing *your* heart’s door *widely* open,
Bid Him enter while you *may*.”

"IF I COULD STOP SINNIN'!"

"**I**F I could stop sinnin' I would hae peace," said a Scotchwoman to me, when visiting one day.

"Stop sinning, Mrs Young!" said I, "what do you mean? You are not living in sin, are you? I have all along taken you for a very decent, respectable woman. What sins do you refer to?"

"Oh, don't think that I'm leevin' in sin, sir. I couldna dae that. I am tryin' to dae my best to gie every ane their ain, and leeve quietly wi' my neebours (and am as good as my neebours); but oh, I hae a wicked heart for a' that, an' my conscience tells me there's an awfu' want aboot me some way or other, for I'm feert to dee, and I'm unco* unhappy at times."

"You would like to be holier, I see; and you think that if you could only arrive at a certain pitch of holiness, you would enjoy happiness and peace?"

"Ay, I think sae, if I could get at it, but it's no' easy for a body wi' a big family to get a' done they would like. I canna get to the kirk, for instance, as often as I would like, and I whiles lose my temper amang them, and thae's the kind o' things that fash me; and mony a time I say to mysel', 'Whar would I gang tae if I were ta'en awa' this way?' I'm far, far frae bein' right."

The tears trickled down her cheeks as she thus spoke.

"If you could get away from your family and all

your cares and trials and temptations, with nothing to disturb your devotions, and if you could get to church as often as you liked, and to the week-night meetings, with reading the Bible and such like all attended to, you think you would be happy and able to stop sinning?"

With a smile she said, "I think I would, sir."

"Yes, if you had a little room away in a retired spot, back from society, with nothing but your Bible and your God, and the comforts of life—say a nice little room in a nice little cottage—you think you would manage the thing?"

She smiled again, as if she saw all these desirable things I pictured to her, and said, "Yes, sir, I am sure I would."

"Well, then, Mrs Young, suppose you had all that to-morrow, do you think you would be perfect then?"

"Maybe I wouldna be perfect, but I would be in a state that I would hae *peace*, I think."

"Well, granting that you would be much freer from sin than now, what would you do with the past? How do you mean to get that settled? You are now between thirty and forty, I should say, and although you have been decent all your days, you must have been guilty of many sins—sins of youth long forgotten, sins of *omission* as well as *commission*, wrong words, wrong thoughts, wrong desires, wrong looks even, wrong motives, &c. Your life has been a life of sin, in short, when you take a right look at the thing in the light of God's Word and holy law. So long as a man compares himself with his neighbour

he is not very greatly alarmed, he thinks a little reformation will do; but when he brings himself alongside of God's broad and holy law, it is then he cries out, '*What must I do?*'

"Granting, then, you could stop sinning to-morrow, which you could not do, remember you have still the old account to settle. Suppose you kept a shop, and gave a little credit to working people from pay-day to pay-day, how would you look if one after another came in, telling you that they were for no more credit, they meant to pay everything after this just as they got it, but that they would not pay what they were owing now? I ask, how would you look? How could you stand such treatment? If you had many customers of this sort you would be ruined, and have to shut up your shop. You could not consent to the proposal. You would say, 'I'll give you time. I'll take so much a week, but you must in the long run pay all, or you'll bring me down. I must *fail* if you don't.'

"Well, how can you think of treating God in that way? You are wishing to act exactly as the supposed debtors. God is just and holy; His law must be honoured, His justice satisfied, His character and government respected. Christ's death for sinners does all this. The law needs blood, my conscience needs blood. Blessed be God, there is blood shed! *Peace* has been made, and *peace* is proclaimed to sinners through the blood of the cross. God's Word says, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die'; my conscience says so too. I see the justice of the sentence,

but I see Christ dying for me, and that gives me the thing you want by your holiness—*Peace*. ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them’ (Gal. iii. 10). ‘He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all’ (Jas. ii. 10). Texts like these made *me* tremble. But then it is written, ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree’ (Gal. iii. 13). This, Mrs Young, is the secret of my *peace*, which I have now enjoyed for a long time. I get it from the cross, from the blood, from looking altogether to Jesus, in letting Him really be my Saviour.

“ ‘Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling ;
Naked, look to Thee for dress ;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace ;
Foul, I to the fountain fly—
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.’

“ ‘What must I do to be saved ?

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

“ ‘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 !’

“ ‘These are the very sentiments of my heart. This gospel gives *peace*, and strange to say, this peace

makes me holy. You want to put holiness *before* peace ; I put peace *before* holiness. Justified by *faith*, we have *peace* with God ; and the upshot is a holy life. First, peace by looking at the blood, then love, then a holy life. ‘ If ye love me, keep my commandments.’ We never can love Jesus *till we really believe* that He first loved us, and so loved us that He died for us. This gives peace. The peace produces love, love again is manifested by a holy, self-denying life.

“ ‘ A soul redeemed demands a life of praise,
Hence the complexion of his future days ;
Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck’d,
And the world’s hatred as its sure effect.’ ”

“ I never could stop sinning till I came to Christ, and neither will you. If you want peace *turn* your eye to the blood ; if you want holiness, keep your eye on the Lord Jesus. You have hitherto been wanting to be saved, but your idea has been to save yourself—to get peace for yourself—from your own imperfect doings. No need of a Saviour for you at all ; if only you had time and opportunity, and everything fitting, you would save yourself. Ah, Mrs Young, do you not see your error ? Come to Jesus as you are ; come now—come to-day ! You will get peace in believing, but never in *working* (for salvation is ‘ to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly ’) ; though, I grant, you will get additional peace and comfort as you go on afterwards. Just as you find that you can command your temper, for

instance, do a good turn for a bad one, and the like, you will no doubt get peace upon peace flowing into your soul like a river."

Never did I see any one listen so earnestly. Oh, how eagerly she drank in the truth; her eyes glistening meanwhile, as if some rays of light were gaining entrance into her soul.

After a little more conversation of this sort, and after answering a few questions, I left.

Upon my second visit, she shook my hand heartily, and told me that she now had *peace* through the blood of Jesus—the peace which she had so long sought in vain, because altogether in the wrong way; and now she felt as if she could do anything for Christ. She had now found out the secret of living a holy life.

Dear reader, have you fallen in with God's plan of making men holy? Holiness is not the offspring of terror, or suspense, or uncertainty, but of *peace*—conscious peace; and this peace must be rooted in grace; it must be the consequence of having ascertained upon sure evidence the forgiving love of God.

The Divine order, then, is first pardon then holiness; first peace with God, and then conformity to the image of that God with whom we have been brought to be at peace.

“Jesus, Thy love exceeds our thought;
But this at least we see,
The soul that knows Thy love is taught
To value naught but Thee.”

J. G.

A HAPPY TOWN.

THESE are few towns really happy! Most of them are full of misery, poverty, unemployment, sickness, and strife. Exceptions there may be; but, generally speaking, this is the rule. All kinds of measures may be adopted by the authorities to mend matters, and these may be, to some extent, successful; but, if you were asked to point out a city or a town where there was real, true, and general happiness, where would you go?

Would you affirm that most communities are happy—most families, most individuals? I hardly think that you would.

We all know the secret of misery; but very few indeed know, in experience, that of joy. The secret of misery is sin. People may say what they like, and explain sin away; but there it is, in all its hideousness, the spring and fountain-head of all the wretchedness we see around us to-day; and sin cannot be ignored. Do what you please, there it is. You may possibly check outward evils, such as drunkenness and the like, but the motive-power—sin—remains, and baffles all legislation.

Sin is indigenous to the fallen nature of man. The whole family is blighted by the terrible disease. Break out in some way it must. It is bred in the bone.

Sin! what is sin? "The transgression of the law."

Yes, it is certainly that, but there may be sin which is not exactly that. It is, as one has wisely said, "the movement of a heart in opposition to God"!

That, I think, is a very full description of the true nature of sin. Let us weigh it well. What a fearful thing to possess a heart opposed to God! But we all have that. Man—fallen man—opposed to God, how terrible, but how true! It is proved by all the facts of history, and stated over and over again in the page of Scripture.

Hence our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." That is conclusive. Well, then, sin is the root of all the trouble, whether in the individual or in the community, and no one can be happy, in the true sense of the word, until he knows the remedy.

What, then, is the secret of this happiness?

We read a remarkable statement in Romans iv., "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven." The forgiveness of sins is the first letter of this great secret, and notice, dear reader, that the secret is open to all. You may get the knowledge of the forgiveness of your own sins. It is a knowledge acquired individually, and there are on all hands hundreds of people who can thank God, calmly and deeply, for this wonderful knowledge.

"There was great joy in that city" (Acts viii. 8). So we read of the city of Samaria, in which Philip had preached Christ.

That same city had just been the workshop of a sorcerer called Simon.

This man was a servant of the devil.

1. He had given out that himself was some great one.

2. He had used sorcery.

3. He had bewitched the people ; and yet, strange to say, "to him they all gave heed from the least to the greatest."

How is that to be accounted for ?

Such was the condition of Samaria when Philip entered it—an unhappy condition indeed !

Then what did Philip ?

1. He preached Christ unto them.

2. Unclean spirits came out of many.

3. The people gave heed to Philip.

4. There was great joy in that city.

What contrasts !

Satan bewitched the people ; Christ broke their fetters and gave them joy.

They were bound by the enemy ; they were delivered and saved by the Lord.

The preaching of Christ was the means used then, and always, and alone, for such deliverance. "There is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved"—that or damnation. Thank God for that preaching—that name—that salvation.

Mark, Simon preached himself. He proclaimed, unblushingly, that himself was some great one, and then produced his tricks, and bewitched the people—an easy task.

Philip, on the other hand, sank himself, and

preached his Master—his Saviour and Lord. And the preaching of Christ was, is, and ever will be, till the door be shut, the grand instrument in the hand of God, for the blessing of guilty man. “It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” “It pleaseth God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.” His power and His pleasure! What is salvation? Well, what is sin? Sin is moral wretchedness for time, ending in death, and then judgment, and thereafter everlasting punishment.

Salvation is the divine remedy, for all this appalling state—and more. It is peace with God, and the calm, sweet knowledge of the Father and the Son.

The believer is pardoned, justified, made a son and heir, and able to cry, “Abba, Father.”

He is happy, indeed—so are all such. Given a heart, or a city where Christ is owned and obeyed, be assured that there is great joy in that heart and that city!

J. W. S.

THE FORGED REPRIEVE.

SIR H. CRAWFORD, when Under-Sheriff of London, once found it necessary to decide, almost at a moment's notice, the fate of a criminal condemned to death.

The day for the execution had come, when a letter of reprieve was received at Newgate Gaol. It was

in due form, and was written on Home Office paper. The Under-Sheriff, however, noticed that the envelope was stamped *with the Board of Trade mark*. This showed that the paper had not come from the proper source, and consequently the order was given to proceed with the execution. Inquiries made later proved the reprieve to be a forgery. Its writer was traced, and was sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

This story would be hardly worth while repeating, save as a matter of interest, were it not for the fact that every unsaved reader of these lines stands in the place of a condemned criminal with regard to God.

When I speak of the *unsaved reader* I mean the reader who has never fled for refuge to Christ; who has never lifted the eye of faith to Him; who has never gained security from everlasting woe by trusting in the Saviour. There is definite scriptural warrant for the statement that such an one is under sentence of condemnation whether he knows it or not. We read in John iii. 18, "He that believeth not is condemned already."

Do you realise, reader, that if you have never been saved through faith in Christ, that dread sentence of doom hangs over *your* head? I ask not if you realise it, but, whether you do so or not, *it is true*.

This being so, it will surely be a matter of interest to you that a reprieve—nay, a free pardon—is offered to you. It is not the kind of pardon that men sometimes imagine it to be. It is not a pardon that ignores the claims of righteousness, or treats sin as if it were a trifle. A pardon of that kind, like the

forged reprieve, would bear evidence upon the face of it that it is not of God.

The pardon that is offered freely to you is a pardon that bears the hall-mark of its divine origin. It comes to the guilty, condemned sinner with the full sanction of divine justice. It is based on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has stood in the sinner's place and made atonement for his guilt.

The ransom that He paid in sufferings and blood upon the cross clothes, the proffered pardon with all the majesty of eternal righteousness. There need be no hesitation on the sinner's part as to accepting it and relying upon it. It is marked as coming from the One who alone has the right to pardon the guilty.

Is this nothing to you, reader? Can you afford to be indifferent? God Himself is anxious that you should receive this free pardon. He sends His glad tidings to you, that you "may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts xxvi. 18).

The situation is this—you are a guilty offender against God. God graciously offers you a free pardon, based on the atoning work of Christ. It is for you to simply accept it. Will you not do so *now*, and join the writer in thanking God that He, "for Christ's sake, *hath forgiven you*"? (Eph. iv. 32).

"There is no other name than Thine,
Jehovah-Jesus! name divine;
On which to rest for sins forgiven,
For peace with God, for hope of heaven."

MISCALCULATION; OR, ETERNITY-NEGLECTING FOOLS.

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully : and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."—LUKE xii. 16-21.

CLEARLY, from the circumstances described here, this rich man must have been in his counting-house cogitating what he should do. "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" You say, what part of the building was his counting-house? I believe it was his bed. That is a splendid place in which to think. There is no better time for thinking than just ere your eyelids close in sleep, or when you awake through the hours of the night.

Friend, will you think, when next you are in your bed, of where you are going to spend your eternity? Ere you close your eyelids in slumber to-night, let me ask you, Will you think seriously of where you will spend eternity? What views have you of eternity? How will you spend it? What is your relation to God? If this should be the last night

of your life, where will you spend eternity? Think on these things. Ponder them. They are worthy of consideration.

But these were not the subjects of grave consideration with this rich man on that night. He thought within himself, saying, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" All his barns were crammed to the roof. His storehouses were filled to bursting. He knew not where to put the incoming goods, with which God had so richly blessed him.

What a strange thing, you say. Were there no poor round about to whom he might minister? Was there no Lazarus at his door? Were there no needy ones on all hands? Alas! these things did not disturb him, for the man lived only for himself; and have not you, friend, till now? Is not the centre and pivot round which you circle self? He was self-surrounded, self-governed, and self-indulgent, I do not doubt.

Now, as he says, "What shall I do?" a wonderful scheme opens up before his mind. Does it concern the poor and the needy on every hand, to whom he could give his surplus? Ah, no, that is not the thought. "And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns and build greater." Before his mind's eye, in the darkness of that night, as he lay there, what does he see? The old barns removed, the old granaries set aside, and the ground cleared.

He has fixed upon his architect. He has got the measurements and plans before his mind's eye, and

he sees pile after pile of palatial storehouses rise, and into these greater barns he already sees the goods which God was giving him, stored and packed away, for "There," he now says, "I will bestow all my fruits and my goods." And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

Now, my readers, tell me, did you ever hear such soliloquy? Have you ever put yourself beside this man? I daresay many of you have not gone exactly the same road, but you have planned out your future for not a little while. You have determined what you will do next, and next, and so forth. Perhaps some of it has come to pass. God has let you increase in the things of this life, and you have got on, as this man no doubt had got on, and here you are to-day. But stop, what about the salvation of your soul? What about that which is due to the Lord? What about the claims of the Lord? Ah, the Lord has been left out entirely. God has had no place, no part in the plan. God has not been in your thoughts. So it was with this man.

Take a good look at him as he says, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." I think I see him as he closes his eyelids. A smile of placid contentment has come over his face as he says, Soul, I have arranged everything satisfactorily, and have made provision for many years. Think of it. "For many years." Eternity he left out of his calculations entirely. How many are like him? There was a

man living last Sunday night, who was arranging for things to go on far into the future ; but yesterday he was buried. Many a man has gone into eternity since this night week unprepared, unconverted, unblest, unsaved, because unbelieving and unregenerate.

Look at the folly, the audacity of this worldling spreading himself out for the future. Sinner, see thyself. See the guilt of this lost soul, as with untouched conscience, and in disregard of God he says, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years"—"much goods!" "many years!" "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Watch him closely and note what happens. His eye closes and he passes into slumber, contented with all, and looking forward to a great future of "many years" of carnal enjoyment.

But that night an unwelcome visitor intrudes on the scene. He does not expect him. No, he is an unexpected, unwanted, unlooked-for visitor ; and you say, Who is it? Ah! it is Death. He wakes with the dew of death on his brow, and he hears the voice of God saying to his guilty and godless soul, "Fool." What wakes him? The voice of God. Oh, reader, may it wake you. Sinner, may it wake you now. And what does God say to this unsaved, selfish soul, who has got his plans for the future so well laid? "Fool."

Young man, you have sketched out your life, have you not? Listen. God speaks: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Oh, what

a change that word effects ! What amazement takes possession of that man's soul ! His eyes are closed, but as he listens, he hears the voice of God saying, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee ; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? "

My dear friend, God may so speak to thee this night. But, thank God, you are yet in the land of the living ; and if you are only thinking of the future for this life, may God cause you to hear His own blessed voice speaking to your soul, and also cause everything to give way to this momentous question—What is the state of your soul, and where will you spend eternity ?

You may have a lease of your house, but you have no lease of your life. Your soul belongs to God, and this night, if God say the word, that soul will go back to God. But what about that soul ? Is it still steeped in sin ? Is it yet black in iniquity, or is it washed in the blood of the Saviour ? Let me inquire most affectionately and earnestly. Let me implore you now to hear the word of God. Do not fall into the devil's trap as did this poor man.

I label this scene MISCALCULATION, because I cannot get any better word to describe what is true of many souls to-day. It is a scene of downright miscalculation. Why ? Because the man was making his plans, and all along he left God out, and nothing came to pass as he had planned. Oh, sinner, you too have left God out. I know you have your plans as to what you are going to do to-morrow.

“Much goods” to be enjoyed, and “many years” to be spent in their enjoyment, was what the rich farmer pictured to himself, and the next thing he found was that he was in hell. He passed from time into eternity. The last word he heard upon earth was the word of God addressed to him, “Thou fool.” What kind of a fool was he? Scripture speaks of many classes of fools. He was the representative of a very large class of fools that live in the world to-day. They must be called the **ETERNITY-NEGLECTING FOOLS**. There are many such fools in this day, and one of them may be reading this article. I mean you, my friend, **YOU**. You know it yourself. You are not saved. You are not converted. How sad!

I suppose the interests of your immortal soul have not given you ten serious moments of consideration all your life. You have occupied all your time with getting on and enjoying yourself in this world. Your aim has been to get a place in the world. Yes, you say, but we must work. I know that, and I conclude that this rich man was not born, as men say, with a silver spoon in his mouth. I suppose he had to work hard, and the blessing of the Lord was with him. But what took place then? He did not acknowledge God. He did not turn round to God in thankfulness. He had no sense of the expression of God's love towards him. He had no sense of the goodness of God. He was not rich toward God as the giver of every good. Do not imitate him.

"HE DIED FOR ME, AND TAKES ME IN."

IT was Sunday morning, a bright cloudless morning in the spring of 1890. The winter, which had been unusually severe, had vanished, and spring, the harbinger of new life, new hopes, new joys, had really come.

The cheering rays of the sun streamed in through the window of the bedroom occupied by a young man of twenty. Instinctively his thoughts turned to Him who is the Sun of Righteousness, who will one day rise with healing in His wings, and who, even to-day, shines in at the window of the poor benighted soul, scattering the darkness and filling it with a light above the brightness of the sun.

As he knelt that morning by his bed-side a deep yearning took possession of him to be used in blessing to sinners, and he prayed that God would make him an instrument in His hands that day of leading some soul out of nature's darkness into His most marvellous light. This prayer was very graciously answered.

About ten miles away, in a quiet country village, lived his grandparents, who had for sixty-five years trodden life's journey together. The grandmother, who was eighty-nine years of age, for nearly seventy years of that time had rejoiced in the knowledge of Christ as her Saviour, endeavouring all the while to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit. ii. 10).

This, however, could not be said of the grand-

father. It was his proud boast that he had lived to the last decade of the nineteenth century (for he was born during the closing moments of the eighteenth), and had not felt it necessary to be a Christian. Much earnest prayer had been offered up on his behalf, that, ere it were too late, he might find out that he was a lost sinner, and turn to the Saviour.

To visit his aged grandfather was the determination of the young Christian as he rose from his knees, for he felt that this was the Lord's will for him that day. Many times during that ten-mile walk he knelt down in some secluded spot and pleaded with God to go before him and open the heart of the old sinner for the reception of the gospel.

On his arrival he found his grandfather in bed, but he expressed pleasure at seeing his grandson, and said, "I know quite well what you have come for. You have come to speak to me about my soul, but I fear it is no use. I realise that my end is near. I have had a long innings, and if I could live my life over again I would act differently. I would try to love and serve the God of your grandmother, but I have spent my life in the service of the devil, and I feel that it would be mean to ask God to take the dregs of a wasted life."

"But, grandfather, 'God' is love,' and so forgiving is He and so anxious is He to save, that He is willing to take even *the devil's castaways*."

"I know God is love, but I cannot think that He can pardon ninety years of sin."

"God can and will save *all* who come to Him by the Lord Jesus Christ, so there is a chance even for an old man who has spent all his life in sin and the devil's service."

"Are you quite sure of that?"

"Yes, listen, grandfather, to these words, '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), and *you* are included in that 'whosoever.'"

"But, my boy," he replied, as he burst into tears, "I can't get away from the fact that I have done nothing to merit His favour and His love."

"All He asks is confession for the past and a simple trust in Jesus and His atoning blood shed at Calvary."

"I see all that, but it is so dark."

"You believe that Jesus died to save sinners?"

"Yes."

"And you are willing that He should save you?"

"I am if He will."

"Why, He says, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in *no wise* cast out,' and, if He does not cast you out, what does He do?"

"Why, He takes me in, to be sure!"

"And you believe that He takes you in?"

"Yes, I see it all now, I just throw myself upon His mercy, and trusting Him for pardon He forgives me and takes me in. I see it all now, I believe He died for me *and takes me in.*"

"Now, grandfather, you must just go on trusting in Jesus."

He then repeated those well-known lines :—

“I do believe, I will believe
That Jesus died for *me*,
That on the cross He shed His blood
From sin to set me free.”

He was a feeble old man, very near the portals of eternity when he thus turned to the Saviour of sinners, but he discovered, as do all who turn to that Saviour, that where sin abounded grace doth much more abound, and the few weeks on earth which remained to him were filled with rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, which is the destiny of all who rest in Him who died for sinners and casts none out who come to Him.

One word more, my reader. You, like the subject of this narrative, may have lived your life in the service of the devil, and like him may feel you do not deserve mercy, but be assured there is full and free forgiveness for every poor sinner, even “the devil’s cast-offs.” Do not hesitate. Turn at once to the Saviour. “Whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts x. 43).

“Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve ;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come.

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

ETERNITY.

A FAITHFUL wife had often wept over and prayed for her unconverted husband. She had many times tried to put before him the glad tidings of salvation, yet to no purpose. He was not opposed, but merely indifferent.

But, alas! this common indifference is slaying its tens of thousands. The majority of people are not extraordinary sinners, but day after day passes much alike to them, and so the months and years fly by: they do nothing very bad and nothing very good, and all the while they think not that they are rapidly being borne down to an endless future; and as to where and how they will spend that future they are little troubled. Oh! that men would think.

This woman used to give her husband, who was a bricklayer by trade, little books which contained the simple story of the gospel, which he would read and lay aside, without saying a word for or against them. However, one Monday, as his wife was returning from a mothers' meeting, she brought with her a little book which she handed to him as he sat at tea after his day's work. He read it through, and was just placing it on the table to give back to her, when his eye fell on a word on the back of the cover.

It was *one* word, but that one word seemed to pierce through his heart like cold steel; and most thrilling of all, as he still looked, and took the little book up again to look and read more closely, he saw

that every verse of the poetry (for such it was) ended with this one awful, searching word, which made him tremble from head to foot. It was that word *Eternity*. And when he came to read the last verse, it had opened up to his mind a new train of thought, such as he had never imagined before. He was in a horror of soul as he read the solemn words over again—

“Eternity ! Eternity !
How long art thou, Eternity ?
Lo ! I, Eternity, warn thee,
O man, that oft thou think on me ;
The sinner’s punishment and pain,
To them who love their God rich gain.
Ponder, O man, Eternity.”

His wife watched his lip quiver, and his cheek pale as he read half aloud that last line, “Ponder, O man, Eternity !” Audibly, he muttered the words, “Ponder, O man, Eternity !” This was just what he never had done ; and now, as in a moment, the long dark future was all opened up to him. He was not prepared for eternity. He had never thought of what it meant before. Night as well as day the dread reality of eternity haunted him—at his work, and at his meals, and even in his dreams in the calm stillness of the midnight, he would shriek out, “Eternity, eternity.”

How could one thus awakened ever find peace, except through the knowledge that that eternity was an eternity of blessing and joy for him ? Yet, as a sinner, how could this possibly be ? For without any openly gross sins of immorality or public shame,

still he was aware that he had no righteousness wherein to stand before God, and that he had no plea to present for admittance to the bright realms of everlasting bliss. He did not deserve heaven, he was full well certain; and therefore his eternity, if not spent in heaven, he knew must be in hell.

As to his ever earning God's favour and pardon, that, too, was out of the question altogether. An amended life could never blot out past sins, even supposing it should be spotless in itself. All hope from himself was gone, and as regarded saving himself he was in utter despair.

It is just when a man comes to this, and gives all up as lost, that the Lord Jesus saves. He testifies by His Holy Spirit to the glorious fact that what He accomplished at Golgotha was for guilty sinners. The Just there took the place of the unjust, to suffer all the righteous vengeance of Almighty God, which the sinner deserved. On the cross, He who had the right to heaven took the place of those who had earned hell, that they might have right, through Him, to His happy home in glory. The curse was His, that the blessing might be ours; and our death itself He took, that He might give us eternal life. Thus, through the death and merits of Another, by virtue of His blood, and the preciousness and power of it, those whose eternity must otherwise have been damnation, now have glory.

Wondrous, marvellous fact! Sing, ye heavens, and break forth and shout, O earth! and let believers praise for such a salvation.

But as to eternity. Do *you* ever think about it? and where will you spend *your* eternity if you die as you are? Before putting down this paper, let this one simple but all-important question be settled. Do not go on in uncertainty; and as your soul is infinitely precious, treat it not with indifference—

“PONDER, O MAN, ETERNITY!”

H. W. T.

THE DEVIL'S BEANS.

ROWLAND HILL began his sermon one morning by saying: “My friends, the other day I was going down the street, and I saw a drove of pigs following a man. This excited my curiosity so much that I determined to follow. I did so, and to my great surprise, saw them follow him to the slaughter-house. I was anxious to know how this was brought about, and I said to the man, ‘My friend, how did you manage to induce those pigs to follow you here?’”

“‘Oh! did you not see?’ said the man, ‘I had a basket of beans under my arm, and I dropped a few as I came along, and so they followed me!’”

“Yes,” said the preacher, “and I thought, so it is, the devil has his basket of beans under his arm, and he drops them as he goes along, and what multitudes he induces to follow him to an everlasting slaughter-house! Yes, my friends, and all your broad and crowded thoroughfares are strewn with the beans of the devil.”

ANON.

AWAKE, O SLEEPER!

(*An Open-Air Address.*)

HOW sound asleep every one seems to be about these parts, as if drugged and dosed with the very opium of hell!—saints and sinners alike. The wise and foolish virgins all slumber and sleep.

It is frankly and cheerfully admitted that there are some *individual* exceptions; but, looking at things as a whole, there is hardly one to mend another—rectors, vicars, curates, and clerks, ministers, elders, deacons, class-leaders, and evangelists, Church and Dissent, alike are all more or less asleep, so far as the *main thing* is concerned—the salvation of the soul, and the after confession of Christ, however much activity there may be in the shape of denominational aggrandisement.

You may be offended at my saying so; but you cannot deny it. It is too true. Nor is that the case only hereabouts; alas! it is the same all over the country. Strange indeed that such should be, seeing there is an eternal hell, into which souls are dropping every hour! Awake, O sleeper! Awake, O England! Awake, O Scotland! Awake, O Ireland! “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

How awful the thought of your nearest and dearest lifting up his or her eyes in torments, while you are weeping over the body and getting it decently buried!

You dare not erase the sixteenth of Luke from your Bibles. What a terrible picture we have there of the sufferings of all unconverted ones in the next world—too dreadful to think of. Very few are converted *here*, or else I don't know what conversion is. Let us meet, Bible in hand, and talk the matter over. Oh! give me the chance to speak to you, or come and set me right, if you think I am wrong. I would be glad to get relief concerning you, if you can give it me. If you can show me that you are all saved, I shall only be too glad.

But if there be but *one* unsaved soul in the place, how can you be at rest? If there were a house on fire, you would all be up and out, running about like to break your legs, doing what you could to save life and property; and quite right. But when an immortal soul is in danger of being eternally lost, no one moves in the matter; nay, more, some even laugh and sneer and scoff at those who, a little more awakened up than themselves, seek to raise the alarm, clearly showing they don't, after all, believe in a hell and in souls perishing, though they profess to do so, and hold it as an article of their faith.

Ah! it is one thing to *hold* so-and-so as a creed, another thing entirely really to believe it, to realise it, and to live and act under the power of it. Oh! what a nation of hypocrites we are! what sceptics! what infidels! The deadly poison of annihilation and universal redemption is being boldly taught in many pulpits nowadays, and is being printed and circulated throughout the land. What next? Shame

on the enemy who thus "sows tares while men sleep"; but shame also on the Christian men and women who sleep and let him thus work.

Awake, O sleeper! "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise and call upon thy God" to save thee, to save thine. Awake, preachers, teachers, guardians, parents! The agents in this Satanic work are comparatively honest. Their theory and their practice correspond, not so yours. You practically and virtually deny what you theoretically hold. Awake! awake!

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man" (Prov. vi. 6-11).

These words of the wise man do not apply to you in regard to temporal things, for a more industrious, better managing people it would be hard to find in any land. Such well-trimmed gardens, such tidy cottages, outside and inside, I never saw—that is, so many of that sort together—never. It is a perfect picture and model of a place in that respect. It does one's heart good to behold such an air of comfort all around, as this lovely village presents. But ah! beloved, so it was with the successful farmer we read of in the twelfth of Luke. He, too, was a good

manager ; he did not neglect his business. He understood it, and attended to it well, and raised fine crops, so that "he had not where to bestow his fruits." Again, he planned, and schemed, and *proposed* ; but God had been planning *before* him, and *disposed* of him, and that with awful suddenness !

Listen to this : "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ? And he said, This will I do ; I will pull down my barns and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, THOU FOOL ! *this night thy soul shall be required of thee* ; then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

It would have been a treat to have visited his farm—to have beheld such comfort and general prosperity all around ; but he himself was only *worldly-wise* for all that. He was the veriest fool in God's estimation, in ours too, now, on looking back, because he neglected "the one thing needful," "one *thing* he lacked"—provision for his immortal soul. He cared for the body, and had plenty for it—too much ; but "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4). He had neither bread nor barn for his soul, poor God-pronounced fool that he was !

And alas ! there are too many like him still. Take

care you are not of the number—you can see *his* folly ; examine *yourself* ! You can condemn the drunkard, the improvident, the non-professor, and call him “fool,” and worse ; but take care lest “thou art the man.” Let all this come home to thine own conscience. “Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.” It is midnight in a sense. These are the last and perilous days (see 2 Tim. iii. ; see also 2 Pet. iii., and Luke xvii. 26).

“It is high time to awake out of sleep.” “The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” “Let us not sleep as do others ; but let us watch and be sober.”

Don't cry, “Peace, peace,” when after all “there is no peace.” If you do, “sudden destruction shall come upon you, as travail upon a woman with child, and ye shall not escape.” Awake, O sleeper !

Don't speak of progress : the Bible and facts are against it. Open your eyes and look around. Take a look at a newspaper for a moment, and see how the world is getting on. True, there may be agricultural progress, scientific progress, political progress, educational progress, yea, moral progress if you will ; but where is your spiritual progress ? Alas ! if man could be happy and comfortable *without* the *gospel* he would, and he does give it the go-by, though he can hardly dispense with the thing called *religion*, forsooth. Everywhere we see men getting on without God, but, believe me, judgment is at the door. Worldly glory reaches the culminating point at last. Where is

the glory of Egypt, Babylon, Jerusalem, Greece, Rome to-day? Read Revelation xviii. and awake out of sleep.

Others will soon live in these pretty cottages of yours—others will soon dress these flower-plots at your doors in spring—others will soon gather the fruits of your gardens, and little farms, and “half acres” in autumn—others will soon handle your tools in these workshops—other maidens will soon trip to the well for water, and to milk the cows—other children will soon play about these doors and road-sides—other names will soon be over these shop doors and in the duke’s books, as his tenants, and where will *you* be? Ah me! Will it be heaven, or will it be hell with you? *Which?* Awake, O sleeper!

How dreadful the thought of your dear children growing up around you, full of health and glee, as they are at present, till they arrive at manhood; then leaving your roof to go to some large city in search of employment, *unsaved all the time*, to be corrupted and ruined, even in *this life*, and to be eternally lost at last. Can you bear the thought? Is it not sickening? Can you give sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids, till you have left no stone unturned to prevent the bare possibility of such a terrible catastrophe, by seeing to it that you are safe for eternity yourselves, and that you are doing all that a man, that a *parent can* do to lead your children to Christ?

Ah! you have a graveyard here too, I see. So

people die here, as well as at other places. Death is no respecter of persons. How fearful to be carried out of all the comforts you evidently enjoy, and which have, no doubt, had much to do in lulling you asleep, to the grave, to hell, to the judgment seat! What an awful awakening up it will be then, but *too late!* Now is the time to awake. "Awake, thou that sleepest!"

What is to be done? you ask. Flee to Christ ere you close your eyes to-night. The way of salvation has not changed since the days of the jailer (Acts xvi.). He was saved and knew it, and rejoiced in it in far less time than I've spoken at your door to-night—standing at his door at midnight, during an earthquake, things not half so convenient as now. I don't ask you to come to my church or chapel, for I have none, nor to join my sect, for I belong to none; but I do plead with you *to trust the finished work of Christ* where you stand, and be saved, eternally saved!

I daresay a tailor is at work at that lighted window. Suppose I were to order a suit of clothes from him, and he were to send me word by-and-by that they were finished, how would he look if I were to bring a bit of cloth, and a button or two, and some thread to *help to finish them*; or supposing I were to send him word that I couldn't come for them *till I got these articles!* How absurd! Let any other artisan, hearing me, only think of the absurdity of a customer bringing a little material to finish the article ordered in his line, which was

already finished by himself—a bit of iron to the smith, after the plough ordered was *finished*—a bit of wood to the joiner, after the cart ordered was *finished*—a cart of stones and a barrowful of lime to the mason after the house was *finished*!

Well, beloved souls, all that is not more absurd than for you to bring a tear, a bit of a prayer, a bit of good work, to help to finish the FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST. “IT IS FINISHED! IT IS FINISHED,” most blessedly and eternally finished “long, long ago.” Oh, that I could reach every ear with that good news! Awake, O SLEEPER!

We believe in preaching and teaching the Word, not in exciting, sensational, extravagant harangues. “And ye shall know the *truth*, and the *truth* shall make you free.” So much has been said and done of late years of an extravagant and unscriptural sort, in connection with *special* efforts for men’s salvation by well-meaning though imprudent people, that I don’t wonder that the very term “Revival,” though scriptural (Ps. lxxxv. 6; Hab. iii. 2), has come to stink in men’s nostrils, as it were. But let us profit by our own and others’ blunders, and be up and doing. We need not despair. If we have failed in days gone by, there is all the more need to *awake*! The blunders and failures of others won’t save you nor excuse you. *Awake, O sleeper.*

Who are you? do you ask.

Come and see; come and hear; try the spirits; prove all things; beware of false prophets. We seek not yours, but you. If you were dying for

want of water, you would be glad to have some, and make no remark about the vessel which contained it. If you were ill off for money you would receive it in a ragged purse.

Who are you? I am nobody, and I have no handle to my name, any more than Peter or John had. I trust I have a little grace in my heart, a little love for souls, and am getting slowly awakened up myself, to see that I have been asleep, and to observe the appalling lethargy and indifference to divine things around. I am content to be a "base thing," "a foolish thing," "a weak thing," "one of the things that are not," a bawler, a babbler, a madman, if you like. Misunderstand me, misconstrue me, spit upon me, stone me, kill me if you will, but I must stand among you here and tell you the truth as long as I can, till you get awakened up. Be angry, or *something*, rather than continue *asleep*. If Paul had said the half that I've said these nights at your doors, his hearers would have had him in the prison long ago; you seem too fast asleep even for that, too dead, alas! Awake, O sleeper!

But are any of you now angry? Ah, that stir in the coffin is a hopeful sign. If you come all the way to Christ, you will soon forgive me and thank me.

If your house were on fire and you in bed, you might be angry at me at first were I to rush into your bedroom and carry you out by the window, perhaps in your night-shirt, but you would soon forgive me and thank me afterwards for saving your

life. You would never say it was rude, impertinent, and no business of mine. Oh, no! So it will be in regard to this matter by-and-by, though you may think me very rude, and a great annoyance at present.

May the Lord awaken us all to the real state of things, and to our individual responsibilities. "Awake, thou that sleepest!"

J. G.

A LEAP FOR LIFE.

A FEW months ago a young porter on the Midland Railway, at Wellingborough Station, ran out of the parcels office, intending to cross the line to reach another platform, where he had some duty to perform on the arrival of a train shortly due.

Before he reached the edge of the platform to jump down on to the line, he saw an express train coming along the line on which he was about to jump. It was only a few yards off, and as it was impossible for him to stop himself, he, no doubt, made up his mind that his only chance was to make a leap, in the hope of clearing the line before the train reached him. This he attempted, but alas was unsuccessful, for he was caught by the outer buffer of the engine and carried along at the rate of about sixty miles an hour for sixty yards, and then hurled aside. He was picked up a corpse—practically disembowelled.

How solemn! How sudden!! One moment in the vigour of health, which almost led him to scorn danger, the next a mangled corpse! Little did he think when he left that office that that short run would be cut short by *death*.

Where his *soul* is we cannot say; but we ask you, If it had been *you*, where would *your* soul be now?

Would it be "with Christ" (Phil. i. 23), or awaiting the *judgment* that comes after death (Heb. ix. 27)?

"Oh," you say, "I should not be so careless as that. Why, it was almost *courting* death. Besides I am always most careful to avoid accidents—especially on railways."

That may be so, and you may be as careful as possible to avoid *sudden* death, yet death in all its sudden solemnity may come upon you at any moment. If this be so, are you not *very* careless in not being prepared for it?

"But how may I be prepared for death?" you ask.

Let me first ask and answer another question, "What is it that makes you *unprepared* for death?"

"Your **SINS**."

You know that you are a sinner; that you have sinned against God; and that sooner or later you must meet God about those sins. You know that "the wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. vi. 23), and that after death is the JUDGMENT (Heb. ix. 27). Then to be prepared for death *you must get rid of your sins*. How is this to be done?

By being washed in the blood of Jesus, for "the blood of Jesus Christ (God's Son) cleanseth us from

all sin " (1 John i. 9). When Israel's first-born sons of old put themselves under the shelter of *the blood*, God said, "When I see THE BLOOD I will pass over you" (Exod. xii. 13). So all you have to do is just to trust the blood of Jesus, and you will be ready for death, slow or sudden.

"Then trust the blood of Jesus ; you'll find God's word is true,

Your sins may be as scarlet, or crimson's deeper hue ;
But all will be *forgiven*—praise God—*forgotten* too ;
Just plead THE BLOOD of Jesus—God will pass over you."

T. C. M.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

(Read John viii. 1-12.)

THE Gospel of John brings out that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Grace is the nature of God shown in blessed activity. It is the love of God active after man has sinned. Sin has sundered man from God. Sin has put us in a place of distance. Perhaps you may not have been troubled about your sins. I pray God that they may trouble you. If your sins do not trouble you in time, when you may get quit of them, they will trouble you in eternity, when you can never get quit of them. The woman of John viii. can teach you a lesson.

It was very well said by Moses, "Be sure your sin

will find you out" (Num. xxxii. 23). This woman's sin found her out, and then we see how grace met her. We can easily see what law would have done to her: only condemned her, but here grace met and blessed her. Grace has come to us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, bringing the fulness of all that is in the heart of God into this scene. I know very well what every one who is not converted thinks about God. You think He is a judge. There never was a greater mistake in this world. God does not want to judge you, "for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John iii. 17).

Then what was the world's state? Lost. "Oh," you say, "I do not think I am lost." What you think is quite beside the mark. What is the truth? The truth is that you are still lost, if Christ has not saved you. But the Son of man has come to *seek* and to *save* that which *was lost*. The Lord Jesus Christ displayed all the thoughts and feelings of God with regard to men as sinners—what He feels about you, and what He knows about you—and while He does not minimise the sin, but exposes it, so that you yourself should condemn it, He acts the part of a Saviour in the most blessed way. He proposes to give you life.

If your sins are not forgiven, you have no business to be a church member. Sooner or later, "your sin will find you out," and you will discover, when too late, that you are a lost sinner, needing salvation, instead of being as you supposed a kind of Christian

person, who was not so bad as a great many folk. If you have never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, believe on Him now, and no matter how bad you may be, you will find that He will not cast you out. George Whitfield once said that Jesus Christ was so full of grace that He would receive the devil's castaways.

I do not suppose that there is any one reading this paper who is a sinner of the same class as the poor woman in John viii., but it is very likely there may be one who is too good for Jesus. I have been hunting all over Great Britain and Ireland for nearly fifty years to find a sinner too bad for Jesus. I have not yet found one. I have found a great many people who are too good for Jesus. Are you of that class? You think you do not need salvation. You do not think you are lost, for you have been moral and upright.

Let me warn you. You may very easily be too good for Jesus, but you cannot be too bad for Jesus. There is no limit to the grace of Christ. What an awful thing it will be if you find yourself in eternity by-and-by, a sinner in your sins, and you appear before that great white throne, where every unsaved man must stand, and where there will be no Saviour for you. What awful anguish will possess your soul at that moment, when you see how the devil has deceived you. You cannot then enter the glory of God, because you are an unsaved sinner, and you will enter the gloom of an eternal hell. Why? Because you are a sinner? Not that only. It will

be because you are an unbelieving and consequently an unforgiven sinner.

If you say, "How can I get salvation?" this poor, sinful woman of John viii. will show you the way. The Lord had spent the night on the Mount of Olives, and He came in the morning into the temple, and all the people came unto Him. I want all my readers to come to Him. I do not ask you to come to meeting, or come to church. Come to Jesus. I greatly desire that you may get into His presence. Get alone with Jesus. When there is a real work of God in the conscience, the awakened sinner always gets alone with Jesus. The result is most blessed, for faith in Him springs up, and "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 48) is then realised. The way to reach this blessing is before us in John viii.

The Lord was in the temple teaching. Then there walk in a lot of greybeards and elderly men—religious people up to their eyes—and in their midst one poor, solitary woman, taken in an act of gross sin. They say, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" The awful depravity into which she had sunk was manifest. It was not a question of imputation or suspicion. So with you. There is no good denying that you are a sinner. What are the wages of sin? Death, and after death the judgment. Unsaved sinner, death and condemnation are ahead of you. Forget not these solemn realities, they are right ahead of you.

Her accusers bring this woman up for judgment. She was guilty. So are you. These Pharisees quoted Scripture to condemn her, and the devil knows how to quote Scripture to-day, as he seeks to destroy you. But Jesus, the Son of man, seeks you that He may save you.

The Pharisees were quite right to say that, under the law, Moses commanded such as she to be stoned, but really it was wickedness that led them to quote him. Their object was to tempt Jesus. They thought they had the Lord on the horns of a dilemma. If He had said, "Stone her," they would have replied, "Where is your consistency? You have been preaching grace, and talking about grace for long, and, now, forsooth, you are going to forego grace, maintain law, and stone her." Suppose He had said, "Don't stone her, be gracious unto her," what would they have said? "Oh, you are upsetting Moses, you are against the law, and against God." What wickedness was theirs!

What does He say? Before He said anything, He "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." I think I see the blessed Lord. You say, "What was the meaning of His writing on the ground?" I do not think He was writing the accusation against that poor woman. He pointed to the earth, where He was going to be for three days and three nights, after bearing on the cross the sins of sinners, and dying the death that sinners ought to die. He wrote on the ground as though He did not listen. They thought, Now we

have got Him. We shall show that He is untrue to His own doctrine, or He is untrue to Jehovah.

“What sayest thou?” says one man, and then another. He lifted Himself up, and said, “He that is without sin amongst you, let him first cast the stone at her.” Then He again stooped down, and wrote on the ground. Light and grace are seen here together. Let the person who is *without* sin first cast the stone. Let her be condemned if you have clean hands to do it. It is only the sinless person who may be the judge. They *could* not fling the stone; Jesus *would* not.

Look at this poor wretched woman in the middle. She is looking which way the stone will come from. What takes place? “And they which heard, being convicted by their own conscience, went out, one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.” Conscience said, “You are a sinner, and as a sinner, you could not fling that stone.” Have you ever been convicted that you are a sinner? It is not a question of what the nature of the sin is. Your sin must find you out sooner or later. “Be sure your sin will find you out.” Light from God searched their hearts, showed up their lives, and beginning at the oldest, they all went out even to the last. The light showed the accusers up, and they fled from it, leaving this poor guilty sinner alone with Jesus.

Do not stifle conscience. You may do it till you find yourself in eternity with a seared conscience, and a lost soul. Here they all went out, beginning at the

eldest. Each thought Rabbi So-and-so, he being the eldest, he will fling the stone. I will tell you what the Rabbi did. He wriggled backwards out of the crowd, and hoped nobody saw him. Then No. 2 went out, then No. 3, and No. 4, and so on. The Lord again stooped down and wrote on the ground. He gave them time to be all convicted, one by one. The light and the truth worked concurrently, and they all had to go out. They *could* not stone her, I repeat. He *would* not. He came to save, not to condemn. Let Christ drive away every accuser from you.

Then when Jesus lifted up Himself, He saw none but the woman. "Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." Were you ever alone with Jesus? What a blessed moment for you if you get alone with Jesus! Does He frown on you? No, He says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Does He condemn you? No. The woman was left alone, with the only One who could condemn her, and what does He do? He might have taken up the stone, and flung it at her, but He did not. They could not, and He would not. He did not come to condemn. He came to save. Blessed Saviour!

She saw holy kindness and goodness personified in Him. Did He say, "Woman, what an awful sinner thou hast been"? No. "Woman, how terrible is thy guilt"? No; what He said was, "Woman, where are those thine accusers, hath no man condemned thee?" "No man, Lord," was her happy answer. What had He done? He had driven out every

accuser. You get alone with Jesus, and see what the effect will be. You will find that every foe is silenced immediately. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." She was to learn that lesson then. Have you learned it now? You had better learn it to-day.

Jesus then said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more?" Do you know what He wants to do with you? Save you where you are. You had better come to Jesus now, and get the question of your sins settled once and for ever. "Neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more," is the language of Christ to-day, as then.

Grace pardons guilt, but it does not encourage sin. Grace reigns now, because grace is on the throne. Until Christ came, death was on the throne; the devil and death and sin—an awful triumvirate—ruled over man, and brought in misery and condemnation, but now that Christ has died and risen again, grace, personified in the Son of God, sits on the throne. Let the accuser say what he will, Jesus will give you peace, and will pardon, and bless you. I do not doubt that woman's heart was full of affection and love from that day forth. Don't you think you had better decide for Christ at once? If you do, you will live a happy life, and will understand what follows on this scene.

Notice what Jesus said to His hearers that day: "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light

of life." Sometimes Satan comes and accuses awakened and anxious souls. If he so come to you, I will tell you what I would do. Say to the enemy, "You had better write all my sins on the wall, and not leave out one." He will pile them up by hundreds and thousands. When the last one is complete, the accuser says, "There, whose sins are these?" Mine. "What have you got to say about them?" Nothing, but I know what God says, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses from all sin." Thank God, there is not one of them left.

Friend, you get *alone with Jesus*, and you will soon know that your sins are blotted out. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. He drives all my accusers away, and blots out all my sins by His blood. Blessed Saviour! W. T. P. W.

FRAGMENT.

WHAT a volume of love is in those words of the Lord to poor Peter, "Feed my lambs," as if He would say, "I am going to make a channel of you for love to flow through, and I am breaking you down that you may be able to feed My lambs. You thought to be a strong disciple, I am making you see your weakness, giving you a broken heart, that you may be strong." Ah, there is nothing like a broken heart for a shepherd, there will be room in it for the lambs when he has got to the end of self. The Lord must always be breaking down a shepherd to enable him to feed His lambs.

G. V. W.

"HE WEPT OVER IT."

(Notes of the last Gospel Address given in Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh. See Luke xix. 37-44, and John xii. 44-50.)

THIRTY-SIX years ago this fine Hall, which is to be demolished next week, was taken for Lord's Day Evening Gospel Services. During these years it has, through the grace of God, been the spiritual birth-place of many hundreds of souls, numbers of whom yet live, happy witnesses of redeeming love, while many have gone to glory.

There is always a special interest attached to the "last" of anything, and the last opportunity has come for you to hear the gospel in this hall. I see some faces that I have known coming here again and again. You have come unconverted and you have gone unconverted; and, alas, you are here unconverted to-night. Well, do not forget it is the last time you will ever hear the Word of God in this hall. It will be an awful thing if the very stones of which this building is composed should stand in the judgment—and, mark, they could easily do it—and witness against you, "O God, that sinner heard Thy gospel, in the hall which we helped to compose, again and again, but he would not have it."

You may say, I don't believe in stones speaking. You should ponder the following quotation from the chapter I have read.

“And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen ; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord : peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, *the stones would immediately cry out.* And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and *wept over it*, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another ; because *thou knewest not the time of thy visitation*” (Luke xix. 37-44).

If men are unaffected by Christ's personal glory, “stones will cry out,” the Lord says.

“Poor Jerusalem !” I hear you say. Yes, it was poor Jerusalem then, but to-night I say, “Poor sinner !” If Christ wept over that careless city, what shall be said about thee ? Well might we weep over thee ! And does He not now say to thee, “If thou hadst known, even *thou*” ? Dear unsaved friend, wilt thou hear His voice to-night ? How

distinctly personal is the appeal—how individual! It is not "you" and "your," but "thou" and "thy."

Blessed Lord! what a heart He had. Never was there a heart like His, never love, never tender consideration like His. It was the last time He paid a visit to preach the gospel to that city. To-night is the last time, very likely, that He may pass your way.

It is very interesting to compare the Gospels and see what the different evangelists say about a certain scene. Perhaps you have never noticed what they say about His coming into Jerusalem. One Gospel says, "When he was come nigh, all the city was moved" (Matt. xxi. 10-12). To-night our hearts say, May God move you unsaved ones, with eternity before you, and still unblessed. The city was moved, and they asked, "Who is this?" and the answer was given, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth."

What, you ask, is all this stir about, in this hall to-night? It is the last time anybody will ever hear about Jesus in this hall. A thousand times you may have heard of Him, and, alas! are not saved yet. You have heard the glad tidings of the blessed Son of God, again and again, from the lips of scores of God's servants in this hall, but I entreat you to seize this, your last opportunity to-night. You may have trifled with God's salvation, you may have put it from you, but I beseech you, do not now miss it. You have missed it over and over again, you dear young people; you have put it off, and thought the time would come by and by. God has given you another opportunity to-night. Seize it. I have seen too

many people cut off quickly to have any faith in "to-morrow"; it never comes. It is now where you are this night the Lord is offering to you a blessed Saviour; receive Him to-night.

This scene records Christ's last entry into Jerusalem, and He rode on an ass. Did you ever notice that it was a colt, the foal of an ass, "*whereon never man sat.*" What is the meaning of that? Would you expect Him to take the *second* ride on that ass? No, He must be first. Do you remember what happened after men had put Him on a cross and slain Him? Where was He buried? Scripture says, it was a new tomb "*wherein never man was laid.*" Would you expect Him to take a second place in the tomb? No, He would not take that. If the Scripture had not been careful to say "a tomb wherein never man was laid," the devil was sharp enough, and his servants wicked enough, to have said that He had been buried beside a prophet, as happened after Elisha died. A man was being carried to burial, but while passing the tomb of Elisha, a company of Moabites was seen approaching, and he was placed in the tomb of Elisha (2 Kings xiii. 21). He touched the bones of Elisha, and immediately came to life again, and, if God had not been so careful to say "a tomb wherein never man was laid," it would have been reported that this was what had happened to the Lord Jesus.

It was reported that His disciples had stolen His body, and the Jews paid "large money" to have this report circulated. But they had not stolen His body.

His Father stooped down and took Him out of the grave—the expression of His perfect delight in His blessed Son. The sinless Man who had died for sinners like you and me was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Now, if He would not take a second ride on an ass, nor a second place in a tomb, do you think He will take a second place in your heart? I know there will be a universal answer, *No, never*. Has He got any place there yet? Fancy a human heart, a heart that is sensible of love, and Christ having no place in it! He must have the first place, and, if there is anything taking that place in your heart, anything that is going to imperil your immortal soul, break from it, flee to Christ, and give Him the first place.

He comes into the city, and the children begin to praise Him. The Pharisees object to this, and the Lord's answer is, if they hold their peace the stones will cry out. I repeat, and I am serious, it would be a dreadful thing if these silent stones, that form the walls of this building, should hear you cry in the day of judgment, "O God, have mercy on a wretched sinner like me," and should have to witness against you, "Lord, *she* despised mercy," or, "Lord, *he* despised the call of grace over and over again." You say, Is it possible? Don't you give these stones the chance.

We read, "When he came near the city he wept over it." You say, Has He wept over me? I believe He has. "Strong crying and tears" we read of in the fifth of Hebrews, when, to save sinners, He

passed into death, where God forsook Him. He has not only shed tears of tender solicitude over careless sinners, but He has shed His very life-blood. You have only one heart, let Him have it to-night.

If we pass back in the Gospels, we hear His blessed voice saying, on that last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John vii. 37). But they did not want Him. Do you want Him, or has Satan blinded your eyes? His was a very loving, tender cry that day, but His love has gone far beyond this for you and me. He has absolutely given up His life. If anything will win our hearts it is the knowledge of His love. He knows all the hindrances, and He says, "If *thou* hadst known, even *thou*, in this *thy* day, the things that belong to *thy* peace." What day? This day of gospel call, gospel privilege, and gospel opportunity, this day, the very last time that He, through me, will ever speak to you from this platform.

But, you say, you will speak elsewhere. Many a man has said, "I will hear thee again of these things," and has been called into eternity without having any further opportunity of hearing. How will you pass into eternity? The Lord is speaking to you to-night, and He says, "If thou knewest the things that belong unto thy *peace*." Peace, peace. What belongs to your peace? How can you have peace without pardon? How can you have pardon without Christ? How can you be right with God unless you are right with His blessed Son? What does God

propose? You must not forget that Christ died to make peace, and He is our peace, and He brings you peace, but everything turns on your reception of Christ.

"But now," He adds; "they are hid from thine eyes." What did He mean? That what He had designed for their blessing was hid from their eyes. So also wrote the Apostle Paul, "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 that believe not" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). Jesus spoke on earth that day and said, "They are hid from thine eyes." He speaks from the glory to-night of peace, pardon, and the love of God. Are they hid from your eyes? Anything will do to blind your eyes. It may be a novel, it may be money-making. Satan has a thousand ways of blinding people's eyes. Christ lingers over you in tender love to-night. Listen to what He says, "If thou knewest." To whom is he speaking? If you are wise you will say, "He is speaking to me." See the blessed Son of God that day on the mountain side; see the scalding tears drop from His blessed eyes. There is the sinner's Friend, and what He was then He is to-night, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

And now follows the warning, "But the days shall come" (see verses 43, 44). Did all this happen to Jerusalem? Every detail was fulfilled. My dear friends, it might well assure you that every word of God comes true. Why did all that take place?

“Because thou knewest not the day of thy visitation.” They would not listen, would not heed, would not hear His voice. Did the Romans cast a trench about Jerusalem? They did. Did they compass it round? They did. And were her children kept in, and were they laid even with the ground? They were. It is perfectly well known that the Roman general gave the order that the Temple should not be touched, but a drunken soldier threw a lighted torch into the Temple, and the words here prophesied were fulfilled absolutely.

Now then, how are you going to escape from the wrath to come if you make light of God's Son and God's salvation? With all the fervency and love of my soul, I say, “Flee from the wrath to come,” and heed God's warning word.

The Lord is speaking to you to-night in a special way, and I would like you not only to heed His last warning, but receive His gospel. Let us turn to the twelfth chapter of John. You get there the Lord's *very last word of gospel* to careless men round about Him (v. 44). I should like that the very last sounds these old walls shall hear should be the impressive words of grace of the blessed Son of God. The great effort of the devil to-day is to set Christ aside. God puts Christ to the front, and you and I must also put Him to the front. Christ must be everything to you and me.

He says there: “I am come a light into the world, that he that believeth in me should not abide in darkness.” Where have you been all the days of

your life? In darkness. Why did He come into the world? Hear Him—"I am come a light." What is coming into the light? You get the knowledge of His love—that you are His and He is yours, and your sins are blotted out in His precious blood. Suppose a man does not receive Christ? Listen: "And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." You have heard His words; have you not believed yet? Look at the peril you are in, I entreat you. "I judge him not." Precious Saviour! He came to save.

But, you say, judgment overcame Jerusalem. Perfectly true. Take care lest you are surrounded on every side by your sins. Listen to His words—"I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Do you believe that? Yes, you say. Are you saved? Well, no. Then you do not believe it. If you are not saved, how can you believe the gospel? Do not deceive yourself.

But He adds: "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day." You say, I do not think I am a rejecter. What are you then? If you do not receive Him you really reject Him, and, more, you have thwarted Him of His object. What did He want to do? To save you. How can you receive Him? By believing His word. How can you reject Him? By refusing His words.

I believe, in that day, if you stand before the

throne a poor, trembling, guilty, self-condemned, God-condemned sinner, these words of Jesus which you have heard to-night from the nineteenth of Luke and the twelfth of John will rise and condemn you. I believe that then, when you feel you must be judged, and rightly so, you will remember that you were called, invited, wooed, wept over, died for, but that you would not come. You will then have no excuse to make. What did the Son of God come to bring you? Eternal life. The gift of God is eternal life. What are you going to do—receive that gift to-night? Surely you will take it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and eternal life is yours.

W. T. P. W.

“IF THOU HADST KNOWN.”

LAST words always carry special interest. We attach to them the greatest importance and cherish them in proportion to the personality of the speaker. The closing message of a father, or a mother, or a warm friend possesses a peculiar charm; and on that message memory fondly lingers. It may be, however, that a closing message is delivered when no one supposes it to be the last. A sudden accident may make it such! Hence, any word may be our last, and what need, therefore, that we should keep this in mind, and remember our responsibility in what we say. A servant of Christ must deliver his message once for the last time;

hence he should always do so in the full realisation of its immense signification.

I heard of a preacher who spoke on Romans iii. one Sunday, and then announced that he would continue his theme and preach on Romans v. on the following; but Romans iii. is replete with truth which goes to condemn the sinner, while Romans v. presents the way of salvation, and of "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He left his congregation thus for a week, so far at least as his preaching was concerned, without showing them the way of escape from the judgment of God. Then, if he had died, or if any of them had died during those seven days what would not the consequences have been? Serious enough surely! He should most certainly have pointed out how a man could be saved, as well as charging home on his conscience the solemn fact that he had sinned and come short of the glory of God.

The example of this preacher should not be followed. Let us speak of the Saviour in all His divine suitability to meet the need of the guilty as well as His separateness from sin. To-day He saves; to-morrow He will judge: but our business is with to-day.

Noah preached once for the last time. We read that he was a preacher of righteousness. He preached; he used his voice and lungs; he worked hard all the day at his hammer and saw; he kept on building his great ship; he meant business: he might be dubbed an enthusiast or a downright fanatic, but he stuck to his task. None could say that he was a humbug, or a mere professor.

The fact is that he had been "warned of God of things not seen as yet." God had placed in his hand a wonderful telescope whereby his eye could penetrate a hundred long years and see the storm clouds, and the windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep, all vomiting forth their deluge of waters, and thus submerging the face of the earth, to the destruction of its godless inhabitants.

To those he preached righteousness. He told them that sin and God could not go on indefinitely, and, that as surely as night follows day, so the judgment of a holy, sin-hating Creator would overtake them. Little they cared! The old man might croak on and prattle away; they had their eating and drinking, their buying and selling, their marriages and all the rest of it; they had to attend their marts, their farms, and their merchandise, and had no time to waste on the warnings of God's witness who was perpetually crying, "Wolf," "Wolf!" when no wolf was in sight.

Quite so, not in sight—unless seen through the telescope—then it was only too apparent. Noah, looking through that glass by the eye of faith was "moved by fear," and made an ark.

They—these antediluvians—were like the men of this generation, profoundly indifferent as to the future. The parallel between those days and our own is awfully striking!

It was mooted in Germany yesterday by ex-President Roosevelt that the end of the civilisation of to-day may be in a "cataclysm," which means "any

violent inundation"; but this idea of the famous ex-First Magistrate of the U.S.A. is derided in the public comments upon his speech. Absurd! Cannot be! The effects of civilisation must continue: and so on.

So thought they of Noah's day; but the flood came and destroyed them all, save Noah and his family. May Roosevelt not be right? Noah was. Pity, a thousand pities, the antediluvians had not hearkened to this old persevering preacher; pity, they had not taken a good long look through the telescope; pity, they had not acted as he did.

They heard his last appeal; it was the old thing over again; they had heard it for a hundred years already. A deluge, a flood, a cataclysm! Nonsense! And away they went to their pleasures! But Noah entered the ark. God shut the door—Noah inside—they out; and the "long threatened came at last."

A far greater than Noah said, while His tender heart throbbed with sorrow, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now are they hid from thine eyes" (Luke xix. 42). And Jerusalem fell.

Reader, reader, whoever you may be, the long-suffering of God cannot last for ever! It waited in the days of Noah (1 Peter iii. 20); it has waited in yours, and why? Just that you may take warning, may repent, may turn to the Lord, may be saved. That long-suffering over, then righteous punishment follows and lasts for ever! Come to Christ while you may.

“THAT LIPPENIN’ BIT IS THE WARST.”

AS soon as Dr Chalmers really came to know the gospel experimentally, sinners were awakened and saved under his ministry. After that, too, he used often to speak in private to anxious souls.

On going to see an awakened woman one day, he had to cross a plank thrown over a little stream for a bridge—a very common thing in the country—quite near to her house. He was a portly man, and as the plank seemed to him not to be very strong, he was cautiously feeling it with his staff and gradually risking himself upon it, when the woman he was going to see, having observed him coming, and having run out to meet him, called out, “Oh! Mr Chalmers, it’s strong eneugh; just lippen til’t” (just trust to it). He believed her, and stepped firmly upon it, and had her by the hand on the other side in a moment.

Soon they were sitting in her house in earnest conversation about the way of salvation. Her difficulty was—faith. The preaching she was now hearing went to show that she could not be saved but by faith in Christ. But what was that? And how was it to be got? These were her difficulties. Chalmers, ever so ready and apt with his illustrations, remembered the plank and her own exhortation to him to “lippen til’t,” and so he said, “‘Faith’ is just another word for ‘lippen’ and ‘lippen’ is just another word for ‘faith.’ You are to put faith in Christ precisely

as I put faith in the plank"; and in this way, to make a long story short, her own word "lippen" was used by the Holy Spirit to lead her to Christ.

I was telling this story in a meeting one night in a country town, and showing that, in order to be saved, one must get over the "lippenin' til't." A very respectable, decent man, belonging to the district, asked me, after the meeting, "to take a mouthful of fresh air with him" up a quiet road. I was glad to find that he was intensely anxious, and made so by that story; for before this he had been under the impression that though he could not say that he was saved, and consequently had not New Testament love, joy, and peace (Gal. v. 22), yet he thought he had all that could be had now, or that anybody else had.

Ah! dear reader, his peace, even such as it was, turned out to be false peace, as he himself discovered. What about thine? Now, think for a moment, and let conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, speak! It never seemed to enter this man's head for a moment, the first few nights of the meetings, that he required anything himself. He thought, with many other decent professors, that these meetings would help their church, that more sittings would be taken, more money would be raised, more names would be got upon the communion roll, &c., and so all that was said at first he put past himself to his neighbour, pitching it all over his shoulder, till by God's grace he discovered that with all his profession (and he was a most consistent pro-

fessor, so far as his character went) he was an unsaved soul, inasmuch as he had never known what believing in Christ meant, had never "let go," had never "lippened" to the finished work of Christ.

In perfect agony of soul in the dark that night at a late hour on the lonely country road, hanging on my arm, he exclaimed, "Man, that lippenin' bit is the warst" (that is, it is the most difficult thing to do). Cruel though it may seem to say it, I was very glad to hear him thus speak, and smiled in the dark (he was looking to the ground, and did not see me), and I looked up to heaven, thanked God, and put the saying into my memory for future service in the gospel. I knew from experience where he was, and that it would soon be all right with him.

Dear, respectable, church-going, praying, religious, but unsaved reader, my prayer for thee is that the Holy Spirit may apply the above to thy conscience, and lead thee to "lippen" to Jesus alone henceforth for salvation, and to start from the seat thou art now sitting upon and do all thy good works, which have hitherto been *dead* works, from quite different motives. I know it is far more difficult for thee to bring thyself to trust Christ *all at once* and be saved *now* than to go on living upon the whole a good life, and performing a round of religious duties, in the vain hope that thou wilt be saved at last.

But it must be done if thou wouldst be saved. Thy creed must no longer be D, O—DO, but must henceforth be D, O, N, E—DONE. Thy motives must no longer be *for* salvation, but *from* salvation, for all

thou doest. The nature of thy works must no longer be *law-works* but *life-works*. I pray God that thou mayest indeed be brought to a standstill, having got thy last sound sleep in an unsaved state; that an entire revolution may now take place in thy views regarding the *whole plan of redemption*; that thy heart may sink within thee, the very breath, as it were, taken out of thee, and thus, every false prop removed, thou may'st fall a helpless sinner without strength (Rom. v. 6) on the kindly bosom of Him who has been all this time standing with outstretched arms to receive thee, and thus thou too shalt have got over the "lippenin'" bit and be saved.

J. G.

"YOU ARE A COWARD!"

GIVING away to the impulse of the moment, a missionary took a half-drunk sailor into the back room of a mission and bade him to lay down for a rest. The proposal was met with strong objection, but after some reasoning the sailor threw himself on the bench and tried to sleep.

Half an hour after, upon opening the door, the missionary found his man sitting by the window so deep in thought that he did not notice the missionary until he spoke.

"What am I to you that you care that I should not go into the street in a drunken condition?"

asked the sailor when the missionary wanted to know if the rest had done him good.

"Well," was the reply, "you might have run into a policeman, or your money gone into the saloon keeper's pocket, and it would not have been to your benefit, whichever happened of the two."

"Yes, that may be, but it is no answer to why you take such interest in me!"

After a moment's hesitation, the missionary said:

"It is not that I would save you from the police station, nor that I care for your money, but I thought that I, through a little kindness to you, might gain some influence over you and induce you to become a Christian. Christ died for you, and it makes my heart ache to see you on your way to destruction. Would you not be a Christian?"

"For that I am not prepared now," he answered, and took his hat and went out.

Late in the evening the sailor returned to the mission much troubled and agitated.

"Sir," he said, "I have tried to make things square, to straighten out some of my mistakes, but it is of no use; the water is too deep for me; I have got too far out."

"And you have been about to make a new mistake, my friend; you have been out trying to rig yourself up," said the missionary. "If you had succeeded, you would have been like the man in the Temple who said, 'See, I am not like other men.' If you want to be a Christian you must accept God's salvation. No wonder that you find the water too deep.

Read the story of Paul's conversion. Did he go about straightening out his mistakes? No, he surrendered."

"His trouble was different from mine; his was caused by mistake, but mine by sin," insisted the sailor. "I must right the wrong I have done before I can come to God for forgiveness, but my sins are such that I can't make them good. I am a lost man."

"Have you read the story of the crucifixion?"

"Yes."

"What about the malefactor? Did he make good his sins?"

He thought a few moments, then he answered slowly:

"No, but he could not. I think he would have done so if he had had a chance."

"Then come and accept salvation, and leave it with God if you shall have a chance to make good your sins to those you have sinned against. If you were to die to-morrow, will you run the risk of living to-day without Christ just because you could not straighten out things?"

"No, no, I will not, but I can't break the tie that holds me. I can't break away."

"I see your trouble," said the missionary, "you have not the courage—you are a coward!"

The man started. "A coward, you say? No man ever called me a coward."

"Yet that is the only name I know. I am persuaded that you would like to become a Christian. You are convicted of your sins, but you dare not

break away. You are afraid to face your old friends. It is cowardly. Now, be a man. Do what you feel you ought to do, and show your manhood by taking the consequences of breaking away from a life of sin."

The missionary and the sailor went into the back room once more, and before the throne of mercy the sailor prayed, "God have mercy upon me. I will be no coward."

C. N.

MAN'S RUIN AND GOD'S REMEDY.

I FIND in God's Word that you and I, after we leave this world, must spend eternity, either in a place of *endless happiness*, or in a place of *endless woe* (Luke xvi. 19-21; Matt. xxiv. 46). Have you ever thought of this? It may be that you think you are not so bad as most people, and that there are plenty worse than yourself; and therefore you hope to be in the place of happiness some time. Have you ever thought of what God says your condition is in His sight? He says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart" (Jer. xvii. 9, 10). "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20; 1 Kings viii. 46). There is "none good, save One, that is God," says Jesus (Luke xviii. 19). "There is none righteous, no not one," says the Apostle Paul (Rom. iii. 10), and "There is none

that doeth good, no not one" (ver. 12 ; Ps. xiv. 1, 3). "All the world is become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). This is what God says about man in His Word.

But perhaps you are saying, "Surely we are not all like this?" Listen again to what God says: "As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man" (Prov. xxvii. 19). And lest you should think that you can change your condition, hear what God says about this also: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. xiii. 23).

How impossible these two things are! Those of whom we speak as good and bad people are all alike in the sight of God, whether they believe it or not. "Oh, let God be true, if every man should be a liar" (Rom. iii. 4). "He cannot lie" (Titus i. 2). If you pass out of this world into eternity in this terrible condition you will be damned for ever (Matt. xxii. 11-14).

But this is the dark side of the question—sorrowful tidings; but it is only in the measure that we know and believe what God says our lost and ruined condition is in His sight, that we value the glad tidings of which He speaks, and He who knows and tells us what we are has provided a remedy whereby He can have us in His presence, in that place of happiness of which His Word speaks (John xiv. 1-3; Rev. xxii.).

"He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have

sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light" (Job xxxiii. 27, 28). You cannot do anything. "Yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14). Oh, listen to His own gracious words, for your eternal good: "When there was no eye to pity, I had compassion on thee" (Ezek. xvi. 5). And again: "I looked, and there was none to help; therefore mine own arm brought salvation" (Isa. lxiii. 5). "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). "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 9, 10). "And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 18; 1 Thess. i. 10).

This is God's means, this is His ransom, and this Christ of God tells us Himself that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Who knows better than His Beloved Son what the heart of God is? Jesus Himself calls you, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—rest for your soul (Matt. xi. 28). And "him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 27). And again: "Verily, verily,

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

But it may be that you do feel your sinful condition before God; if so, how do you propose to get it met? Do you know that being religious will not save you? You may turn over a new leaf, and be religious, but this will not do for God. Listen to what He says: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. lxiv. 6). And again: "By the deeds of the law, no flesh shall be justified in his sight" (Rom. ii. 20). Again: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). "Not justified by the works of the law" (Gal. ii. 16). And lastly, "There is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

Now, what will be the portion of those who reject God's salvation? The Word says, "After death the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27). "He that believeth not, shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). "He that believeth not, is condemned already" (John iii. 18). Even now, you see, the unbeliever is in a condemned state. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" says the Apostle Paul (Heb. ii. 3). You are in a ruined condition before God, and unfit for His holy presence. It is impossible for you to remedy your condition, but God who well knows what your condition is, has provided a remedy, has devised means, whereby He can have you in His presence.

All that remains for you to do, is just to accept what He has provided; so that forgiveness, peace, and happiness may be yours now and in eternity. No remedy of yours will do for God; you can be saved only through the Lord Jesus Christ. But if you reject this salvation of God, "frankly" and "freely" offered to you, your portion will be outside His presence, in the lake of fire for ever.

God loves you, though He hates sin. Oh, be made happy by Him now and throughout eternity. Now Jesus says, "Come unto me," but in judgment He will say to some, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 42, xxiv. 41). Oh, reader, may you never be there; but may you be led, while you have the opportunity, to consider your latter end" (Deut. xxxii. 29). "Man goeth to his long home" (Eccles. xii. 5). Where is your long home to be?

ANON.

"IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE IN DEATH."

NOW terribly sudden! A Shropshire farmer was driving in the company of his wife when the reins dropped from his hands, his heart ceased to beat, and he was gone. A solemn illustration of that oft-repeated and well-known saying, "In the midst of life we are in death."

Scarcely two weeks before the writer had used these very words to this farmer, who, to all appearance, outwardly was in the very best of health, and who undoubtedly never imagined that they would soon be so forcibly and solemnly exemplified in his own case. Nevertheless, such was the fact.

Since recording the above incident I have received a letter from a sorrowing son, in which he says :

"I regret to inform you that my poor father passed away quite suddenly on 6th March. He was as well as possible in the morning, but died about one o'clock, of syncope, in his bath."

Only nine days previously, in the great city of London, had we discussed together business propositions, and he had spoken of what *he* proposed to do in twelve months' time !

Unsaved reader, it may be that death has marked *you* out for one of its next victims. The possibility of this should fill you with awe, for remember "in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccles. xi. 3). Possibly your exit from this world may not be so dramatically sudden as these just recorded, but, notwithstanding this, *you will die*. It may be you will draw your last breath on earth surrounded by loving and sorrowing relatives, but you will *die*. The cords that bind you to this life will be broken and every link of relationship snapped. Then the undertaker, the flowers, the funeral, the last lingering look of sorrowing friends, as they surround your open grave with aching hearts, tear-stained cheeks, and grief too great for words, and the world will see

and know you no more. In that circle where you were beloved the sorrow of your absence will remain, but the world will laugh as loudly, and move on as swiftly, and things will remain as though you had never been.

But as to yourself, how will your dismissal from this life affect *you*? Let Scripture speak, with all its living power and authority. "*But after this the judgment*" (Heb. ix. 27). Yes, once the narrow archway of time is passed and eternity entered upon, there is, for the one who dies unsaved, nothing but God's righteous and unsparing judgment. Oh! awful, dread, dark eternity of woe, without one ray of hope or spark of joy; "*tormented in this flame,*" outside the blissful presence of Jesus, the One who in unmistakable language, when here on earth, said of those who die unblessed, "*Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come*" (John vii. 34). Why? Because "*ye shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come*" (John viii. 22).

Be warned in time. "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"Haste, haste, haste,
To-morrow too late may be,
Oh! sinner, thy many stains are dark,
But Jesus hath died for thee."

"To him (Jesus) give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 42).

MODERN THOUGHT.

TURNING to a fellow-traveller on the G.W.R., I asked if he would accept a book ("The Way to Heaven"). He turned over its pages for a few minutes, noticed something about hell, and turning sharply round asked if I could tell him where hell was, adding something to the effect that "modern thought" was against the idea that there was such a place.

I asked, "Is modern thought the same as it was a hundred years ago?"

"Oh no, it is what is believed to-day."

"If the world continues another hundred years, will the thoughts of to-day be the same then?" He thought they would not be, so evidently such shifty stuff was not of much value.

Turning then to the words of the Lord Jesus, I told him that He who ever spoke the truth, and could tell us about hell, had drawn aside the veil and given us a peep into its depths, where we could see one wanting a drop of cold water, but wanting in vain.

The man who had thus gone down into the depths of hell is not described as an awful character, but one who had lived in a land of privilege and blessing—the land of Judea where they had the Word of God (Moses and the prophets), but he had NEGLECTED GOD and His way of salvation.

Sodom and Gomorrha, I remarked, had been

destroyed by fire, and buried beneath the waters of the Dead Sea, but He who ever spoke the truth had declared that they should come *forth* to judgment, and I preferred the words of the Lord Jesus Christ to the vain thoughts of man.

My companion observed that he did not think I could convert him to my views. I fully agreed with him. I could not. God only could do that.

My belief was not the result of mere reason, but God Himself had given me faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His Word, and moreover God had *offered faith* unto all, in that He had raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. See Acts xvii. 31 (marginal reading).

We were now near Bristol where we parted, and my companion promised to read the book and consider the subject of our conversation, which I doubt not he intended doing, as his whole manner had very much softened by our conversation.

Reader, are you governed by "modern thought" or God's Word?

G. G. G.

No wonder, if we look at our walk in the light of His coming, that we should judge it unworthy of Him, and I would not wish it otherwise. But I wish the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, rising up from the Father's right hand, were always before our minds. I believe it would soon make our walk consistent. I believe it would set both affections, heart, and thoughts in order.

J. N. D.

"A PICTURE NOT ON THE WALLS."

MANY years ago I noticed a stalwart, middle-aged man listening very earnestly as I was preaching the gospel one Lord's Day evening in Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh, now pulled down. To me he was a perfect stranger, though I had heard of him before from the Christian woman who sat by his side, and who had brought him to the meeting.

When the meeting commenced he was very busy studying the various historical and allegorical pictures which covered the walls of the hall, but as the tale of man's sin and God's love fell upon his ears, he became deeply interested in what he *heard*, not what he *saw*.

The meeting concluded, he rose to leave, evidently deeply impressed by what he had heard that night from my lips. What I, on the other hand, had previously heard of him had deeply interested me in his spiritual welfare. His friend, whom I knew, had, during the preceding week, told me that for fully twenty years he had been nowhere to hear the Word of God preached. His occupation compelled him to work part of the Lord's Day, and, nothing loath to miss hearing the Word of the Lord, he gladly gave that as a good ground for being as heedless of divine things on Sunday as he was the other days of the week.

His Christian friend, greatly desiring his salva-

tion, invited him again and again to come and hear me preach, but he always declined. One day, however, he said to her that, as he did not feel very well, he should not go to his work next Sunday. She saw her opportunity, and again begged him to come and hear the gospel. His reply was characteristic—a blunt refusal—as he did not care at all for that sort of thing. She pressed her suit, saying the hall was large, airy, and comfortably seated, and that there were a good many historical pictures on the walls.

“I’ll go and see the pictures, I’m very fond of paintings, but I don’t want to go to hear him preach,” was his response, and, her point gained, she appointed to meet and accompany him on Sunday evening. These facts I knew, and when my listener began to move down the aisle I rapidly left the platform, got behind him, and laid my hand upon his shoulder. When he turned round to see the owner of the hand I quietly said, “Friend, are you right with God?”

“No, I am not,” was his honest reply.

“Is it not about time that you got right with God?”

“I believe it is. If I only knew how to get right with Him I would do so.”

“Take a seat again and let us have a talk,” said I. “God is willing and anxious to bless you.”

He sat down. A few words revealed that he was a spirit-wounded, deeply anxious sinner, so I drew his attention to these words:—

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him 'from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. x. 8-12).

I then said to him, "Go down on your knees, man, and get right with God." He dropped on his knees, spent some time in quiet prayer, and rose a new man in Christ Jesus; believing, converted, pardoned, and saved. His changed life ever since has borne witness to the reality of God's work in his soul that evening.

The last night the gospel was preached in the old Hall, ere it came down, he was there, and I asked him what it was that led to his conversion and to so marked a change in his life.

"I came to see the pictures that night, but *I saw a picture not on the walls*," was his reply.

"And what was that?" said I.

"The picture I saw, as you preached God's Word, was myself, a ruined, guilty, lost, hell-deserving sinner. 'And then I saw the Lord Jesus, come into this world 'to seek and to save that which was lost!' I saw Him dying on the cross for me, my heart was broken and won for Him. It's over nine years ago

now, but I can never forget the picture I saw that night."

I wonder, my reader, if you have ever seen a similar picture. You must not forget that the Holy Ghost has described you and me to life, for "it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 10-20).

There is our full-length portrait. Do you recognise the likeness? It is the dawn of the day of salvation for your soul if you do. The way God meets the terrible condition here described you will find in the verses that follow. Read them. "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for

there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ; 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, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God : to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness : that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 21-26).

The believer in Jesus is justified by God Himself. What a Saviour and what a salvation ! "Get right with God," my reader, by believing the One and receiving the other.

W. T. P. W.

TRUTH WILL OUT : THEN WHY NOT FACE IT NOW ?

THE apostle introduces Romans iii. with "Let God be true, but every man a liar ; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (ver. 4).

We have to do with God. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight : but all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13). "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12). No unreality will do—no outward cloak of religious profession. God desires

truth in the inward parts. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom" (Ps. li. 6). He knows me through and through from the beginning—my thoughts, my motives, the very springs of my whole being are laid bare before him. He searches the hearts, he tries the reins" (Jer. xvii. 10). He knows me much better than I know myself. And therefore, though I make fresh discoveries about myself, *God makes none*; and though I may deceive myself as to my condition, I cannot deceive Him.

Well, then, has He deigned to express Himself about me? He has weighed me in the balances. Do I come up to His requirements? He gives His answer, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). "There is none righteous, no, not one" (ver. 10). He has patiently applied the test to every soul of man, and His conclusion is that they are all gone out of the way, and become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Man is charged with failure to meet the just and holy claims of God. "For there is no difference: for all have sinned" (vers. 22, 23).

Now, depend upon it, even if we do not understand God, yet He is justified in His sayings. He can render a reason for what He says, and I desire to look at one or two of His sayings, to prove that they are facts with each of us.

It is indeed a dark picture that is drawn of us. If man had invented the Bible, he would have drawn a very different picture from this. He would have

told of man's deeds of philanthropy to his fellow-men ; he would have lauded his almsgiving, and have recorded the progress he could make, so as to flatter him and make the Bible acceptable. But God does nothing of the kind. He draws a life-size portrait of the sinner, and sets it before him in Romans iii. From top to toe the whole man is depicted by the finger of God. If the King or the Prince of Wales had painted a picture, and exhibited it, how the multitudes would have stopped before it and gazed upon it as the veritable work of Royalty ! Or if a poor man had been introduced to the Emperor of Germany, and the Emperor had learned to love him so much that he had deigned to paint a picture of him and hang it in some public place, how that man would have delighted to go and gaze upon it ! My friend, God has taken a photo of you and put it in His album—the Bible. He has photographs of many of His saints there—David, Samuel, Moses, Joshua, Abraham, Isaac, and others—prophets, priests, and kings—men in humble and men in exalted positions, and we love to gaze upon them there. But here is the picture of the sinner as such, and that is *you*.

Now, what does he say of us ? “They are all under sin.” This sounds simple enough, for everybody admits that he is a sinner ; but, oh, my friend, if under sin, we are under its curse and doom. It has cast an awful gloom over this poor earth, and its shadow rests on every one—we are all under sin. Jews and Gentiles, outwardly religious and outwardly profane, without Christ, are alike UNDER

SIN. Sin has obtained a terrible mastery in the world, and, alas, men and women are its willing slaves. Oh, is there one that longs to be delivered from its bondage? Our Redeemer is mighty. He has died unto sin once, now He liveth unto God, and delivers every soul that looks to Him.

But some may say, "Wherein have we sinned?" *There is none that understandeth.* The mind is wrong. It is perverted from the thoughts of God, and does not understand the ways of God. It loves the pursuit of things that cause it to forget God. It aims at drowning the voice of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." The natural man discerneth not spiritual things, they are foolishness unto him. It is only by God's Holy Spirit that a man can understand the things of God. And it is because the wise refuse to become as little, weak, foolish children that not many of them are called.

"*There is none that seeketh after God.*" The heart is wrong. We do not like to confess we are in the wrong. Naturally speaking, we do not say with Job, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him." We would fain content ourselves with staying away from God, happy enough, in a way, if we may only banish Him from our thoughts. And yet true happiness is found only with God. If we knew what it really was, we should seek after Him. But the sadly true statement of Him who knows the heart is that "it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," and "there is none that seeketh after God." Thank God, He seeks us.

"They are all gone out of the way." Isaiah liii. says, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way," and that means we have preferred walking by ourselves to walking with God. Sin makes us dread the presence and company of God. How I used to hate the gospel meeting, or the prayer-meeting, and the conversation of the "saints." I had no love for God nor His ways, and if He had not arrested me, I should have preferred evil companions and their occupations, till my own way landed me in hell. But God sent His Son Jesus, to reach me in my wanderings, and He who has saved me, can save you.

"They are together become unprofitable." God gets no revenue from a sinner. Like the young man in the parable, instead of being a comfort and an honour to the Father, we have squandered our substance in riotous living. We have spent on ourselves that which was given us for His glory. In short, "the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, thou hast not glorified." The solemn conclusion is, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

The corrupt heart within puts the language of corruption on the lips. Blaspheming the holy name of God or uttering dark oaths; lying one to another, or, shall I say, worse than all, telling a living lie to God, by a life of sin; speaking idle words, for all of which an answer must be given in the day of judgment—these things mark the unsaved, and these only? No. The lie of a religious profession without the

knowledge of Christ, the idle words of a glib acknowledgment of sin that never touches the core of the heart, the total ignorance of the way of Divine peace, perhaps the suicidal rejection of God's Word altogether—these are terrible indicators of *your* alienation from God and of the fact that you are not yet right with Him. Sinner, face the truth, and face it now.

The defiant heart replies, "Who is the Lord, that I should serve him?" and braves the conflict with the God of Pharaoh, and the God of the great white throne. May God arouse any infidel reading this paper.

The unbelieving heart replies, "Let my thoughts of my condition be true, and let God be the liar." **BEWARE, SINNER,** lest wrath consume thee in a moment, and thou be found in hell with the unbelieving (Rev. xxi. 8). May God awaken and convict any unbeliever reading this.

The anxious heart says, "Woe is me, for I am undone." It is all too true. I am discovered to God. He knows me, and what He says of me is only the awful truth. Oh, what shall I do to be saved? Listen, dear anxious one, to the blessed word of deliverance: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 24). You seek pardon, you want justification, you need peace. Then boldly take the plunge of faith into this blessed verse. God has most graciously put it on the very edge of that awful tale of my guilt, in order that my next step might be into that

fathomless grace that obliterates from His sight every trace of my guilt.

"Being justified." Cleared from every single charge. Instead of appearing before God in my sinful condition, and under Divine judgment, I am righteously acquitted and justified now. How?

"Freely." Without claim or merit on my part, without my earning it by prayer, or tears, or repentance (though each of these are tokens that God is arousing me to a sense of my condition), without money and without price.

"By his grace." Pure sovereign grace, which abounds where sin abounded, but in such a wondrous measure as to cover all my sin—grace which is the expression of His unbounded love, that yearns to bless me.

"Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," for, in no other way could it be done righteously. Yes, Jesus must die the sinner's death, and bear the sinner's judgment, that God might be just, and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus. Jesus has done so, and now God is free to bless you. Oh, come now, as you read these blessed words, come and prove the glorious power they have, and blessing that they reveal, and then praise the thrice precious grace of which they speak.

"Come sing, my soul, and praise the Lord,
Who hath redeemed thee by His blood;
Delivered thee from chains that bound,
And brought thee to redemption ground."

“HARD CASH.”

“**W**HY did Christ die?” was the question I was asked by an intelligent young lady; “for,” said she, “if He had just lived and left us an example to follow Him, would that not have been quite enough?”

My answer was very simple: “Supposing I was in your debt a heavy sum of money, but, being unable to discharge the debt, I said to you, ‘Kindly ignore my indebtedness and let us be on friendly terms’—would that be just, or honourable, or equitable?”

“Oh, no,” she replied, “the debt should be paid first.”

“Just so,” said I, “but the life of Christ, exemplary, in the fullest sense, for the imitation of His people, did not pay the debt, nor meet the penalty of sin; for this His death and wrath-bearing were necessary.” Hence we read that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Now the idea entertained by this young lady is deplorably prevalent to-day. It is quite true that the life of Christ is the pattern for every Christian; nor can we over-rate the moral perfection of it. He came to make God known—to reveal the Father.

Creation is exceedingly magnificent, whether we study the starry heights or the butterfly’s wing, whether we hear the grand roll of the ocean-wave or the note of the nightingale: all is lovely. But

creation with all its inherent beauty has not made known the tenderness of the heart of God.

The law, issued amid a flaming environment, causing the mediator to fear exceedingly and to quake, while pronouncing judgment sure and swift on all transgression, and indicating the essential holiness of God, told nothing of His love.

Providence, as we sometimes speak of the dealings of God with men, is too mysterious to comprehend. We are oft-times perplexed as we endeavour to decipher His hand in them. We are silenced. They do not teach His heart. But this was fully told out in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You pay but little heed to the admitted beauties of creation when once your soul has been opened to an appreciation of Him. "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," said the apostles as they walked by His side and in His holy but gracious company.

Mark the words "full of grace and truth"—the two combined in perfect harmony—grace unmeasured and truth absolutely faultless—these blended in unfailing expression, that is a study worthy of the highest philosophy; and this was the life of Jesus our Lord.

That life stands alone! And what an example for His people!

How each of us needs the power of the Spirit of God to walk, never so feebly, in His sacred footsteps!

Could we do so without that Spirit?

Certainly not!

Can we do so, faultlessly, with that Spirit?

Certainly not, is the answer of every honest soul who attempts it.

Now, mark the conclusion. It is clear that the life of Christ can never save; for the simple reason that its perfection condemns all of us. The standard is, thank God, beyond us. The Christian can never resemble Christ until he sees Him as He is, in glory; and that is effected by a change into His likeness and not by attainment here below.

Something else is needed. If His life condemns us, His death lays the foundation of acquittal.

The Paschal lamb had to be slain; and the fact of its being unblemished was not sufficient. God did not say, "When I see the unblemished lamb," but "When I see the blood I will pass over you." That He did say.

The atoning virtue lay in the blood; there and there only was atonement made. The presentation of a thousand living lambs, however unblemished, were utterly useless for this. The offering of Cain was, no doubt, very beautiful; but it had this damning defect, it was bloodless. It denied the nature of sin, and of the punishment due to the sinner.

The moral beauty of the offering was necessary; but, if mere beauty would do, then Cain's offering would have been accepted.

If, therefore, the perfect life of Christ did not in itself work atonement, how can the imperfect life of any one of us avail? Nay, by the deeds of the law shall no man living be justified.

Then, is atonement necessary? Certainly. And how is it accomplished?

Well, how is the debt paid? By vows and promises? By professions of affection and pledges of fidelity? Nay, but only and alone by “hard cash”—a fact that is admitted in every market, and enforced by every law of man.

Neither is there any acquittal before the bar of God but on the ground of the death and wrath-bearing, under divine judgment, of our blessed Lord and Saviour. He was the corn of wheat who died in order to bring forth fruit. He would have “remained alone” but for His death.

And now, reader, your debt can be cancelled by nothing but the blood of the Son of God; are you willing, here and now, to trust that precious blood alone as your only title and perfect cancellation before God? This rests with yourself.

Mark, “he gave himself a ransom for all”—that ransom is available for you who are amongst the all. Hence your door of hope—your grand but only chance of escape—your one splendid and most gracious opportunity.

Oh! may you discover the worth of that ransom; may your ears be closed to the reasonings and sophistry of unbelief; may you come under a sense of your hopeless bankruptcy and the enormity of your debt to Him whose blood can cleanse, observe, from all sin, and you shall be saved, like Abel of old, and countless multitudes besides, who have repudiated their own work before, or after, conversion as

their ground of salvation, but to whom the sacrifice of Christ is their one and sufficient plea !

“ Oh ! I am my Belovèd’s,
 And my Beloved is mine ;
 He brings a poor vile sinner
 Into His house of wine ;
 I stand upon His merit,
 I know no other stand,
 Not e’en where glory dwelleth
 In Immanuel’s land.”

J. W. S.

THE BIBLE.

I HAVE a profound, unfeigned (I believe divinely given) faith in the Bible. I have, through grace, been by it converted, enlightened, quickened, saved. I have received the knowledge of God by it, to adore His perfections—of Jesus, the Saviour, joy, strength, comfort of my soul. Many have been indebted to others as the means of their being brought to God—to ministers of that gospel which the Bible contains, or to friends who delight in it. This was not my case.

That work, which is ever God’s, was wrought in me by means of the written Word. He who knows what the value of Jesus is, will know what the Bible will be to such a one. If I have, alas ! failed in thirty years’ arduous and varied life and labour, I have never found it fail me. If it has not failed for the poor and needy circumstances of time, through which we feebly pass, I am assured it never will

for eternity. "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." If it reaches down even to my low estate, it reaches up to God's height, because it is from thence: as the love that can reach even to me, and apply to every detail of my feebleness and failure, proves itself divine in doing so—none but God could do this, and hence it leads me up to Him. As Jesus came from God and went to God—so does the Book that divinely reveals Him come *from* and *elevate to* Him. If received, it has brought the soul to God, for He has revealed Himself in it. Its positive proofs are all in itself. The sun needs no light to see it by.

I avow, in the fullest, clearest, and distinctest manner, here my deep, divinely taught conviction of the inspiration of the Scriptures. While of course allowing, if need be, for defect in the translation and the like, when I read the Bible, I read it as of absolute authority for my soul as God's word. There is no higher privilege than to have communications direct from God Himself.

My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength, for nearly thirty years, have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the Word of God. In the beginning of that period I was put through the deepest exercise of soul on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible Church, and man himself crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace, since that epoch, hold to the Word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God. I am satisfied that God has given it me as such. I do not doubt that the grace of the Holy

Spirit is needed to make it profitable, and to give it real authority to our souls, because of what we are; but that does not change what it is in itself. To be true when received, it must have been true before.

And here I will add, that although it requires the grace of God and the work of the Holy Ghost to give it quickening power; yet divine truth, God's Word, has a hold on the natural conscience from which it cannot escape. The light detects the wrongdoer, though he may hate it. And so the Word of God is adapted to man, though he be hostile to it—adapted in *grace* (blessed be God!) as well as in truth. This is exactly what shows the wickedness of man's will in rejecting it. And it has power thus in the conscience, even if the will be unchanged. This may increase the dislike of it; but it is disliked because conscience feels it cannot deny the truth. Men resist it because it is true. Did it not reach their conscience, they would not need to take so much pains to get rid of and disprove it. Men do not arm themselves against straws, but against a sword whose keen edge is felt and feared.

Reader, it speaks of *grace* as well as truth. It speaks of God's grace and love, who gave His only-begotten Son that sinners like you and me might be with Him, know Him, deeply, intimately, truly know Him—and enjoy Him for ever, and enjoy Him now; that the conscience, perfectly purged, might be in joy in His presence, without a cloud, without a reproach, without fear. And to be there in such a way, in His love, is perfect joy. The Word will tell you the

truth concerning yourself; but it will tell you the truth of a God of love, while unfolding the wisdom of His counsels.

Let me add to my reader, that by far the best means of assuring himself of the truth and authority of the Word is to read the Word itself.

J. N. D.

"ENOUGH THERE FOR ME."

THE following touching story is an illustration of the power of God to the believer in the sorest trials. Reader, what would you give to lie down on your death-bed at peace with God, and be able to say of Jesus, "That will do, there's enough there for me?"

A friend of mine paid a visit to a member of his congregation lying in St George's Hospital with an arm broken. He found the man in a state of mind which made him feel that, although he went there to teach, he came away taught.

The injured arm having had to be amputated, the sufferer's brother came up from Scotland to see him, and was asked by the patient to read to him the eighth chapter of Romans. He read, "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus . . . nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord;" and as the brother read this last verse, the man said, "There, that will do, there's enüch (enough) there for me," and peacefully expired.

ANON.

THE NEED OF DELIVERANCE.

THAT a great many of God's people are not in the joy of full deliverance must be plain to those who have the spiritual care of souls. Romans viii. is not realised as the true and only Christian state.

The result is that not a few are *self*-occupied. The unerring mark of one in the power of deliverance is that he is occupied with the Deliverer. Christ has displaced self in the mind and afflictions of the truly delivered soul.

That truly converted people have been almost in despair, as the result of soul depression, through not enjoying deliverance is manifest from the confessions we have heard from not a few. This shows both the great need and importance of deliverance.

One well known to many said he was for eight years in the quagmire of Romans vii. This was largely through false teaching and false ideas about the improvement and correction of the flesh.

SELF-DISAPPOINTMENT.

Undelivered souls are self-disappointed. Self-disappointment arises from self-occupation. Expectation from self arises from not having learned and not accepting that there is 'no good in the flesh. On the contrary, we have to learn that there is nothing but badness in it—incurable evil.

"In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." It is important and helpful for those who

start the Christian life to accept, in the simplicity of faith, this plain statement. It is the statement of one who had learned it by bitter experience. It is given that others may not be deceived by the expectation of good from the flesh, nor be disappointed when they feel it rising up in lustful desire against the Spirit.

PEACE WITH GOD

is not what Scripture treats of as deliverance, though deliverance cannot be known without it. Peace is the result of a work done for us, a work done outside of us, by God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is most needful and highly important to see that God undertook to settle His own claims by giving His own Son to do so. This is what enhances the gospel. The claims of His righteous throne have been vindicated and settled to His perfect satisfaction for all who believe in Jesus. It must be so if He did it. His work is perfect.

In this great and glorious settlement the love of God was fully displayed. "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." The eternal judgment of all our offences against God has been borne, and now those who believe are delivered from the eternal consequences of them.

CHILD-LIKE FAITH.

When we, in child-like simplicity, lay hold of this

in our minds and hearts, we are cleared from the intolerable burden of sins on our conscience and enter into peace with God.

Faith is simply the eye that perceives God acting in love for us through the work of Christ to meet all that lay upon us, and all that was due to His righteous throne. "He was raised again for our justification." No one but God could raise Him out of death. The fact of His being raised by God shows how well pleased God is with Him and the work He accomplished.

HIS RESURRECTION IS THE PROOF OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.

Because He is raised again from the dead, the apostle bases his argument for our justification on that fact. "*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.*" Faith is the acceptance of the fact. *God is our Justifier, and therefore our best Friend.* "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" All doubts are for ever dispelled by learning this and resting believingly upon it.

How can we doubt, when we see that Christ was raised to justify us? How dare we doubt, when God tells us that it is so? Let the weakest and most simple say with all confidence, "I BELIEVE GOD." "And by him ALL THAT BELIEVE ARE justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

SPIRITUAL LIBERTY.

But, though we might enjoy peace with God, and thus be delivered from all dread of judgment, yet it

does not follow that we enjoy spiritual liberty. Liberty is the blessed characteristic of having the Spirit. But all who have the Spirit do not *always enjoy* this soul-emancipating liberty.

Why is this? Because of getting under the power of the flesh within, which is most soul-distressing and distracting to those who do not see the complete judgment of it in the death of Christ. "Our old man is crucified with him." "Our old man" takes in all that we were in the flesh before God. It is when souls get under the power of the flesh that real distress and self-disappointment ensue.

VOWS AND RESOLUTIONS.

Vows and good resolutions do not help here. Every vow and good resolution made by the sincerely distressed soul only proves that the true and deceitful character of the flesh has not been accepted and experimentally learned.

Those who walk in, and hence enjoy, the liberty of the Spirit of God never make vows and resolutions, however pious it may appear to do so. Vows and resolutions only prove our bondage to the flesh in a sanctimonious or legal way.

THE SPIRIT'S LAW.

"The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." This is true spiritual freedom. It is the very opposite to "When I would do good evil is present with me, and
HOW TO PERFORM THAT WHICH IS GOOD I FIND

NOT." The latter is bondage, soul-bitterness, and powerlessness; the former is true Christian liberty, joy, and power. *It is spiritual victory all along that line.*

The law of anything is its uniform controlling power. The law of the Spirit and the law of sin are in opposition. The law of the Spirit is the power of love. The law of sin is the power of lust. Death is the result of sin. Death here means a state of carnality. "*To be carnally minded is death; to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*"

Lust is the corruption of the affections from their proper object. It therefore takes the form in us of corrupt or carnal desire—desire out of harmony with the will of God. The blessed Son of God came into the world in the power of love to win man's affections back to God, and work deliverance for man by undoing the works of the devil in his heart.

As the Spirit fixes our mind and affections on Christ, who is the centre of God's affections, we realise deliverance from the *power* of lust, not the *presence*, and from the whole sphere of carnal desire, around which is a sphere of death.

DELIVERANCE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE.

When we speak of what is objective we mean the object that controls us, and by which we are influenced. When we speak of what is subjective we mean the effect produced in us by the contemplation of the object which controls us.

It is the Spirit of God that produces the subjective

power in us, but never apart from the glorious object in whom all the love of God is displayed for us.

To illustrate. When passing along a beautiful street in the city of E——, in the height of the season, I observed a young fellow walking along as uninfluenced by all that was passing in that famous street as if he had neither the power nor the taste to enjoy aught in it. With most strangers who visit E—— it is far otherwise.

I could not help watching this young man as he moved quietly along reading his weekly journal. He seemed completely absorbed, and therefore lost to all the enjoyment of either the grand people who throng the street in the season, or its unrivalled natural beauty.

Whatever absorbed his mind so completely controlled him that its influence could easily be seen by his utter unconcern to that which others thought so beautiful. That was the subjective effect of being engrossed by an object outside what was around him.

It was the love of what was to him greater than what was around him that made him appear so dead to his surroundings.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

So long as the Church was engrossed with Christ in heaven in the Spirit's power, she was filled with the love of Him, His Person, and His place. In this way she was maintained in the power of deliverance from all around her in the corrupt world, where Christ her Head and Lord had been rejected.

First, love made everything of Him, to the exclusion of all else. The lust of other things had no power over her; they had lost their power by the love of what was infinitely greater.

Have we not seen the same in individuals? When deep soul-bitterness was passed through, and Christ as the Light of life was known dispelling all the darkness of death, His glory seemed to fill and absorb them. He was first and last in their thoughts. Everything in life seemed to bend to what suited Him. He was the gauge and touchstone of all that seemed to concern them. In this way they were dead to all else; it was no effort, it was real.

The hope of being with and like Christ was their only hope. They had no hopes in this world. That side of things seemed a sealed chapter in their history, never to be opened again to all appearance. One pure motive governed them, because they had only one object. They had truly said like Paul, "The things that were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Christ was Sovereign, and thus crowned Lord of all in their hearts, every thought must be under obedience to Christ as supreme—this was "the love of their espousals," which the Lord so much appreciates and can never forget. "I remember thee, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Has this purity of affection for Christ been main-

tained? With many is it not far otherwise? What is the cause? Is it not that the love of Him has waned in their hearts, and the love of other things has taken His place? They might be things lawful but not expedient; earthly things, but not the things of Christ—the things which are above. Such a state Paul describes and deplores by two sentences: “For all seek their own, and not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.”

The word from the Lord to such is, “Repent, and do the first works.” “First works” are the fruit of love that is absorbed with Christ. When we are absorbed with Him He is supremely glorious in our eyes. We are truly able to say, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none beside Thee upon earth that I desire” (Ps. lxxiii. 25).

It is attachment of heart to Him that delivers us from all that would detach us from Him; it is as our hearts grow in attachment to Him by the Spirit that we find the truest and the fullest liberty. It is the blessed liberty of having now to please but One.

“Fairer than all the earth-born race,
Perfect in comeliness Thou art;
Replenish’d are Thy lips with grace,
And full of love Thy tender heart.
God ever blest! we bow the knee,
And own all fulness dwells in Thee.

Be Thou the object bright and fair
To win and satisfy the heart;
Our hope to meet Thee in the air,
And never more from Thee to part:
That we may undistracted be
To follow, serve, and wait for Thee.”

"OCCUPY TILL I COME."

SOON He cometh to receive us
To that home He has prepared,
There to be for ever with Him,
What with this can be compared?
All His glory with us shared.

Would He have us *idly* waiting?
Has He given nought to do?
With the precious moments passing
Precious souls are passing too,
Passing on to bliss or woe.

We would hear the Master saying,
"Till I come just occupy";
Serving, waiting, watching, praying,
Willing hand and wakeful eye,
While His coming draweth nigh.

Once the ready slaves of idols,
Turned to serve the God above;
Waiting for His Son from heaven,
While we wait, oh, may we prove
Willing bond-slaves in His love.

Now is ours the time for service,
Resting time will come at last,
Now the sowing, then the reaping,
Now we feel the chilling blast,
Then the summer, winter past.

THE STRANGE STORY OF A STANZA.

MANY years ago, Dr Valpy, a well-known English scholar, wrote a little verse of four lines as the longing of his heart and the confession of his faith. This was the simple stanza:—

“In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.”

Some time afterwards he gave this verse to his friend, Dr Marsh, a well-known Church of England clergyman and the father of Miss Marsh, the author of the “Life of Captain Hedley Vicars,” and the verse became a great blessing to him. Dr Marsh gave the lines to his friend, Lord Roden, who was so impressed with them that he got Dr Marsh to write them out, and then fastened the paper over the mantelpiece in his study; and there, yellow with age, they hung for many years, a memorial of the beloved hand that traced them.

Some time after this an old friend—General Taylor, one of the heroes of Waterloo—came to visit him at Tollymore Park. Lord Roden noticed that the eyes of the old veteran were always fixed for a few moments on the motto over the mantelpiece. “Why, General,” said Lord Roden, “you will soon know the verse by heart.” “I know it now by heart,” replied the General, with great emphasis of feeling,

and the simple words were the means of bringing him to know the way of salvation. Some two years afterwards the physician, who had been with the old General while he lay a-dying, wrote to Lord Roden to say that his friend had departed in peace, and that the last words which fell from the old General's lips were the words which he had learned to love in his lifetime :—

“In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see ;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.”

Years afterwards, at the house of a neighbour, Lord Roden happened to tell the story of the old General and these lines, and among those who heard it was a young officer in the British Army who had recently returned from the Crimea. He listened carelessly enough, and no impression seemed to be made at the time. A few months later, however, Lord Roden received a message from the officer that he wanted to see him, as he was in a rapid decline. As the Earl entered the sick-room the dying officer extended both his hands to welcome him, repeating the lines :—

“In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see ;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.”

And then he added, “These simple words have been God's message of peace and comfort to my heart in this illness, and they have been brought to my

memory by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, after days of darkness and distress."

As I was telling this story in Old St Paul's, Halifax, I noticed that an old gentleman, who was sitting in a pew not far from the pulpit just in front of me, a representative of one of the oldest families in Nova Scotia, was being overcome with an extraordinary emotion. His whole frame seemed to quiver with some unwonted excitement, and his eyes looked bright with a strange light. I thought for a moment that it was a transient attack of some physical affection. But as I went on telling the story there was no doubt that it had in some way seized upon the very soul of the listener and touched his feelings with some strange and indescribable suggestion. And when at last I came to the part about the Crimean officer I thought that the old gentleman would have almost cried out in the church, so deeply was he affected. The story ended the sermon. After the singing of the hymn I went into the vestry. I had scarcely got there when a knock was heard at the door, and the old gentleman, with emotion still evident, came and said, "Where did you get that story?" I told him I had read it in the work of a modern author whose works are widely read. He said, "I do not know whether you saw that I was very much touched by it, but it almost overcame me." And then, with tears streaming from his eyes, he told me this story:—Years ago, when he was a young man, careless and indifferent in matters of religion, he sauntered one day in his walk into an

old churchyard near Wolfville, Nova Scotia, in the land of Evangeline, and, seeing a fallen gravestone, he overturned it in pure curiosity. And there he read at the foot, engraved in the stone, a verse of four lines that took such hold upon him, and so clearly explained to him the way of salvation, that they were the means of his conversion. And from that day, nearly fifty years before, he had, by God's grace as a result of those four lines, led a consecrated life for Christ. The lines were :—

“In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see ;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.”

“You can imagine,” said he, “my amazement, as well as my delight when I heard you tell the story about the lines. You brought back to me the wonderful way in which God was pleased to save my soul.”

It was not long after that I was sent for to visit this old gentleman in a sickness, which gradually grew more serious. One of the last things he did before he died was to take my hand affectionately and ask me, as his clergyman, to do him a favour ; and that was, that at his funeral and over his coffin I would tell the story of the lines, in the hope that the prayer of a dying man might be answered, and that they might be a blessing to many souls more. Soon afterwards he died ; and at his funeral, which was attended by some of the most distinguished citizens of Halifax, a large and representative body

of prominent men, I told over his coffin, amidst the most profound and interested silence, the story of the stanza that had transformed so many lives. I ended by saying that it was the wish of the dear old man on his dying bed that the words, which would be distributed as his last memorial to all present, might become a blessing to their souls. And as each one passed from the house of mourning he received a beautiful card, elegantly printed in purple, with the name and age and burial-date of that old saint of God, and on the other side the never-to-be-forgotten words :—

“In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see ;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me.”

The secret of the wonderful power that resides in these lines cannot be told. It may be that they were written in prayer and watered by tears of love. I only know that when I told this story in a vacation service in one of the charming hotels in the White Mountains, New Hampshire, last summer, an American gentleman, a prominent New Yorker, was so deeply impressed that he said, after hearing the words, “I have rarely heard anything that made such an impression upon me. Never in my life before have I so clearly grasped the way of salvation through faith in the Crucified.” May they become the confession of faith of all who hear and all who read !

(*Extracted.*)

DO I LOVE THE BIBLE?

WHILE reading the hymns of one of the finest of the Christian poets of last century I was greatly struck by the following verses :—

“Some tell me that the Bible
Is not God's sacred Word,
And brand as cunning fables
The records of the Lord ;
That Moses is a fiction,
That prophets never spake,
And e'en the blessed Gospels
As myths I must forsake.”

Written, in all probability, three-quarters of a century ago, we cannot but be struck by the fact that the infidel attacks on the Bible—on Moses, the Prophets, and the Gospels—of the present day, are clearly nothing new. They must have been then as virulent, if perhaps not quite so intellectual, as they are to-day. Hence we may see that the Bible has always been an object of attack. Why should this be? Let us read on :—

“There was a time I listened
To those old serpent lies,
My foolish heart sore tempted
The Bible to despise ;
Its holiness rebuked me,
Its precepts crossed my will,
I wished to silence conscience,
And thus my lusts fulfil.”

Does this not give us a very true explanation of man's hatred of the Bible? This writer said that

"its precepts crossed my will"; and, in so saying, he states that which every conscience, enlightened by the truth, admits as thoroughly correct. Our "*will*" is the battle-ground; but he continues:—

"I cared not for the Saviour,
This present world I loved,
Its lust, and wealth, and glory,
Alone my passions moved;
I cared not for a Heaven,
I hoped there were no Hell,
I wished for no Hereafter,
I loved my sins too well."

Here was the realm of his "*will*"; here his desires ran riot. A Saviour, a Heaven, had no kind of attraction for him. The present was enough! Military glory (for he was an officer) and the pleasures of a mere animal life—these sufficed. As to the future—ah! he only "hoped there were no Hell," and doubtless closed his eyes and thoughts to the possibility.

But suppose there should be a Hell, and a Judgment Bar, and God to face?

God—the sadly unknown God—He who loves the poor guilty sinner, spite of all his sins, and who, in deep and measureless mercy, seeks his salvation! This is God! At last he cries:—

"His mercy still pursued me,
While wandering far away,
His hand with sickness smote me,
To wound, but not to slay;
His Spirit then convinced me,
And brought my guilt to light,
I saw my lost condition—
How awful was the sight!

The Serpent's crafty teachings,
 The heart's deceitful lies,
 The sceptic's subtle reasonings
 All vanished from my eyes.
 Naked, and lost, and guilty,
 Beneath God's searching eye,
 Eternity before me,
 Oh ! whither could I fly ?"

Quite so—"naked, lost, and guilty"—a fact true of each individual from king to pauper, in the entire family of man ! When this is known in the conscience, by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, and when such an one, thus convicted, places himself beneath the eye of God, then whither can he fly ! Yes, whither ?

"If you would flee from God flee to Him !" The God of holiness is the God of salvation, and the penitent, who flings himself on this God, is met with a kiss, a robe, a ring, and sandals, together with a feast of perfect satisfaction.

But it is the sense of guilt that is the death-blow to sceptical reasonings about the Bible, reasonings which are but the miserable lies of the heart of man, and the doctrines of the serpent. God and scepticism cannot co-exist.

Well, then, whither did he fly ? He fled to God.

"Oh, then what beauteous sunshine
 Burst on my raptured sight,
 It chased away the darkness,
 And all was life and light.
 I saw how grace and glory
 In God's Free Gospel shone,
 Before the Cross my terrors
 And unbelief were gone."

Just so! The cross of Christ is the solution of the stupendous mystery. There the awful guilt of man, in his inborn hatred of God, reached its appalling height. "Sitting down," after having done all that the most malicious ingenuity and the most inconceivable cruelty could invent, "they watched him there." Ponder that statement (Matt. xxvii. 36). That was man! He could sit down to look and stare on the agony of the blessed "man of sorrows." Then, again, on that cross He was "made sin," bearing the judgment of God against it; for He suffered not only as a Martyr, but as a willing Victim also—He, sinless, and therefore capable of bearing, atoning, the sins of others,—He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Who can fully appreciate the meaning of that cry? None but God.

Marvellous cross! Fit meeting-place of all these antagonisms:—guilt, grace; hatred, love; sin, holiness; iniquity, righteousness; man, God!

"God so loved the world!"

Therefore a true vision of the cross chases all unbelief away. It is the perfect cure of infidelity, and it dissolves every doubt.

There I learn myself in all my fathomless filth and vileness; there I see God in all His illimitable love and grace. There I apprehend atonement, and know that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin." Glorious solution! "Beauteous sunshine" indeed.

What of the once despised Bible now?

“ I love the blessed Bible,
 I know it all is true,
 It is a faithful mirror,
 In which myself I view ;
 It shows me all my weakness,
 My folly, and my shame,
 But makes thereby more precious
 My Saviour’s grace and name.”

More need not be said ! The story of such conversions, in poetry or in prose, is ever welcome—conversions which spring from the written Word of God—a book once scouted, hated, rejected ; but now cherished, loved, and owned. Such is a true conversion to God.

Reader, are you among the Bible-haters (ponder the question), or among the Bible-lovers ? The test is most important.

J. W. S.

OLD STAMFORD’S DEBT.

A WORD TO THE ANXIOUS.

“ **I**T stands in my book against you, and you may tell me as often as you like you *feel* sure you are not in my debt, but I have ‘black and white’ to prove it, and you have no receipt to show it is paid.”

The speaker was a baker ; he was addressing an old man, named Stamford, who kept a small shop in the East End of London.

Stamford had been in the habit of taking bread

each week from this baker to retail to his customers, and, one week, there was no receipt in the book to show that the bread was paid for, and the baker angrily demanded the money.

Poor old Stamford felt certain he had paid the amount, could not be convinced he was in debt, and was both unable and unwilling to pay again; so the matter was carried to the County Court, and, as no proof could be shown that he had paid the money, judgment was given against him. He was ordered to pay the sum demanded, also the costs, amounting in all to about six pounds.

The poor old man could scarcely manage to exist on the small profits his shop produced, and his daughter, who kept his house, was almost constantly an invalid, so this fresh trouble pressed upon his spirits like a black thundercloud, and crushed him down to the earth. He was so ill from anxiety and worry that he was unable to crawl downstairs, as usual, to his little parlour at the back of the shop. Where to look he did not know. He knew no friend who could pay the debt for him, and none who loved him sufficiently well to do so. One thought haunted him night and day; one vision was ever before him, waking and sleeping—**THAT DEBT.** He pictured the day when the bailiff would take possession, and he would be a homeless wanderer in a cold, dreary world.

Thus passed gloomy November, with its dark days and thick, smoky fogs. There the old man lay on his bed purposing, planning, contriving some way out of

his difficulty. His weary brain and aching heart always came back to the same conclusion, *hopelessly in debt and nothing wherewith to pay*, no friend who would, or could, meet his need.

Reader, have you seen yourself a sinner, hopelessly involved, with "nothing to pay"?

Have you heard God, in His Word, declare you are "lost," a "debtor," "without strength"?

Have you discovered that your state and character are recorded in black and white in the imperishable records of the Word of God? and are you anxiously saying, "Where can I get this load of guilt removed? Who can show me any good? Where can I find one who loves me well enough to pay the mighty debt of accumulated sins of omission and commission?"

Our old friend could not believe he was responsible to pay until judgment was recorded, and a verdict given against him.

Have you discovered that judgment has been recorded against you, and the verdict pronounced, "The soul that sinneth it shall die"? Have you gazed upon these words which tell of something after death—*the Judgment*. Have you learned that judgment means eternal separation from God, and light, and life, and joy, and peace, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone? Are you unable to rest night and day, because of the dark, doleful, dreaded future? If so, listen as I tell you how God, in His goodness, undertook for old Stamford.

Just as the old man was in the deepest distress, and the day that he feared was drawing near, the

writer of this paper called to see him, and heard the story of his suffering, his debt, and his inability to pay. He left the little shop, and went to some friends whom he knew, and told the woeful story. One of them immediately said, "I shall be delighted to pay the debt. I have never seen the old man, but what you tell me of his need is enough. Here is the money; go and pay the debt, but do not tell him who paid it."

It was then suggested that the money should be paid directly into Court, without telling the old man anything about it, so that the first bearer of the good news would be the postman who brought the letter containing the Court's discharge.

Early the following morning the money was paid, the Court satisfied, and old Stamford declared free. What was now needed that he should be delivered from all his perplexities, and freed from his anxieties? You will say, "The knowledge of the fact that his debt is paid."

Hours rolled away, and his misery continued, *for though he was a free man he did not know it.*

Even so, years have rolled away since the work of Christ was finished, and the "debt our sins augmented" paid in "blood"; since the Friend of sinners, pitying us in our deep, deep need, met all the claims of justice. Long, long before we knew anything about it, "he was delivered for our offences," "was raised again for our justification." The work which saves us eternally from all the consequences of our sins is a work done by another, altogether outside of ourselves.

Just as Stamford's debt was paid by one who was both able and willing to do it, and did do it, before the old man knew anything about it, so Christ's work was completed before we knew anything about it.

Could the old man have worked, or "done" anything to pay his debt, he would not have needed a friend.

So with you, anxious soul, it is your need, your helplessness, your utter inability to help yourself, which renders you a fit subject for the grace of God, and the work of Christ. What will make you happy, set your soul at liberty, and speak peace to your conscience? Faith in the fact, stated in three words, "IT IS FINISHED," the debt is paid.

Let us follow the postman as he gives a rat-tat at the door, and hands in a blue envelope with an official-looking seal.

The daughter takes it with trembling hand, whilst the old man upstairs says to himself, "Ah! it has come at last, here is the letter to tell us the execution is to be put into effect." For some time she feared to face the truth, and did not open the letter, but at last with sorrowful heart she breaks the seal, and reads of a *complete discharge*.

Surely now she will be filled with joy, and hasten to her sorrowing father with the good news that the "debt is paid."

Not so. As she reads she says, "There is some mistake here, this cannot be meant for us—it cannot be true!" She hurried upstairs, calling out, "Father,

just look at this letter. It says the debt is paid, but that cannot be true."

With beating heart, and shaking hand, the letter is eagerly scanned, and as he lays it down upon the bed, he says, "Yes, there is some mistake somewhere, this cannot be for us; we don't know a person in the world who would pay the debt!"

And so they were more perplexed than ever. The same Court that declared he was *in debt* had now declared *his discharge* from the debt; the same authority that *condemned* had now *justified* him; the power that had pronounced him *guilty* had now declared that he was *free*. Did this bring happiness? No. Why? *Because he did not believe it.* Unbelief said, "It is too good to be true."

Anxious soul, Jesus, who was nailed to the cross, delivered for your offences, is now raised again for your justification. He who was crucified between two thieves, made "a curse," "made sin," is now in the best place in heaven, exalted to the highest seat, because of the perfect and complete way He has "paid the debt," and glorified God about the question of sin. That Word, which announces that the unbeliever is "condemned already," also declares there is no condemnation for the believer. Through this man (Christ Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe *are justified* from all things (Acts xiii. 38). It tells you in plain, unmistakable terms that Christ Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all," "died for sinners," "suffered for sins once, the just for the unjust, that he might

bring us to God." Do *you* believe it? Do you accredit what God's Word says?

If you look at yourself, you may well say, "It is too good to be true," but it is *not too-good for God*, it is just like Him, for He "*so loved the world* that he gave his ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The father and daughter did not believe what was written, and so remained perplexed, troubled, anxious. In order to solve their doubts, they sent for a neighbour, and asked him to read the letter, and tell them what he thought about it.

"Why," said he, "it's plain enough, there it is in black and white; the Court has discharged you, and you may be sure *somebody* has paid the debt for you."

"Then you really think it is true?"

"True! why, there it is as plain as can be, *the Court says so*, and that ought to be quite enough for anybody."

The load went, the anxiety departed, and the effect was so powerful, when he really believed what the letter stated, that he got up from his bed, the news doing what the doctor's medicine had failed to do, enabling him to go downstairs for the first time in several weeks. Joy and thanksgiving filled his soul, and his one desire now was to know *the one who had paid the debt*.

Is the reader burdened with guilt, and seeking relief therefrom? Learn a lesson from old Stamford.

His debt was paid unsought, unasked by him. Jesus died in love to your soul, unsought, unasked.

Stamford's debt was righteously paid, so that no further claim could be made. Every claim of righteousness was fully discharged by Christ at Calvary's cross.

Our old friend's debt was paid before he knew it. Your debt was paid before you knew it.

He had the witness in the written discharge of the Court.

You have the witness of the Holy Ghost, who attests the fact in the imperishable Word of God, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

Stamford believed in a work done for him by another: joy, rest, and peace followed.

This will be your portion if you truly believe on God who delivered Jesus for our offences, and raised Him again for our justification. Rest in this fact, peace will be yours now, and glory presently.

H. N.

"WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?"

(Read John v. 1-29.)

YOU will very often find in the New Testament that, based upon some gracious and blessed incident, in which the goodness of the Lord to some poor wretched sinner comes out, there follows an unfolding of doctrine of a most

precious nature. The fifth of John is no exception to this simple statement, in fact, it is an illustration of it.

Here was a company, in Jerusalem, of very distressed people. True, it was the feast of the Jews. Man goes on with his religion no matter what the state of men's souls—whether their real need has been met or not. Men do not know God apart from revelation, and many do not know Him even although that revelation exists. Why? Because by the power of Satan their eyes are blinded.

Jesus comes into the midst of the people at this feast, deeply interested in all round about Him. Look at this great multitude of impotent folk—blind, halt, withered. They were waiting for the moving of the water—waiting for a miracle. You have difficulty about miracles, have you? I am very sorry for you. I never had any difficulty about miracles since the day I found out that the Lord Jesus had actually died for a sinner like me. If you do not know what redemption is, I can quite understand your difficulty. If you knew what it was to be saved—to be the possessor of eternal life—and the man who does not know that is not a Christian—you would have no difficulty about miracles.

There was a great crowd of people here who desired healing. An opportunity came when one man might get it. Undoubtedly it was a miraculous intervention of God that the man who stepped into the water first, after the troubling by the angel, "was made whole of whatsoever disease he had."

But that healing was only for one, and here was a huge crowd.

“And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years” (ver. 5). Scores of doctors doubtless had tried their hands on him and had failed. There he lay, and he knew that there was one way, and only one, by which he could be cured, if—— Yes, there was an “if.” If he could get some one to help him. The Lord comes close to this poor man. I believe, my reader, He is coming close to you to-day.

What a history of disappointment was this poor man's. For thirty-eight years he had said, “I hope my turn may come, I hope I shall get in next time the water is troubled,” but, while he was hoping, some one else stepped in, and his opportunity was gone. Now, you know very well you are not content; there is that wretched, evil heart of yours, with its evil thoughts, which is not to be trusted. Scripture says the man who trusts his own heart is a fool (Prov. xxviii. 20). Your heart and mine are exactly alike. I know what yours is like because it is absolutely like mine. “As face answers to face in water, so doth the heart of man to man.” My heart answers exactly to the description God gives of it in Jeremiah xvii.—“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (ver. 9). It is incurable and incorrigible, and long ago I gave up all hope of curing it.

The Lord knew this man had been there a long time. He does not make any inquiry as to his

condition; He knew all about it. Do you think Christ does not know all about you, your life, your history, your heart, your ways? He does. Yes, God knows what you are; you cannot hide it. He knew all my life, all my history, and loved me in spite of it. His Son has died for me.

The Lord comes alongside this man, and He says to him what I think He is saying to you to-day, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Is it not a lovely question? Your whole case met and cured, and permanently cured too. After He had healed the man, when He met him the second time, He said to him, "Thou art made whole." There was to be no relapse. He had taken him clean out of the condition in which He found him. The gospel takes a man right out of the condition it finds him in, and gives him the knowledge of God's nature and God's heart. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Who do you mean? *You*. Are you not burdened with your sin, discontented, ill at ease? You dread the thought of death, it is horrible. Why? Because you know that you have to face the state of your soul, as a sinner before God, when you die. If you are wise, you will face it before you die. You will to-day let Christ meet you in your need. He met this man's need, and He can meet your need now, for He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

This man was honest. Look at his confession. "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." That meant he was friendless.

“But while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” I daresay you have been making efforts to get right with God, but you have not succeeded. The moment for the troubling of the water was to come when an offer is made by this gracious, blessed Stranger by his side to make him whole. His answer was this—I have often longed for help, and I have been disappointed all my days. The Lord knows exactly what your heart longs for, and He wants to save you. Wouldn't you like to be right with God? Wouldn't you like to be ready for the Lord's coming? Wouldn't you like to be ready if death were to overtake you? Surely. Listen, then, to Jesus' voice to-day.

What is the Lord's next word? “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” He did not expect that. No, and you did not expect, when you took up this paper, that you might be converted before you put it down. But so it is. Many a person has gone into a gospel meeting careless and come out converted. The man might easily have said, “It is impossible,” but he did not. Nor does he say, “Here I have been for eight and thirty years on my bed, how can I now carry it?” What did he do? He did what he was told. When the grace of God gets hold of your heart and saves and blesses you, something like this transformation scene takes place. He heard the command, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. *And immediately* the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked.” What a change! Oh, you say, is that what conversion is? That is exactly

what a divine conversion is. You say, I think I am converted. Is your life changed? It is very easy to sit on a bench here and say, I am converted, I am a Christian. I should like to follow you home. When conversion is real there is just where it comes out.

The Jews then say to him, "It is the Sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." There are plenty of Jews going nowadays. Mark well his answer, "He that *made me whole*, the same said unto me, 'Take up thy bed, and walk.' I am doing just what I was told." Then they ask, "What man is this, which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?" He is not very intelligent at first, and, when people get converted to the Lord, at first they are not always very intelligent, but they are pretty bold sometimes, and they have the courage of their convictions as this man had. He only said a stranger met him and told him to rise and take up his bed and walk. No matter how much you say it is unlawful, He bade me do it, and I am going to obey Him.

As that man went home to his house, carrying his bed, I should not wonder if the whole population turned out to see this wonderful sight, a witness to the blessed grace of Christ. Don't you think people take notice of God's grace to men? Of course they do. There should be a very great change when a person gets converted. Has that change taken place in your history? If it is a real genuine conversion, it will be known where you live and where

you work. “Carry thy bed,” *i.e.*, give proof in your life of the change that has taken place in your soul Godward. Later the man boldly told the Jews that “it was Jesus, which had made him whole” (ver. 15).

This miracle produced a great deal of talk, and we find the Jews were bitterly set against the Lord, and wanted to slay Him (ver. 17). Man’s opposition never stops God’s grace. How could God cease working in a world where sin and death were on every hand, and where Satan would defame the character of God? God goes on with His work, and Christ goes on. This only angered the Jews the more, and now they sought to kill Him, because He had broken the Sabbath. Here they were absolutely angry because Christ in His grace had met this poor man on the Sabbath day! God won’t be limited. Has He ever worked in you yet? If not, you ought to stop and ask the question, Why not in me? What does He work? Repentance, self-judgment. He works to bring you to see who you are, what you are, where you are, and what the end of the road is.

Now notice the doctrine that follows the narrative. Why was the Son of God here? To make the Father known. To make the Father’s love, the blessed goodness of the Being of God, known. That is what the gospel does. It makes God known to you, and there is real happiness in the knowledge of the Lord. How blessed to know God!

Then Jesus goes on to say, “The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself

doeth; and he will shew him greater works than these." What had He done? Healed this poor man. But what were the greater works? The blessed Son of God would go into death to reveal God, and the Father would take Him out of the grave. What a miracle is the love of God, the death of Christ, that the eternal Son of God became a man and went into death, the death of the cross, to deliver and bless you! Ponder how He stepped into this scene to make God's heart known in goodness and love, and stooped even to death.

How came He among the dead? Was the seed of death in Him? Never. Anne Steele has told us in the most lovely language why He died:—

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

He died for sinners, for you, for me. The Father raised Him from the dead because God had been glorified about sin by that death. What do I see in the death of Christ? The revelation of the love of Christ; yes, the revelation of the love of God, but, more, the righteousness of God. The wages of sin is death. He *must* die if you and I are to live.

You may escape His voice of grace to-day, but the day is coming when you will not escape it.

Heed these words: “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (ver. 22). Who is going to be the Judge by and by? The Lord Jesus. But before He becomes

a Judge, what has He become? A Saviour. Before He has to deal with you about your sins, He has stepped in and, virtually in His death, has said to God, Deal with Me about that man's sins that I may deal with him in grace and blessing. Thus all soul-blessing depends on the knowledge of Christ as Son—"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (ver. 23).

People no doubt talk of the "universal fatherhood of God" and the "universal brotherhood," and I know how young men and young women are embracing these ideas, and they think they do not need to be converted. They think they can go to the Father on their own account. The cardinal truth of Christianity, however, is the acknowledgment of the Father and the Son. The Son has come to make the Father known, and all blessing for you and me depends on the knowledge, and the acknowledgment too, of Jesus as the Son of God.

Hear now His words of priceless worth: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life" (ver. 24). Everlasting life is the present portion of every believer. How much better that than everlasting judgment. You say I do not believe in everlasting judgment. I do, but I shall never taste it. Why? Because I have got now that eternal life which the Son of God has

brought and given to me. What could be more simple or more blessed? The one who *hears* and *believes* has everlasting life. Isaiah lv. says, "Hear and your soul shall live." How does divine life become communicated to a man's soul? He hears, and hearing, he believes, and hath (a present possession) everlasting life, shall not come into judgment but is passed from death into life.

Have you passed from death into life? You could not say that? Well, listen to the next verse. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (ver. 25). That hour of quickening the dead began when He was here, and it runs on still. Have you heard His voice? Everything turns upon that. Many voices are calling men to-day, but the great thing is to hear the voice of the Son of God. If you hear His voice and turn to Him, blessing is the result.

Look at the importance of hearing the voice of the Son of God. See the unspeakable importance of hearing and receiving God's gospel, while you have the opportunity. It is a real thing when the voice of the Son of God is heard. You may say, I do not understand it. The person who has heard it does, even a child, and is blessed for time and eternity. It is not "they that pray," "they that weep," or "they that work," no, but "they that *hear*."

Then He adds other solemn words: "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the

Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the 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 damnation” (vers. 26-29). A living Man in glory speaks to-day to sinners, such as you and me, and says, “Wilt thou be made whole?” If your heart says, Yes, Lord, to use the figure, you will carry your bed henceforth, you will have life and liberty. God has given the Son authority to execute judgment. Why? “Because He is the Son of man.” He was God and became a man, and man took occasion by this to crucify Him, to put Him to the most shameful death that a man could die. God has now put all authority into His hands, and what is going to happen? You may thank God that the second hour of John v. has not yet arrived. The hour in which we are to-day is the first hour? in which He gives life to the dead—healing, blessing, and pardon to all who *hear* His voice. But there is another hour coming, in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice.

Forget not that you who live in this hour of gospel grace may miss His voice; you are too pre-occupied, you won't listen to Him, and you won't come to Him. He says in the end of this chapter, “Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (vers.

39, 40). Have you never listened to His voice yet? You will yet have to listen when too late to be blessed. You have missed life, you must taste the second death. That will be eternal judgment. All will obey His voice yet, "And shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life." That is the first resurrection. Who are they? Those who have believed the gospel. "And they that have done evil to the resurrection of judgment." That is the second resurrection. Remember you are going to arise from your grave when He summons you. You may say you won't listen now, and you may to-day refuse the blessing of eternal life, but one of these days He will speak and you will listen. You will obey then. Why not now, when He says, "*Wilt thou be made whole?*"

W. T. P. W.

FRAGMENT.

As Christians deriving your life from Christ, and having your place with Christ, you are not of the world. The life, the place you have in Christ, all flows from the fact that He has given you a relationship with the Father, in virtue of which you are no more of the world than He Himself was. There is the manifesting of Christ to the world; but these duties and affections flow from a relationship that is established already. It is not as the way of getting into the relationship; but when Christ has become my life, then I must walk as He walked. J. N. D.

A PARABLE AND ITS SETTING.

(Read Luke xiv., xv., xvi.)

LET me turn your attention to the beautiful parable of Luke xv.—which contains such an unspeakable measure of precious truth for hungry and anxious souls—and to its setting. I believe these three chapters (fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen) have been put together for a special purpose. In the fourteenth we have the feast and the invitation; in the fifteenth we have the guest, the man who went in to the feast; and in the sixteenth we see what became of the man who did not go in to the feast.

In the fourteenth we have earth; in the fifteenth, heaven; and in the sixteenth, hell. Now, to-day you are on earth; by to-morrow you may have passed into eternity. Where will you spend that eternity? In heaven or in hell? The man who leaves earth and passes into what the sixteenth chapter unfolds—hell, passes by the open door of heaven, because the fifteenth chapter comes between the fourteenth and the sixteenth.

I often hear people say, “I don’t like that scene in the sixteenth chapter.” I daresay you don’t, and I would encourage you in your dislike. Don’t like it, and don’t go there. I am not going; I was on my way there, but God stopped me. Has He stopped you? If not, you may say or think what you like about yourself, but, if you have not been arrested by God, washed in the blood of His Son, born of His

Spirit, and been received by the Father, the simple truth about you is that you are still just a hell-bound sinner. Probably you say, "I don't like that." Well, I am thankful to hear you say so, because surely you will now wake up, listen to the voice of Christ, and likewise heed the voice of the doomed man in the sixteenth chapter.

In the fourteenth chapter we have *earth with its hindrances*. God's feast was spread, and His invitations issued. "A certain man made a great supper and bade many." Alas! everyone was pre-occupied. One had bought an estate, and wanted to survey it. Why had he not surveyed it before he bought it? Another had bought five yoke of oxen, but had not proved them. An arrant fool that man was, but not a greater than many a reader of these pages. A third said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Woman! fancy your husband making you his reason for not going to heaven! Were he right he would go to God's feast, and take you with him, but to say, "I attend to the relationships of life, and I have no time to spend thinking of eternal things," is folly indeed. The land, the oxen, and the wife sufficed for an excuse to decline God's call. So it was then and is now. But excuse-making is poor work. It really means refusing heaven and walking blindfold into hell.

In the fifteenth chapter we have *heaven and its happiness*; a Shepherd out after a *lost sheep*; a woman seeking a bit of *lost silver*; and a father welcoming a *lost son*. Who is the Shepherd? The blessed

Lord Jesus Christ, and man is the *lost* sheep. The Holy Ghost's activity is seen in the energy of the woman who seeks the bit of silver. She lights a candle and seeks *diligently*, as she sweeps the house. No doubt there would be a great deal of dust flying about. I believe the broom is now sweeping the place where you are. You are the lost sinner, who is being sought. Don't miss the blessing of God once more, but, where you are, wake up to discover what God wants, viz., your blessing, your salvation.

He wants to fill your heart with joy and peace. His own heart will be filled with deep joy if you get saved to-day. It would be a wonderful thing if you were to cause joy in the heavenly courts by to-day getting converted on earth. Have you ever been converted? No? Then you have never given any joy to heaven yet. You may say, I am religious, dutiful, and respectable. That avails nothing. Was not the elder brother, in the parable, all this? He was able to say he had never transgressed, but, with all his goodness, he never got inside to share the feast, although the father went out and entreated him. "He was angry and would not go in." How very different these two brothers were. One was so *hungry* he could not stop out, and the other was so *angry* he would not go in. Which are you?

I have no doubt the devil did his best to keep that poor hungry man out, and he has done his best to keep you out, and so far he has succeeded. In chapter xiv. all those who were bidden made excuses. Heaven with its happiness had no charm for

them; and *hell with its horrors* had no fear for them. These latter chapter xvi. brings solemnly before us.

In the sixteenth chapter we hear the voice of the poor wretched man who did not go into the feast. Where did he go? The man who does not go into the feast with God has to go into the flame with the enemy of God. Look at it. I do not want to minimise the gravity of Luke xvi. Read it over again. You say, It is a picture. What of? A fearful fact. Do you think the Son of God, who agonised on Calvary's tree, that by His sufferings He might save sinners from an undone eternity, was a mere picture-painter?

Is Christ a mere word-painter, as he describes the history of that poor fellow—rich though he were in this world—who went in one minute from the lap of luxury to the lake of fire? "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." When you are dead, men will bury you, and then? "Then," you say; "well, I don't know." You should know; you know now that you are not fit for God; God knows it; Satan knows it. The rich man knew it, when too late. What does this man in the sixteenth of Luke say? He sends this striking message to you and me,—"*Don't you come where I am.*" In the fourteenth chapter the word was, "*Come*; for all things are now ready"; in the fifteenth chapter we are told, "*He arose and came to his father.*" Sensible man! In the sixteenth chapter what do we hear? "*Don't come!*" "*Testify to them lest they come to this place of torment!*"

The words of the Lord Jesus here plainly and solemnly affirm that hell is a place of torment, and I know that the man who has reached it would fain have no companion. I can well understand, therefore, the Apostle Paul saying, "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." If you only saw your real state before God, as a guilty, godless, lost sinner, it would be a wonderful moment in your history, for you would come to Jesus and get saved on the spot, where you now are.

But, men often ask—Was this place of torment prepared for man? No, it is a libel on God to say so; it was "prepared for the devil and his angels," (see Matt. xxv. 41), but men are so insensate that they land there for eternity, since they prefer the company of the devil for the present—along with their sin, lust, and unbelief—to the company of the Lord Jesus Christ, reached through faith in His love.

When the Spirit of God begins to work in you, you won't need anyone to prove your state to you; your conscience will tell you, and your empty, unsatisfied heart will make you sure, that if there be a lost man on earth, you are that man. Lost men on earth can be saved; lost men in hell cannot. Why not? "There is a great gulf *fixed*" then. That is to say, your eternal destiny is going to be settled while you are a living man on earth. To-day the Holy Ghost calls you, saying, "*Come*; for all things are now ready," and on the other hand a warning note comes up from hell—it may not be very loud, but it should be loud enough to reach your ear and

mine. It says, "*Don't come.*" I have made up my mind to heed these voices. Will not you also? Oh, come and taste the grace of God just now.

Chapters xiv. and xvi. give us the setting of this parable of the love of God, or heaven's joy in man's salvation. In the fifteenth chapter we see the guest, the kind of man who did come to the feast. While the Lord was speaking so plainly in the fourteenth chapter some of His hearers were not very pleased. The scribes and Pharisees drew off, and the publicans and sinners drew near. "*Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him*" (xv. 1). They were people who knew that they were not right with God. Are you? If not, get right just now. Let me entreat you, draw near to Jesus. The Pharisees complained, "*This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them*" (ver. 2). What glorious tidings. "*He receiveth sinners,*" and if there be a poor wretched sinner reading these lines, man, woman, or child, conscious of their sin and guilt, understand—He is prepared to receive you this moment. Give Him the opportunity.

The Lord's reply to the Pharisees' charge against Him is most blessed. He does not deny—nay, He admits it and justifies God's grace as He unfolds, in this beautiful parable, not only that God receives sinners, but that He—the Son of God will *seek* the lost, and that the Holy Spirit—under the figure of the woman sweeping the house—will *seek* too, while His Father will *receive* and welcome the returning one. The Holy Ghost touches the conscience and

reaches the heart; for there is such a thing as being "born of the Spirit"; while there is also such a thing as the Spirit striving, and, by-and-by, when there is resistance, He may stop. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" is a solemn statement (Gen. vi. 3). He offers now to bless you, to save you, to give you His salvation. The point is, are you prepared to simply come to Jesus, to trust Him, to believe Him?

This is one parable, not three, as has often been said. It is a tripartite parable. You have the part the Shepherd plays, the part the woman plays, and the part the Father plays. What does that mean? It means that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are each and all deeply anxious for the blessing of lost man, and you find here the joy that fills the heart of God when a sinner gets saved. The Shepherd puts the sheep on his shoulder rejoicing; the woman, when she finds her piece of silver, says, "Rejoice with me"; and, when the prodigal comes back, the father says, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad."

Some one may say, I should be very, very happy if God saved me. I believe you would, but God would be a great deal happier. That might well touch anybody's heart. Have you not understood that the Son of God, in the Shepherd character, has given His life for the sheep. Am I wrong in saying that every man is *lost*? The sheep was lost, the silver was lost, the son was lost. The word is used in each part of the parable. Look at God's character;

God is love. We do not half believe the deep and wonderful love of God to us. Think of His love that lingers over you, that seeks your blessing, your salvation, your pardon, your emancipation from the grip of the devil, your deliverance from sin, and then satisfies your heart with the happy knowledge of that love.

Peace, pardon, and welcome the believing sinner tastes, while heaven is filled with joy. It is not the angels that rejoice. It says, "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (xv. 7), and again, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God" (ver. 10). Who rejoices? It is God Himself. The devil would gloat over your damnation: God rejoices over your salvation. Which shall it be?

First of all here we read that the Shepherd goes out to find the sheep. On the cross Jesus took up the question of our sins. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). Then we get the Spirit's work; He sweeps. Extraordinary ways the Spirit of God has got of meeting men. Sometimes He works without any means at all, or He will use all kinds of instruments to reach man. Then we get the tale of the father's ways and his dealings with the prodigal. Let him be an illustration to you how to come to the Lord. First of all he took up what he had in this life to enjoy it. Soon he found life was very full of misery; "he began to be in want." When you have plenty of money, you are a splendid fellow; you are the very life of your party, and they could not do without

you. But when your purse is empty, your clothes shabby, and your need manifest, the world forgets you, your old quondam friends are stricken with blindness, they cannot see you on the street, they do not know you. "No man gave to him."

Then he joined himself to a citizen in the far country. Who is that? He knows you very well, if you don't know him. It is Satan, the god of this world. "And he sent him into the fields to feed swine"—the very dirtiest work there can be for man to touch. That is the figure Christ uses of the moral degradation into which men may sink through sin. But at that point, when he has reached the very bottom, he comes to himself. Then he came to his father and found out how he was loved. You, too, may have got the length of finding out your misery; what are you going to do now? I will tell you what you should do. Come to God now, as you are. No matter what you have been, you will be welcomed. On what ground? The ground that His Son has died for your sins, and given Himself that He might redeem you and bring you to God.

The prodigal said, "I will arise and go to my father." Splendid determination! There are five interesting points about this prodigal. There was conviction, conversion, confession, repentance, and there was going to be a bit of presumption, but it died on the road. He, as it were, says, "There is goodness with God, and there is badness with me." Servants have "bread enough and to spare, and *I perish with hunger*"—that is conviction. "Bread enough"

means the goodness of God that leads you to repentance. He made up his mind he would return to his father; he did so and said, "Father, I have sinned"—that is honest confession. "And am no more worthy to be called thy son." There we have repentance, that is judgment of himself.

Before he got to his father he said he would say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants"—that was presumption. Oh, you say, I thought that was humility. How could you be so blind? If I have sinned against God, and I come back to Him and have to own my sin, what right have I to say what He shall do with me? When he got into his father's arms, how could he say, "Make me a servant," when his father was covering him with kisses? How long did it take him to come? It may have taken a good while, but he came and confessed all. What will you say? "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight." That is quite right; make a clean breast of it. There is no use covering things up. Let Him hear what you think of yourself; He will not love you the less.

"He arose and came to his father." What he said on the road was not what he said when he got to his father. "When he was yet a great way off his father saw him." Think of it, God sees you to-day. He knows the misery in your heart, and the trouble in your conscience. I think I see the poor prodigal coming slowly along lifting his eyes towards the old homestead, and then he sees some one running towards him. Who can this be? My

father against whom I have sinned, and the next moment he is in his father's arms. I shall never forget the moment when He said to me, "Forgiven, My son, all forgiven and all forgotten."

The lessons of these chapters are very simple.

Chapter xiv. is—ALL PROVIDED AND ALL INVITED.

Chapter xv. is—ALL FORGIVEN AND ALL FORGOTTEN.

Chapter xvi. is—ALL RETAINED AND ALL REMEMBERED.

Where will you spend eternity? In the gladness of heaven or the gloom of hell?

W. T. P. W.

"I KNOW WHERE I'VE MISSED IT."

THE prayer meeting was drawing to a close when a gentle knocking came to the door. A very unusual occurrence, but the call was promptly answered, and it was found that a young woman was requesting that some one would call at H—— Street and pray with Mr B——, who was dying and very anxious about his soul's future destiny.

After the close of the meeting three brothers adjourned to the address, which happened to be close at hand, and found there an old man in great distress of soul. He wanted us to pray by his

bedside, but none felt free to do so, fearing no doubt that he would pin his faith and rest with a false peace upon the prayers, instead of upon the finished work of Christ.

After a little conversation, during which we gathered that he was a retired sea-going engineer, he was asked what his hopes were for eternity.

"I know where I've missed it," he cried in great distress of soul. "I know where I've missed it. I know where I've missed it. I feel like an old hulk cast on a rock."

It was pointed out to him that the door of mercy still stood wide open ; that the Saviour's cry was still "Come"; that he had nothing to do to merit the favour of God, but own himself a lost, guilty sinner, and "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark ii. 17). "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14, 15).

Such scriptures as these, and many others, were pressed upon him, with the fact pointedly put before

him that all he had to, and could do, was to accept Christ as the One who had borne the judgment due to him as a guilty sinner, and whose precious blood could atone for all his sins.

To all this, however, he could only cry in greater distress of soul: "I know where I've missed it. I know where I've missed it. I'm an old hulk cast upon a rock."

After a few moments' silence, and looking to the Lord for a word which would speak peace to his troubled soul, the saying of Jesus was quoted: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

This was repeated slowly and calmly three or four times, then turning to the storm-tossed one he was asked: "Seeing that you know where you've missed it, do you think that *if* you came to Jesus now that He would cast you out?"

A calm came over him, and he answered, "No."

"Then *if* you came to Jesus *now*, do you think He would refuse to take you in?" "No," was again the answer.

"Then what is your trouble. Have you not asked Him to take you in?"

"Oh! yes; but I know where I've missed it."

"Now come, dear friend, let us understand each other plainly; you say you have asked Him to take you in, you also say that *if* you ask Him He will not refuse you, and yet you say you have missed it; surely these statements cannot agree. You have come to Him, He cannot cast you out, or He would

be denying Himself. Believe what He says, don't trust anything that you can do. '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). God plainly says of every believer in Christ, 'Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more' (Heb. x. 17). For 'the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John i. 7)."

We left him feeling that God would finish the work He had begun.

The writer called the next afternoon when passing, and the glow of joy upon the old man's face at once told what a mighty change had taken place. "No longer an old hulk cast upon a rock, but a living stone resting on the Rock of Ages." He lived a few weeks, and happy were the moments, as opportunity offered, which were spent by one or another talking and reading to him of the Saviour he was so soon to be with.

But, my dear reader, the object in writing this is that you too may be brought to know this great salvation, this peace and joy which is to be had by simply *believing* in Christ and trusting His finished work on Calvary's cross, where God was glorified about the whole question of sin; for through that finished work God has a righteous basis upon which He can be just and the Justifier of all who believe.

Unsaved sinner, you may not be like our friend, tempest tossed and feeling that you are nothing but a wreck, with eternal judgment ready to engulf you.

Oh! that God would arouse you to a sense of your great need. You may be enjoying good health, and have great prospects before you, but how uncertain is life here; and were you to be called hence, think for a moment, you would have to meet God in your sins, to be banished from His presence, to spend eternity in blackness of darkness, amidst the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, where their worm dieth not (Mark xi. 44).

You have been going on heedless of the many warnings, and careless of the eternal consequences, but "beware, lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18).

Troubled soul, let me ask you to cast your burden upon Jesus. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

W. A. B.

LOST!

WHAT a sad ring there is about that word LOST! What interest it awakens even in those who hither have had no interest in that which is lost. If it be an animal or an article, the interest varies according to the value the owner sets upon it. But if it be a *child*, and especially a *little* child, how intense that interest becomes; and how deep and genuine the sympathy

for the sorrowing parents until the little one is found. If found *alive* how great the joy, and how hearty the congratulations to the parents. But if found *dead* how intense the grief; and how heart-felt the sympathy extended to the bereaved parents.

Such was the grief and sympathy which filled the inhabitants of the little village of Ashendon, in the county of Buckingham, last year—a grief and sympathy which will surely find an echo in the heart of everyone who hears the sad story.

A father and mother went out into the fields for harvest work, taking with them their family of seven little ones. When the mid-day meal was over the father made a ring of some sheaves, inside which he placed the baby and little “Tommy” (aged three) in charge of their eldest sister.

Somehow little “Tommy” managed to get out of the ring, and wandered away. As soon as he was missed search was made for him, but he could not be found. Policemen and kind friends joined in the search which was kept up till after dark with the aid of lanterns; but still little “Tommy” could not be found.

Next day the search was continued. Policemen were drafted in from other districts and neighbours poured in from other villages to join in the search, which continued day after day, but still little “Tommy” was not found.

At last, just one month after he was lost, his little body was accidentally found in a bean field, only about a quarter of a mile away from the place where

he had been placed in the "ring" of sheaves, in apparent safety.

It makes one's heart ache to think of the sufferings of that little darling, as no doubt he wandered about from day to day, crying, hungry, and thirsty. But his sufferings are all over now. His little soul is with Jesus, which is far better (Phil. i. 23); and we may well leave the child with Him who makes no mistakes, and of whom we shall yet be able to say in the *fullest* sense, "He hath done *all* things well" (Mark vii. 37). We dare not question His *wisdom*, though we cannot understand His *ways*. It may be that He had a twofold purpose in taking this little one home to Himself. First, to save him from a life of sin and sorrow; and, second, to bring blessing to the souls of his father and mother, and those who loved him, by leading them to think of their own souls. Perhaps wider still—to bring blessing to *your* soul through reading this account of Tommy's sad death.

Into the sorrow of the parents we cannot enter. None but those who have passed through similar circumstances can imagine what their feelings must have been, as day after day they searched for their little darling and found him not. But we are assured that they have the heartfelt sympathy of all our readers; and we pray that God may be pleased to use it in everlasting blessing to their precious souls. He can bring *good* out of *evil*.

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;

He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour ;
The *bud* may have a *bitter* taste,
But *sweet* will be the *flower*."

"What a *sad* story!" I can imagine my reader saying.

Yes, indeed, a very sad story; but only a faint picture of the still sadder story of how man became LOST.

In little "Tommy's" case he was hardly to blame, being of such tender years. He little knew when he gained his *liberty* that he was really LOST, and that unless somebody found him he would be lost *for ever*, as far as his body was concerned. But in man's case he is wholly and solely to blame. Just as Tommy's father placed him in that "ring" of sheaves, where he should be safe and happy, so God placed man in safety and happiness in the Garden of Eden. But man was not satisfied with the circumstances in which God placed him, he wanted his *liberty*, so he "struck out for himself," and got it; but the moment he got it he found he was LOST, and, worse still, that he was the slave of Satan who had so deceitfully captured him from God.

Solemn thought! Man is LOST. Who lost him? God. The God who loved him and cared for him.

Did God *feel* the loss?

Feel the loss! From the moment man was lost God began to *seek* him, and for four thousand years

did all He could to recover him from Satan ; but man preferred to remain in his lost condition rather than turn to God and live.

Did God then give him up altogether ?

No ! God valued him too much ; and He was determined to prove to the whole universe (including Satan) that He *loved* man.

How do you know that God valued man so much ?

By the fact that He parted with the dearest object of His heart in order to save him. Listen !

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his *only* begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be *saved*” (John iii. 16, 17).

Had His Majesty the King sent his *eldest* son, the Prince of Wales, to join in the search for little “Tommy” it would have been rightly considered *kindness* indeed. But think of God—the one against whom we had rebelled, sending His *only* begotten Son, not only to *seek* us, but to *save* us by dying on the cross. Surely this is *love* indeed : “the *great* love wherewith he loved us” (Eph. ii. 4). “God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ *died* for us” (Rom. v. 8).

It may have been that some of the searchers came very near to little Tommy before he died, but being too exhausted he could not make them hear, and so they passed by.

God has come very near *you* in this little paper.

Beware lest He hear not your voice, not because of your *weakness*, for the weakest cry will He hear, but because of your *will*. If there is only the faintest desire in your *heart* He will meet it *at once*. It does not need a *long* prayer, or a *strong* cry to reach His ear. The shortest prayer that we read in the Bible was that uttered by Peter as he was sinking. He had not the time to say much, but he said what he felt. He said. "Lord, save me." How long did he wait before the answer came? Not a moment! For "*immediately* Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him" (Matt. xiv. 30, 31). Peter was saved *at once*. And you too can be saved this moment, for the Word of God tells us that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord *shall be saved*" (Rom. x. 13).

"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iii. 15).

"But if you still His call refuse,
And all His wondrous love abuse ;
Soon will He sadly from you turn,
Your bitter prayer for pardon spurn.
Too late ! too late ! will be *your* cry,
Jesus of Nazareth *has passed by.*"

T. C. M.

"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" (Isa. liii. 6).

BLINDED.

IF you only felt the blessedness of knowing that you are "all right" for eternity, that there is no danger and no possibility of your being damned, you would, I am certain, seek to get right at once.

It is an awful thing to live on, day by day, having before you nothing but "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which," as we read, "shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. x. 27).

There it is, and it hangs like a great black cloud before the conscience. You may try to shut your eye, to drown the thought and banish the foreboding, but there it is all the same. Death, judgment, and eternity stare you in the face; they must be met. The assurance of this should be overwhelming.

As surely as God lives you must die, you must be judged, you must live for ever! The thought is appalling.

Mark :—

"There is no condemnation,
There is no hell for me;
The flame with all its torment
My eye shall never see."

So, at least, sang old Paul Gerhardt near three hundred years ago, and there is a fine ring of certainty in his words. He was a saint of the first water, and hence his confidence. But, then, what is a saint? He is simply a saved sinner, one who by grace has

“got right” by the only means of so doing. He is saved through faith in the blessed Lord Jesus, and washed from his sins in His precious blood. This it is that puts the soul right with God and right for death, judgment, and eternity.

Mark, again, the road that was right three hundred years ago for Paul Gerhardt was right nineteen hundred years ago for Paul the apostle. It was the same road, and the road that was right for them and for all others is likewise right for you to-day. And all who thus get right with God are unspeakably blessed. The sense of this blessing is beyond all description. To know that some passing danger or accident has been averted (*e.g.*, an escape from drowning or from a burning house) creates feelings of deepest delight. But only think, to be rescued from eternal woe and to be placed on the Rock of everlasting security! That is a deliverance the glory of which must baffle human language.

God “hath delivered us from the wrath to come,” said Paul to the Thessalonian believers; and whatever that wrath may be, the deliverance from it was absolutely sure, certain, and pronounced.

Happy people! So are all such.

To trifle with these tremendous verities, as is the fashion of the day, is the madness of unbelief. Who would temporise in a house on fire? No one. Nay, all would be frantic in their efforts to reach a place of safety.

True, but they would be forced to this by their flaming surroundings. They would see their peril;

it would be visible. Quite so, and just because the danger of the sinner is unperceived he is careless.

Mark once more. "The god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them that believe not" (2 Cor. iv. 4). That accounts for the whole thing. Blinded minds.

Oh, you may discredit this statement, but please ponder it well. May it not be just the very thing that has kept yourself in the dark all these years? Satan has blinded your mind to these things, and much more than these.

You may be clever enough in things pertaining to time. You may have passed successfully many a stiff examination in human learning. But what of the wisdom of God and that which qualifies for life eternal?

Careless as to an eternal destiny would appear an utter impossibility were it not an exceedingly common case.

"Are you on the road to heaven?" I asked a highly intelligent young lady the other day.

"Oh, I think so," was her easy reply.

"Think!" Only "think" when awful certainties are in question!

"Are you on the road to London?" you ask a fellow-passenger in your carriage, which is labelled "Edinburgh to London," in a train going in that direction.

Did he reply in the same words and say dreamily, "Oh, I think so," you would imagine that something was mentally wrong with him. No one in his senses

would talk like that. Nay, he would be wide awake to all the requirements of a four hundred-mile railway run; but "I think so" will do for heaven, and "I think not" will do for hell. Each is treated with criminal incertitude.

The poor *soul*, whose future is eternal, is placed on the shelf with a passing thought, while the body which is mortal, and whose end may be to-day, is safeguarded on every hand.

The mind is blinded. No other reason can be assigned for the positive insanity of the day. The present commands all attention; the future, because unseen, is madly neglected. But the danger signal cries aloud. God calls for repentance. The storm will burst.

"Time's sun is fast setting,
Its twilight is nigh,
Its evening is falling
In cloud o'er the sky;
Its shadows are stretching
In ominous gloom;
Its midnight approaches,
The midnight of doom.

Then haste, sinner, haste! there is mercy for thee,
And wrath is preparing. Flee, lingerer, flee!"

J. W. S.

"BECAUSE there is wrath, BEWARE lest he take thee away with his stroke: then A GREAT RANSOM CANNOT DELIVER THEE" (Job xxxvi. 18).

**HE THAT BELIEVETH SHALL BE
SAVED.**

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

MARK xvi. 16.

To every one of Adam's race
There comes a message, fraught with grace ;
Though ruined, lost, by sin enslaved,
"He that believeth shall be saved."

O'er every head this judgment lies,
"The soul that sinneth surely dies" ;
But oh, glad message, God be praised,
"He that believeth shall be saved."

The judgment fell on Jesu's head,
And He was numbered with the dead ;
His precious blood the price has paid,
"He that believeth shall be saved."

In glory now exalted high,
Think, 'twas for thee He came to die ;
His cross thy peace with God has made,
"He that believeth shall be saved."

Then come to Jesus, quickly come,
He has a full salvation won ;
Oh, haste, ere mercy's stream is stayed,
"He that believeth shall be saved."

Proclaim this message all around,
Make it from sea to sea resound ;
Oh, let no creature be dismayed,
"He that believeth shall be saved."

"THERE IS HOPE FOR ME."

IF Tom C—— is converted there is hope for me," was the jesting remark of a young profligate in a Somersetshire town some time ago!

Tom C—— was an ex-soldier who, with a godless set, spent most of his time in the taproom, their ribald songs and coarse jests well suiting his tastes.

It was after a drinking carouse that, with his comrades, he stood outside a public-house, drunk, with a bottle of beer in his pocket, which he intended to take home and consume there. At home sat a broken-hearted Christian wife, who longed for the conversion of her profligate husband.

Are such prayers in vain? Has not God said, "Call upon ME in the day of trouble"?

And again, "Before they call I will answer."

Her cry was heard! how wonderful are His ways!

Their drunken mutterings were interrupted by a young and ardent Christian who at that time happened to be passing.

"Will you come to a mission service?" he asked our friend Tom C——.

"What is that?" asked the poor drunkard.

"Come and see," was the reply, to which he acceded, doubtless thinking to have a fine joke that night.

But the hand of God was over all, and as Tom C—— sat in his drunken condition, under the search-

light of God's Word, his whole moral being was exposed, and, ere that meeting closed, sobered by the Word, he was faced by his guilty past, his conscience at last reached in the presence of God.

At the close of the meeting a young man spoke to him, and scarce knowing what to do, T. C. said, "Will you pray for me?" and pray he did, but as yet no light broke in upon the darkness.

This state of things went on for some days, and trying to drown the thoughts of God and eternity, he sought again his boon companions, but found no satisfaction. A band of praying young men visited his cottage, but at first without result. They still, however, felt God would lead our friend Tom C—— to know Him, whom to know is eternal life, and again visited him, beseeching God that night to hear and answer their prayer. While they knelt the answer came, darkness gave place to light, misery to gladness, the storm to calm and peace, peace with God filled his soul.

He told me a few days ago, that next morning when he walked down the road, the world seemed different, he felt he had lost a load, and taking from his pocket his pipe and tobacco (to which he was a slave), he consigned all to the river, and through God's grace has never touched them since.

Yes! the God who saved our friend, and has made him a bright and happy Christian, can save you. He is *rich* in mercy and glories in His grace. The same SAVIOUR that Tom C—— rejoices in to-day may be your Saviour. Will you not *to-day* turn

away from this deceitful world, with all its illusive hopes, and seek that which will give you eternal gladness?

"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).

J. W. H. N.

FRAGMENT.

LIFE down here is to most people a life of vexation, of trial; the heart wears out under it, or else there is a sort of stoicism, and, as troubles come, like the sparks that fly upward, people say, "We have got to endure it, and we must." But how different this experience from that of the Christian who can say, "Show me any sharp flint scorched by the sun, and I can turn it over and find moisture underneath." How different when all things are seen to be of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by giving us His Son. A person gets the heaven-side of things who finds God in everything. It is a blessed thing that as there is not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a flower that blossoms, without the Father, so, as sorrows turn up, and thorns and briers come in our path, to know that the Father is in it all; to be able to say in everything, "There is my Father," and so, pass on quietly without care, knowing that every detail of life is watched by a Father's eye.

G. V. W.

"IRREVOCABLY DOOMED."

SUCH was the headline of a paragraph in one of the daily papers recently, announcing the fact that the air-passages in the Wellington Pit at Whitehaven had been closed up by order of the Government Mine Inspector.

The sad story is familiar to all. An explosion occurred in the pit one night while 136 men and boys were at work at its extreme end, about three miles from the pit's mouth, deep down under the sea. Upon examination it was found that the explosion took place near where the miners were at work, and that their exit was blocked, rendering it impossible for them to escape, especially as fire had broken out, and, unless speedily rescued, they would soon be suffocated.

Every effort was made by their noble comrades to rescue them. At great risk to their own lives they descended the pit, only to be beaten back by the raging fire and poisonous gases. At last the Government Mine Inspector deemed it wise to close the mine up as the only chance of extinguishing the fire. Some considered this action premature, and appealed to the Home Secretary to give permission for the pit to be reopened, as many had even then volunteered to go down and make another effort to rescue the entombed miners. While admiring their courage, the Home Secretary declined giving permission; no doubt guided by those whose judgment he was bound to

respect in the matter. Soon after the air-passages were closed up, which meant that, if alive, those 136 men and boys would soon be suffocated. They were thus, as the daily papers expressed it, "IRREVOCABLY DOOMED."

With the sorrowing relatives all have the deepest sympathy; and we can thank God for the ready and full response to the Mayor of Whitehaven's appeal for the widows and orphans. But no financial assistance can relieve the *heart*-distress of those bereaved ones. God alone can do that. May He do so in His own tender way, is our earnest prayer and hope.

But our thoughts turn to those 136 men and boys. What about *them*? What were their thoughts and feelings as they heard that awful explosion? We can imagine the silence that reigned for a moment—a terrible contrast to that loud explosion. Every voice hushed, every tool dropped. Then a rush made for escape—only to find to their horror that their way is blocked, and, worse than all, a fire raging close to them.

Was there any hope of escape? Yes, they knew that their brave comrades above would do all in their power to reach and rescue them. So they hope on, hour after hour, day after day (if alive), until, at last, it becomes clear that it is impossible for their would-be rescuers to reach them. Their position is absolutely hopeless. Death—certain death—stares them in the face. What are their thoughts and feelings *now*?

Were there any *atheists* there? If so, now is the

time for them to show what comfort their "no God," "no hereafter" doctrines can give in the presence of death. But we know that they can give none. We have heard of *dismal* atheistic death-bed scenes; but we have never heard of a *joyful* one yet; and we venture to say that we never shall. Atheism may furnish plenty of courage when it is not necessary—when its disciples are in good health, and death at a respectable distance; but when disease and death draw nigh that courage, which is now so necessary, vanishes; and misery, if not abject terror, takes its place. Atheism fails most when it is most needed.

Were there any there who, though not *atheists*, yet were not *Christians*? Those who had heard the gospel, and were "almost persuaded," but had deferred it to "a more convenient season." What were *their* thoughts and feelings now? How they wished they had decided at that last gospel meeting, or when last spoken to about their souls. Would Jesus accept them *now*? It looked mean, very mean, to turn to Him at "the eleventh hour," when death stared them in the face; but *would* He have them *now*? Yes, blessed be His name; did not the preacher remind them that the thief on the cross was saved *just before he died*; though he, like his fellow-criminal, had reviled Jesus but a few moments before (Matt. xxvii. 41-44).

Oh what grace! What marvellous grace! Let us hope that they availed themselves of it, and turned to Jesus, even at their dying moments. If so, we know that He accepted them; for He says, "Him

that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out" (John vi. 37).

Were there any *Christians* there? Surely. There are many true Christians among those hard-working miners; whose *lives*, aye, and whose *death* too, bear testimony to the saving power of the blood of Jesus.

We are told that when the Hampstead mine was reopened, after the disaster there, five Christians were found dead kneeling together in one place, *hand in hand*. How blessed! How precious! It may be asked, Did they all belong to the same *denomination*? No, but they all belonged to CHRIST. "They were all brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8). They were "all *one* in CHRIST JESUS" (Gal. iii. 28). They were a real testimony to the "unity of the body" in death. Would God that all Christians were a testimony to it in *life*.

Well, what were those Christians' thoughts and feelings as they faced death?

Did they think of their loved ones, and of the intense anxiety they would pass through, and of the inexpressible sorrow that would overwhelm them when it became absolutely certain that rescue was impossible? Did they think of the future of their poor widows and orphans, and how they would have to battle through life without the support and love of husband and father? Surely they did. Christianity does not weaken the natural affections, but rather strengthens them. But they could turn to God—the God whom *they* had known—

"Well known in Jesus' love,"

and commend them to HIM; for had He not said—

"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them; and let thy widows trust in ME"? (Jer. xlix. 2).

They knew that God—the God of *all* comfort, would comfort them in *all* their tribulation (2 Cor. i. 3, 4), for though many would rise up to comfort and take care of them, yet none can comfort and care for "his own" like Himself.

But above all they knew that they would meet their loved ones again; and that their loved ones would not sorrow as others who had "no hope," but would look forward to that moment when—

"The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and *the dead in Christ* shall rise first, then *we which are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Well may the Spirit of God add—

"Wherefore COMFORT one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 13-18).

What a comfort this must have been to those miners who died in Christ! To know that not only would God take care of and comfort their bereaved ones, but that they would all soon meet together in the air, and so be together "for ever with the Lord!"

What a comfort too to those poor widows and orphans—not only to have the assurance from God Himself that He will comfort and care for them, but

that they will soon meet their departed ones, and all be together "for ever with the Lord."

What a contrast to the poor atheist! "No God" to whom to commend his loved ones; "no hope" of meeting them again; "no hereafter" of "for ever with the Lord."

My friend, if you are an atheist, may God in His great mercy deliver you from its darkness and misery into the light and joy of Christianity, by giving you to know JESUS as your own Saviour!

No doubt you thank God from the bottom of your heart that you were not one of those 136 miners; or that you are not a miner at all, and so do not run the risk that they do. But you *risk* death every day; and you *must* die some day unless you are saved. Then what about "after death"? Oh, you say, surely there is a chance for a man after death. No—a thousand times no. Scripture does not hold out one ray of hope for those who die unsaved. On the contrary, it distinctly states that "it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the JUDGMENT" (Heb. ix. 27). And if God enter into judgment with *any man* there is no hope for him; for in God's sight "shall *no man* living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2). Let us, in all love to your soul, put it plainly to you—If you die in your sins you will be

"IRREVOCABLY DOOMED."

When the Home Secretary refused permission for the Wellington mine to be reopened, there *was* a higher power to which an appeal might have been made—His Majesty the King—the highest in the

land; but he, no doubt, would have confirmed the decision of the Home Secretary. If *you* pass into eternity unsaved, appeal will be useless on your behalf; for, "in the place where the tree falleth *there* it shall be" (Eccles. xi. 3). God Himself—the Highest Power in the universe—will be unable to save you *then*. "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of *salvation*" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

In Luke xvi. we read of one who "fared sumptuously every day" in his life, but who evidently had no thought of God or hereafter while he lived. He died, "and IN HELL he lift up his eyes, being *in torments*." Terrible contrast to the luxury of the life from which he had just departed. He sees Lazarus, to whom he denied the bare necessities of life in this world, *in comfort* in Abraham's bosom "afar off." He pleads that Lazarus may be sent just to dip *the tip* of his finger in water and therewith cool his tongue; "for," he adds, "I am tormented in this flame." Mark, he cries for the *smallest* mercy that could possibly be conceived. The tip of the largest finger on a man's hand cannot take up more than *one* drop of water. That *one* drop of water that man has never had, *and never can*. Not one drop of water will ever reach hell. There is no alleviation of the torment of those who suffer there the just and eternal judgment of their sins. This man is told that there is "a *great* gulf FIXED" between Lazarus and him, rendering it *impossible* for one to pass to the other. Mark, that "*great* gulf" is *impassable* from *either* side. No one can come from heaven—the

sphere of blessing, where "the *river* of water of life" is, to bring *one* drop of water to hell—the sphere of judgment, where no water is; and no one can pass from hell to heaven to enjoy "the *river* of water of life" there. What! *never*? NEVER! That "*great gulf*" is

"FIXED,"

and when God says "fixed," He means FIXED. God is no trifler with words. He says what He means, and means what He says; hence that man is

"IRREVOCABLY AND ETERNALLY DOOMED."

And this is the doom, unsaved reader, that you *risk* every day of your life. Is it worth risking?

It is not for us to judge as to the cause of that explosion at Whitehaven, but it may have been caused through the wilful disobedience of one who dared to risk, not only his own life, but the lives of his comrades, by having a secret "*smoke*." It seems almost incredible, but, soon after the Whitehaven disaster, we read in the papers of a man who was sentenced to three weeks' imprisonment for lighting a cigarette in another mine. What a fool, you may say, to risk his life for a *smoke*! Quite so; but you may be a greater fool. You may be risking, not only your *body* but your *soul*. What for? Some little present gratification. Is it worth the risk? we ask again. No. As the Lord Jesus said, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the *whole* world and lose his own soul?" (Mark xiii. 34). You cannot take the world to hell—its pleasures, which are but for a

season, being the pleasures of sin, must be left behind. Yes, put the world and all its pleasures on one side of the "Profit and Loss" account, and "a *lost* soul" on the other, and you will have the balance on the LOSS side of "A LOST SOUL" to carry into eternity; for the king who enjoyed most of the treasures and pleasures of this world wound up by declaring that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was NO PROFIT under the sun" (Eccles. ii. 11).

Again we ask, Is it worth the risk? Clearly not. The risk you are running must inevitably result in "NO PROFIT" on the one side, and "ALL LOSS" on the other. If you die unsaved you will lose your wealth, your relatives, and above all your SOUL. All will be *irrevocably* and *eternally* lost.

A man in business may have a balance *loss* this year in his "Profit and Loss" account, but he may hope to turn that loss into a *profit* on his next year's trading. But if you close up your "profit and loss" account with "A LOST SOUL," that loss will be IRRECOVERABLE. Your soul will be lost FOR EVER.

May God in His mercy open your eyes to the risk you are running daily of finding yourself on the LOST side of that *fixed* gulf. May you turn to Jesus *now*; trust His finished work, His precious blood, His atoning death on Calvary's cross, and you will then run no risk of being *lost*; but you will then be sure—perfectly sure—of being *eternally* SAVED.

"WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN IF HE SHALL GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AND LOSE HIS OWN SOUL?"

T. C. M.

"HAVING NO HOPE."

THESE three words, taken from Ephesians ii. 12, struck me forcibly this morning. I viewed them carefully, and saw that they applied to us Gentiles—all of us—and that because we were "strangers to the covenant of promise" and were, awful fact, "without God in the world." A bad condition surely!

And full certain I am that this hopeless condition of the sinner should be most diligently pressed upon his attention to-day. He overlooks the fact; it is seldom stated to him; he may admit that he is bad, perhaps very bad, and that his life has been a lamentable failure; but, withal, he fancies that he has some ground of hope for the future.

The sinner! Yes, and by that term my mind is not resting solely on the grossly wicked, of whom the common verdict might justly be—a hopeless case—but the description applies to all, whether bad or indifferent (the word "good" cannot be flung in here), whether high or low, civilised or barbarous, educated or illiterate, religious or profane—all in one common sweep, one vast and indiscriminate category, one huge, black indistinguishable mass of fallen humanity—they are all in this dread and guilty condition, "*having no hope.*" How appalling! Would it were only felt!

Stay, I am not yet treating of the grace of God, or of what that wondrous grace has wrought through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

I am speaking of the state in which man is toward God. I am trying to point out the foundation on which that grace may build; for God's salvation finds a basis not in man's goodness, but, wonderful to say, in his guilt!

I was speaking the other day to a very intelligent old lady of more than eighty summers. I took the liberty of broaching this great question of salvation. She stated, alas, alas, that her life had been "fairly good" and that therefore she was not without hope.

Life "fairly good" and therefore a hope! Her life was not perfect, not altogether good, not even good—only "fairly good," and yet she flattered herself into a hope! What a deplorable delusion and yet how fearfully common!

Think—a life not absolutely good (as we must all honestly admit of our own), supposed to furnish a ground of hope for a place of the purest holiness! A man imperfect (as all of us are), fit and suitable for God! Fire and water are not more incongruous!

Oh! how I wished that poor old lady had acknowledged that her "fairly good" life had been a downright bad one, and that all her supposed righteousnesses were but "filthy rags." Then, if she had felt that she had no hope, I should have felt that she was approaching the divine ground of it. There is hope for the hopeless.

The fact is that the god of this world has placed a veil across the mind of man, whereby he is positively blinded to his state before God, and that veil is designated "Hope"! Hence every one has a hope.

He hopes he is not so bad as he really is. He hopes God will show him mercy at last. He hopes that if there is a heaven he may somehow get there. He hopes fervently that there is no hell and no judgment to come. He lives in the realm of hope, but a hope that is without ground or foundation. His hope is a mere imagination which must one day be dissipated to thin air, and he will then discover the stern truth of guilt, judgment, and eternal woe as his hopeless doom.

These facts, I repeat, should be pressed on the conscience of men to-day when the denial of them is becoming increasingly popular. We reach the ground of divine hope when we own that our case is hopeless, "having no hope," because that admission throws us off ourselves and on to the mercy of God in Christ, who then becomes our hope, our Saviour, our life, and our all. Then our hope is solid, settled, certain, and eternal.

J. W. S.

"JESUS, AND THE RESURRECTION."

"Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange

things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.) Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but 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. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.”—ACTS xvii. 16-34, xviii. 1.

THIS is a striking scene. The concourse on Mars' Hill heard the gospel for the first and last time in their lives. How different the effect on Paul's three classes of hearers! But, as then, so is it to-day. Some mocked, some procrastinated, some believed.

To a city “wholly given to idolatry” God sent His servant and His blessed gospel. “Jesus, and the

resurrection" was the "new doctrine." They had never heard such tidings before, hence the appeal, "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean" (ver. 20).

Dear reader, do you know the import of "Jesus, and the resurrection"? Who was Jesus? The eternal Son of God became a man that He might reveal God, defeat Satan, and deliver man. How glorious a being was He! How wondrous a person!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, . . . full of grace and truth. . . . John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. . . . This is the Son of God" (John i. 1, 14, 29, 34). He was eternal as to His existence, distinct as to His person, divine as to His nature, and, withal, "a man of sorrows" in a world of sin and woe.

What a Saviour does God present to the faith and affection of our hearts! The dignity of His being may well affect us, as His grace touches us in His lowly life of self-sacrificing love. Of that we read, "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts x. 38). Cradled in one man's manger (Luke ii. 12), while foxes had holes and birds of the air nests, "the Son of man had not where to lay his head" (Luke ix. 58), nor a penny to call His own (Matt. xvii. 27, xxii. 19), and finally died on another man's

cross (Matt. xxvi. 26), and was buried in a third man's tomb (Matt. xxvii. 57-60).

Such was the life and death of the Jesus Paul preached at Athens. But that life—disregarded or despised of men—charmed the heart of God, His Father. Hence we read, "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts ii. 24).

Adam lived, sinned, died as a consequence, was buried, and saw corruption. That, too, is the natural fate of all his children. Jesus lived, glorified God, died to put away sin, effected atonement, and then God "raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory" (1 Pet. i. 21). Adam's sin brought in death, Christ's death put away sin, and resurrection is God's answer to the moral worth of the Man who glorified Him in life, and in death also. Blessed Victim! Wondrous Victor!

All this, and more, did Paul tell those anxious "to hear some new thing." What wondrous news! that a man had triumphed over death by putting away the sin that brought it in. Further, the benighted Athenians, whose very altar, labelled "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD," confessed their darkness, now heard the words, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Jesus is the revelation of God, the redeemer of man, and the victor over Satan and death. The truth is now out. "The times of ignorance" are for ever gone by, and men are responsible for the light the

gospel brings. Consequently God "now COMMAND-ETH 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 to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (vers. 30, 31). That command you disobey at your peril. Could any command be more comprehensive? **ALL MEN EVERYWHERE.** Every person, in every place. That takes you in, my reader, as well as the writer.

The question therefore arises, Have I repented? Have you repented? Repentance on man's part is an absolute necessity. The Baptist first of all pressed it (Matt. iii. 2). His Master confirmed His servant's demand (Matt. iv. 17), and then charged His twelve apostles, "and they went out, and preached that **MEN SHOULD REPENT**" (Mark vi. 12). Heaven rejoices over "one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 7, 10), while hell, convinced of its all-importance, says, "If one went unto them from the dead they will repent" (Luke xvi. 30).

Repentance is a man taking sides with God against himself. Thereby he owns his state, and God's righteous condemnation thereof. He owns that he is guilty, polluted, sinful, and lost. God's Word declares him to be such, and he consents to the sad truth. He *believes* God and is blessed, for repentance is the tear-drop in the eye of faith.

The universe of God is witness that the only way to escape God's righteous judgment of sin is to follow

Nineveh's example. Jonah predicted coming judgment. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," was his cry. "So the people of Nineveh *believed* God, and proclaimed a fast," was the result, and our Lord's comment thereon is this—"The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for *they repented at the preaching of Jonas*: and behold a greater than Jonas is here" (Luke xi. 32). Jonas was believed; Jesus, risen from the dead, alas! is not believed by many, whether in Athens, or to-day. How solemn!

Paul's address split his hearers into three classes—mockers, procrastinators, and believers.

I. MOCKERS.

"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked" (ver. 32). Fancy, the sorrows and victory of Jesus scouted as impossible. Mockers are a pitiable class, for what they sow they will inevitably reap. The hour is at hand when God's words will be fulfilled. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; *I will mock* when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you" (Prov. i. 24-27).

Reader, if you have been a mocker, cease your mocking ere God cease His calling. When His call ceases, His mocking begins.

II. PROCRASTINATORS.

Do I hear my reader say, "I am not a mocker"? Thank God for that, but are you a believer in Jesus, saved and cleansed by His precious blood? You are not sure as to that? Where are you, then? Amongst those who defer decision, saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter"? Please observe, they never did. "So Paul departed from *among* them" (ver. 33), and "from Athens" (xviii. 1), is conclusive on that point. Procrastination leaves your soul on the same ground as mocking—it is without Christ. Rowland Hill well called it, "The recruiting officer of hell." He never said a truer word.

A poet has written, "Procrastination is the thief of time." Certain of my ground, I boldly say, "Procrastination is the thief of souls." Procrastination simply means—putting off until to-morrow what should be done to-day. What countless myriads of immortal souls are to-day in hell, who meant to be in heaven, but put off, for one day, coming to Jesus, and for ever lost their opportunity, since death hurled them into a lost eternity, ere the step they should have taken was taken.

Procrastinator, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18). You know you ought to come to Jesus to-day. Do it. He will pardon, save, and bless you. Let not this fatal lure of the devil any longer detain you, lest, by-and-by in hell, your sin-stained lips are fain to

confess, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are NOT SAVED" (Jer. viii. 20).

III. BELIEVERS.

Get in amongst this blessed class, as you read these lines. Some Athenians did. Follow them. "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed, among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them" (ver. 34).

It is a grand thing to be a believer in Jesus. It means present salvation and peace with God. Listen! "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever *believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Notice, he that *believes* in Jesus, *receives* remission of sins. Again, hear the Lord's own words—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth* on me *hath* everlasting life" (John vi. 47).

If you have been a procrastinator, or a doubter, till now, just believe the Lord, as and where you are, and then, a happy believer, do not be afraid to associate yourself with God's servants and God's people. Dionysius and Damaris were not. They little thought that they would have their names recorded in the page of God's holy book, as witnesses of His grace. Their holy and bold decision led to this favour.

You make as bold and holy a confession of Christ, where you live, and you will prove the truth of the words, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. ii. 12).

“HELL IS IN THE WAY!”

A YOUNG lady was so strongly moved, under the preaching of the gospel, that she often wept. Her pastor watched her with interest, hoping to see her brought to Christ. After a time, not seeing her at any meetings, he inquired concerning her of her mother. That lady was a widow, and she replied, weeping, “Ah, sir, I fear my daughter has met with companions who are leading her sadly astray!”

The pastor did his best to restore the girl to right paths. His efforts were vain. She had given her heart to folly, and would no longer listen to the voice of wisdom.

But her sinful pleasures could not guard her against the assault of death. Not many weeks elapsed before this young woman, while busy over her sewing, suddenly dropped her needle and exclaimed, “Oh, I am dying!” The inmates of the house placed her on the bed. Looking wildly about her she said, “I see heaven and hell before me. I can’t get to heaven, for *Hell is in the way!*”

These were her last words. Terrible words, were they not? But would not the same words be applicable to you, O impenitent sinner, if you were on your death-bed? Would not hell be in *your* way too? Would it not be “moved from beneath”—a stormy sea of fire—to meet you at your coming? You know it would.

Why not go to Christ, then, for pardon? Had that young woman obeyed her conscience and her convictions, she would have gone to Christ when His Word softened her heart. Would hell be in her way then? Would it be in your way if you were a pardoned sinner? You know it would not. On the contrary, you know that if you were a Christian you would have a safe and sure passage from earth to heaven. Why, then, do you delay? Why not flee to Christ? Why not end the ruinous strife you are carrying on against God by ceasing to rebel, by becoming a happy believer on the Lord Jesus Christ? Why not?

J. G.

RECONCILIATION: ITS BASIS AND EFFECT.

THAT man is estranged from God is witnessed by the fact that he loves self-pleasing more than doing the pleasure and will of God.

Were he not alienated from God he would love God supremely with all his heart and mind, and seek His honour only.

“Enemies in your mind by wicked works,” was the state of those at Colosse before the gospel reached them. “At that time ye were without hope, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” is said of the Ephesians before they were brought out of Nature’s darkness into God’s marvellous light.

“Be ye reconciled to God” would be a baseless

exhortation were man at peace with God in his natural condition. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" were utterly untrue were it not an accomplished fact with regard to those who believe the gospel.

Antagonism to God is to be in rebellion against His authority and holy will. Because man's affections are corrupted the will of the Creator is positively irksome and hateful to him. No greater evidence of man's irreconcilable condition was ever seen than when God came into the world in Christ to seek its highest blessing. He cast Him out.

Such is the condition of all, whether religious or profane. The evidence of it may assume different forms in each. But it is there all the same, at the bottom of the hearts of all.

In this paper we shall seek to present—

1st, The ground of reconciliation.

2nd, What reconciliation is.

3rd, The effect of reconciliation.

THE GROUND OF RECONCILIATION.

In all God's dealings with man He must be true to His holy nature and character. What He is in character is the result of what He is in nature. Sin is, and must ever be, utterly offensive and repellent to the holy nature of God. "Sin is lawlessness," or independence of God. *Man is lawless because his affections are corrupted from their proper object, and therefore estranged from God, who ought to command them.*

While man remains in that condition of corrupted affection it were impossible for him to be at peace with God, or be happy in His holy presence. God's hatred of sin deters man from living in the presence of His holy love. Besides, because God is righteous He must give sin its just deserts.

If man were brought back to God without an atonement for the offences committed, where would the justice of God be apparent to the eyes of the angelic hosts, who constantly behold the ways of God with men? If man were brought back in his state of estrangement and corrupted affection, which is lust, how could he be happy in the presence of divine purity? If the most cultured son of Adam's race were taken, unreconciled, into the holy presence of God he could not live there. It would be death to him.

A change must be wrought in him to enable him to enjoy the holy love of God. If we are not made holy, and thus like God in nature, we never could enjoy the presence of divine and perfect holiness. The pure in heart only shall see God.

A sow would be more happy in a drawing-room than would a depraved and lustful man in the presence of God. A refined and cultured lady would be happier in the presence of profane, blasphemous, and utterly uncultured men, than could the most refined lady be, in her natural condition, in the presence of God. No natural cultivation will fit us for God.

Scripture never presents reconciliation apart from atonement, nor yet apart from the One who made

the atonement. In the death of Christ the basis of reconciliation was laid, by His "being made sin for us who knew no sin." It is in the death of Christ we see not only the just judgment of man's offences, but the judgment of man's corrupted state. The state of man in flesh is abhorrent to God, and this is shown by the solemn fact of God's judgment of that condition in the death of His own Son. In this way He condemned sin in the flesh, as Romans viii. 3 so graphically puts it.

In Romans v. 10 we are said to be reconciled to God by the "death of his Son." In that death all being judged and put away, that could hinder our being happy with Him, we can now truly rejoice in God Himself, of whom we were once afraid. In these two verses we have both the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ presented, as instrumental in bringing us into reconciliation or harmony with the will and affections of God.

It is the same in Ephesians ii. 13-16. In the two preceding verses the apostle speaks of our state of alienation, and then proceeds to show how those who were afar off are now made nigh by the blood of Christ, which is the witness of His death. *In Christ Jesus* we are made nigh, even as nigh as He is in all His intimacy with the Father. "Through him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father." How blessed!

Paul goes on to speak of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in one body by the cross—the death of Christ. In that death all distinctions disappear, so

that all that man is in flesh—ordinances and all that went to give him a standing in flesh—is completely and entirely swept out of God's sight in judgment, so that God might bring in a new man, so making peace.

Apart, then, from the death of Christ, which is not only the judgment of man's offences but the judgment of what man is in flesh, reconciliation could not be effected. So that now we are reconciled *in* and *through* our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT RECONCILIATION IS.

Reconciliation is being brought into harmony with the will and affections of God, so that we might be at perfect peace and be happy with Him, for His own satisfaction and eternal pleasure. This harmony were impossible in the flesh, which is at enmity against God, and is not subject to Him. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." "The carnal mind is enmity against God." That is the nature of the flesh, as such, and nothing can cure it. Hence it had to be set aside in the judgment of death.

These are plain and very emphatic statements. Brush them aside we cannot, if we would. Experience teaches us the truth of them if we would be true to our experience. "*Cannot* please God." "*Enmity against God*," is shown by all the records of man, both past and present.

How could people in that state or condition of life be reconciled to God? Only by ending that state

and bringing them into an entirely new state in Christ risen out of death.

Does not this involve a new creation where old things are passed away and all things are become new? "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." A new creation involves the entire displacement of the old, which is the judgment of it as unfit for God. We are newly created in Christ Jesus unto good works. All good works flow from the power of new creation life in us by the Spirit.

New creation is all of God, as the source, and all for God, as the object. If it is of God it must be of His nature, and being for Him it must be perfectly acceptable to Him, and all the fruit that springs from it. It is all in Christ, who by His death laid the ground of it, and in His risen life has brought it to pass.

In Him only could God find His delight, and in Him only could we find our delight in God's will and pleasure, and be in the good of reconciliation. In Him all the distance, and thus all the estrangement is removed. In Him we are made nigh, and all, not only for our peace and eternal blessing, but for the will and eternal pleasure of God. "He will rest in his love." That is the fruit of the activity of His love in Christ, and thus in what His love has effected.

THE EFFECT OF RECONCILIATION.

When the soul is brought into the knowledge of reconciliation by the Spirit's power, the effect is per-

fect peace and joy in God's holy presence, which is Love. It can then truly rejoice in all that God has revealed Himself to be in Christ. God Himself in Christ becomes the absorbing portion of our hearts. He is then our highest and only source of satisfaction.

We can thus take account of ourselves, outside of and apart from flesh altogether. We can understand something of the meaning of the words—"Wherefore, henceforth we know no man after the flesh," and also, "To God I am outside myself" (N.T.).

Wonderful blessedness to know this! In the eternal state God says, "Behold, I make all new." He will then be able to dwell with men, and men be at home with Him. Who does not long for it, when we see the distance that sin has brought in between man and his loving Creator? The true heart ever says, "Lord, haste that day of cloudless joy."

We have not to wait until then to taste this unspeakable blessedness. We know it now in some measure, and might do so in far greater measure if we went more in for it. The Spirit is ever ready to help us and bring us into the blessedness of it, if we do not grieve Him; even if we grieve Him but then judge ourselves, our spirits are free, and He is as free as ever to help us.

We await the reconciliation of all things—thrones and powers in the heavenlies—which will take place when all the universe is subject to Christ, and He made Head, visibly and publicly, of all creation. When all is subjected to Him, all will take their

directions from Him. His heavenly glory will be universal, which will be the full result of the purpose of God. He shall be the centre and attraction and delight of every heart. All will be subdued by His love. His love will be the mighty magnet of attraction and the power by which He shall subdue all things and keep them in a state of subjugation.

He will fill that world with the love of God, which will chase away hate and envy, and malice, and bring in peace and goodwill to all men. God will fill the whole scene with Christ—with the glory of that anointed Man, who did His pleasure here at all cost to Himself, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him" (Eph. i. 10). P. W.

FRAGMENT.—"God is love." That is what He always was, before man was on the scene at all, or before man fell. "God is love." That is what He is in His eternal existence. And "God is light." These are the two absolute terms by which God is described. Love is His absolute character of goodness. Light is more relative to evil. He cannot tolerate evil. After man sinned, what do I find? That God stepped into the scene where man had sinned. Grace is the love of God putting on a new colour, and a new character, entering the scene where man has sinned, and entering for the purpose of blessing the man, who by his sin had put up a barrier between himself and God.

W. T. P. W.

WHICH SHALL HE SAVE?

“THE people on the shore shouted to him to save himself and let the child go.”

These words, overheard in a shelter at the seaside, naturally awakened my curiosity, as the reader may suppose, but the speaker went on to tell how on the day previously a child, playing on the pier, had overbalanced and fallen into the water below. A gentleman who saw the accident, without waiting to divest himself of coat or boots, dived in, quickly reached and grasped the little helpless thing, and struck out for the shore. By this time a crowd had gathered, among whom stood the mother of the child and the wife of its brave rescuer.

The tide was flowing very strongly, it is a place where the currents are always dangerous, and, burdened with the weight of the child and of his own heavy clothing, all his endeavours were unavailing, and it seemed as though both must perish. Then it was the people cried to him as I have related. Did the words nerve him to fresh efforts, or did someone standing by send up a swift cry for help to Him who sits above the waves? I cannot say. They watched him try again, and presently, fainting and exhausted, he reached the shore. He had saved himself and the child. The joy of the mother, the relief of the anguished wife, and the cheers of the spectators can be better imagined than described.

This is a true story; it was corroborated in all its

details by someone, whom I knew well, a few days later, and I am telling it you because it gives me an opportunity of drawing your attention to Him of whose great salvation this touching rescue may remind you. Did not another crowd shout to Him in scorn and cruel mockery, "He saved others, himself he cannot save"? It was true, though not as they meant it. Has it, I wonder, ever entered into your heart that He could not save Himself and you, for you are a sinner, and "the wages of sin is death."

It may be you object to being called a sinner; do you not lead an upright, moral, charitable, nay, even Christian life? People have so little idea of what sin really is. Sin is lawlessness, self-will. "I am a free agent," say you, "I am my own master, I do as I please," and you do not know that though you live thus blamelessly, yea, though you preach to others, and are accounted a zealous servant of Christ, if your own will is the governing principle of your life, you are a sinner of the deepest dye. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is *finished*, bringeth forth death." Death is not simply the penalty of sin, it is the necessary consequence of sin. Never think lightly of self-will. At the cross you see what it really is; there is no possible salvation from its dread penalty, except by the dying of Him on whom death had no claim. Oh! how I marvel at Him, the One who always did God's will, who could say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John iv. 34). He gave Himself up to be made sin. He would not save Himself and not you.

Are you surprised that those who have thus beheld Him, in His unutterable grief, in His unimaginable surrender, as all God's waves and billows passed over Him, must needs own Him Lord, must needs follow Him whithersoever He goeth? They would rather weep with Him, toil with Him, suffer with Him, than have the fairest thing earth has to offer. You tell me you are a Christian, but you do not feel like this, then, dear friend, all I know is, you have never had a sight of Him; it is possible you may be enjoying the benefit of His work, but you do not know Him. Self in some form is between your heart and Him. But oh! confide in Him; to Him you may lay bare your inmost soul; His salvation takes in this too, a full, free, present salvation, for He would not save himself, that He might save you.

"Oh, the bitter shame and sorrow,
That a time could ever be,
When I let the Saviour's pity
Plead in vain; and proudly answered,
'All of self and none of Thee!'

"Yet He found me; I beheld Him
Bleeding on th' accurséd tree;
Heard Him pray, 'Forgive them, Father';
And my wistful heart said faintly,
'Some of self and some of Thee!'

"Day by day His tender mercy,
Healing, helping, full and free,
Sweet and strong, and ah! so patient,
Brought me lower, while I whispered,
'Less of self and more of Thee!'

“ Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered ;
Grant me now my soul's petition—
‘ None of self and all of Thee ! ’ ”

NEMO.

A PROBLEM.

A YOUNG man, distinguished for his mathematical attainments, was fond of challenging his fellow-students to a trial of skill in solving difficult problems. One day a class-mate came into his study, and laying a folded paper before him said, “ There is a problem I wish you would help me to solve,” and immediately left the room. The paper was eagerly unfolded, and there, instead of a question in mathematics, were traced the lines, “ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ”

With a gesture of impatience he tore the paper to atoms, and turned again to his books. But in vain he tried to shake off the impressions of the solemn words he had read. The Holy Spirit pressed home his convictions of guilt and danger, so that he could find no peace, till he found it in believing in Jesus. He subsequently became a preacher of the Gospel he had once despised, and his first address was from the words, so eminently blessed to his soul, “ What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? ” (Mark viii. 36).

J. G.

FOOLS AND THEIR FOLLY.

THE person who, from birth, or as the result of some accident or disease, is deficient in mental qualities deserves our most sincere pity. But those whom *God* calls "fools" deserve no pity whatever. Their folly is their own fault.

Two things are spoken of in the Scriptures in connection with such fools, namely, their practice and their punishment.

THE PRACTICE OF FOOLS

is to "make a mock at sin" (Prov. xiv. 9). That is, they make light of it, they treat it as a trifle, something to jest about.

Just think of it! All the misery in the world is primarily due to the presence of *sin*! Wrecked lives, blighted prospects, broken hearts by the thousand bear witness to the ravages made by *sin*. God's throne has been dishonoured, man alienated from his Maker, and the world filled with violence and corruption as the result of *sin*. Sin, if permitted to have its course, will drag the sinner down to unutterable doom. Yet men are to be found who make a mock at it! Are they not rightly named "fools"?

The second thing is—

THE PUNISHMENT OF FOOLS.

We read that "judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools" (Prov. xix. 29).

Punishment, by-and-by, will be meted out by the hand of perfect righteousness. Not one unmerited stripe will be inflicted. There will be those beaten with many stripes, and those beaten with few.

Those who are in comparative ignorance will not be dealt with as severely as those who know what is right and yet do it not. It shall be more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for those with little light and privilege, than for those with much (Matt. xi. 22). But how great must be the punishment reserved for those who "make a mock at sin," who are indifferent to its seriousness. "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin, as it were, with a cart rope" (Isa. vi. 18). Heavy indeed must be the stripes prepared for fools of this kind.

Let no man delude himself with the idea that future punishment is a myth. Even amongst men crimes are visited with just retribution, and God, as the great Governor of the Universe, *must* visit sin with His sore displeasure. "After death, the judgment." His Word declares that stripes are prepared for the back of fools. No one who, in God's reckoning, is a "fool," will escape those stripes!

Fools are not all of the same sort. Their folly exhibits itself in various directions. We read in the Scriptures of several kinds.

First, there is

THE SCEPTICAL FOOL

who shuts his eyes to the evidence all around him, and turns a deaf ear to the testimony of the Bible, and says, "There is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1).

But observe, this is the language of the fool's *heart*. Not exactly of his mind. His reason, unless perverted, would lead him to the very opposite conclusion. It is in his *heart* he says, "No God." That is, if he could only have things as he would like, there would be no God. The wish is father to the thought.

More than 250,000 French youths have the letters A.D. tattooed on their arms. These letters stand for "Anti-Dieu," which means "Against God." How horrible! But the *heart* of the sceptic, and, indeed, of all men naturally apart from the grace of God, is branded with the same device. "The carnal mind" (that is, the mind, or will, or desire of the flesh, man's fallen and depraved nature) "is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7).

A man hears that he is responsible for his actions to God, and that he must give account to Him for all that he has done. The thought is dreadful to him, for he knows that God is holy, and that he is most unholy. Then he silences the voice of conscience by disclaiming his disbelief in the existence of God. The Bible emphatically calls this man by his right name, "fool"!

There is also

THE RATIONALISTIC FOOL

who does not go so far as to deliberately deny that there is a God, but who seeks to cast discredit upon revealed truths by raising all sorts of questions: Why? When? Where? How? and so on.

The Scriptures teach a bodily resurrection of the dead. The rationalistic fool asks How? "With what body do they come?" (1 Cor. xv. 35), implying that he will hardly believe what he cannot understand.

We learn from Scripture that "the natural man" cannot know or understand spiritual things (1 Cor. ii. 14). And so indeed it is.

Dr Taylor once said to Mr Newton, of St Mary Woolnoth: "Sir, I have collated every word in the Hebrew Scriptures seventeen times, and it is very strange that the doctrine of the atonement, which you hold, cannot be found by me."

"I am not surprised at that," retorted Mr Newton; "I once went to light my candle with the extinguisher upon it."

A man may be very learned, and may occupy the chair of a University professor, and yet be a veritable "Fool" in the reckoning of God. And "stripes are prepared for the back of fools."

Then there is

THE WORLDLY FOOL.

We read of him in Luke xii. 16-20, and two marks of his folly are apparent.

(1.) He left God out of his reckoning.

(2.) He thought more of time than of eternity; more of his possessions than of his soul.

If anyone were to attempt to write a history of England for the last fifty years and omit all reference to Queen Victoria and King Edward VII., he would be regarded as a fool. Much more of a madman is he who, day by day, is writing his life's history without any reference to God.

But if God was not in the thoughts of the rich and foolish man of Luke xii., he was in God's thoughts, and the day came when God broke through the silence of His long forbearance, and spoke. And what He said was this: "Fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

Be sure of this, reader, that even if you forget God, He does not forget you! He observes every action, and marks every word, and thought, and motive. And one day you will have to meet Him. Be not guilty of the inexcusable folly of leaving this great fact out of your reckoning.

A further mark of folly is to think more of time than of eternity, more of one's possessions than of one's soul. Time will one day cease to be, and all our earthly possessions must be left. But the *soul* will never cease to exist, and eternity will have no end. It is an act of folly to lay up treasure where "moth and rust corrupt," and to be indifferent to the possession of true and lasting wealth. It is madness not to look beyond the horizon of time. It is folly that will end in over-

whelming disaster to march on, day after day, to eternity unprepared. Well deserved, indeed, will be the stripes prepared for the backs of such fools as these!

Lastly, there is

THE RELIGIOUS FOOL.

Have you ever read those scathing words of the Lord Jesus Christ wherein he is described? You will find them in Luke xi. 39-40: "Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. YE FOOLS."

Against religion, if it be of the right kind (see Jas. i. 27), we have, of course, not a word to say. But to use religion as a cloak for wickedness is the act of a *fool*. Mere external appearances can never deceive God. They do not always deceive even men. God must have reality. And since we are all sinful, by nature and practice, a radical change is necessary if we are to have to do with God. This deep, thorough, radical change is spoken of in the Scriptures as the *new birth*. It is a change so complete and far-reaching that it can only be brought about by the direct operation of the Spirit of God. And anyone who is satisfied with a religious life (however sincere) short of being *born again*, is, in plain language, a fool.

Reader, have you been "born again"?

Let us, one and all, admit our folly, if we have never done so yet. And let us betake ourselves

to Christ, who is the very Wisdom of God. He alone can teach us the secret of true wisdom, and set our feet in wisdom's path. He has, wonderful to relate, borne the stripes that are the penalty of sin and folly, and in His stripes there is healing virtue (Isa. liii. 5).

My appeal to my unconverted readers, then, is to abandon whatever folly they may be guilty of, and be truly wise by *coming to Christ*. H. P. B.

"SOW THY SEED."

I HAD a very encouraging incident the other day in a train, while travelling to a little Scotch town. With the hope that it may be used of the Lord to encourage other tract-distributors, I now tell it.

It was a very cold snowy day in March, and as I entered the railway carriage I passed a remark to that effect to the only other occupant of the compartment, a young woman, but then added, "The *One who* sends the weather knows the best kind to send—doesn't He?" "Yes," she said, "He does."

After a few minutes' silence, during which she had been staring very hard at me, she said, "I wonder, do you remember giving me a tiny gospel tract, one morning, more than a year ago, whilst travelling in this same train?"

"No," I replied, "I do not—but as I generally

give away tracts to my fellow-passengers, that is not to be wondered at. However, I fancy I have seen you before."

"Yes," she continued, "you gave me a little gospel book which I read as I was on my way to visit a 'guid-brither,' who lives with his mother-in-law. I gave it to her, and she read it too, and said when she had done so, 'Oh, I do wish Jim would read this, it might help him.' Jim was my brother-in-law, quite a young man, who was, I am sorry to say, addicted to drink. We were very much troubled about him, as he was destroying both soul and body, every penny going to the public-house, and we felt quite helpless to do anything, and we longed to see him arrested in his mad career. We both wished him to read this book, but were afraid to ask him, as he would probably resent it, so we laid it beside his plate, when he came in to dinner, without saying anything to him. He noticed it at once and said, 'Hullo, what's this?' sat down and read it through before he touched his dinner, and, as he put it down, said, 'Well, I never saw it like that before, what a wonderfully clear little book!'"

The young woman continued: "I always thought I would like to let you know that Jim has been a changed creature ever since. He has never tasted drink since then, and that is nearly eighteen months ago, so he has had time to be tested."

I thanked God, and took courage as I was reminded of the word, "In the morning sow thy

seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Eccles. xi. 6).

M. M. M.

PEACE, GRACE, AND GLORY.

(Read Romans v. 1-11 ; viii. 31-39.)

IN the first two verses of Romans v. we have three things: "peace with God," "access by faith into this grace wherein we stand," and thirdly, "we rejoice in hope of the glory of God." That is the portion of *every* believer—not of the strong believer, nor the old believer, but just the believer; "being justified by faith." It is affirmed of the one who has faith that this is his portion.

It is beautiful and blessed to know that this is my portion, to look out and see the glory of God and say I can rejoice in the hope of that. I can boast of that. How much may I boast of? Of present prosperity? To get into the door of heaven by-and-by? No, that is not my boast. Is it to escape hell? I do no doubt escape hell, but that is not the portion of a Christian. The boast of a Christian is to look out and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

"Being justified by faith." It does not say much faith, nor strong faith, but simply by faith. I have the right of entrance into the grace I am standing in

—the latch-key into all this grace or favour. Not only I have grace with God concerning all my sins—everything I have committed that I would be uncomfortable in His presence about—but more, I have access at all times to His presence and favour. By much faith? No, but by very little. Faith even as a grain of mustard seed. The man who has faith at all goes in—it is his right, his title. And then as to the future, I make my boast in the hope of the glory of God. Now you cannot make your boast of a thing that is not yours: I can only make my boast of what is mine.

I ask, what can you boast of as to eternity? Do you say, “I do not know.” Well, then, I do; I can boast of the glory of God. There are three things in these first two verses—a past, a present, and a future—and all for the believer linked up with Christ. Christ died for my sins, and there is an end of them. He was raised again for my justification, and by Him also we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The whole life of a Christian is linked up with Christ, and every Christian has life, liberty, and pasture. “By me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture” (John x. 9). If *any* man. No matter who—he shall go in and out—has full liberty.

When a child comes to his father's door, coming home from school with his satchel over his shoulder, how does he knock? Like a beggar? No, he batters away at the door, the door is opened, and he rushes in. Where does he go? To the kitchen? No, he

goes where he likes—to the best place in the house if he likes—it is his father's house, his home. This is the freedom of access that every Christian has.

The first two verses give us one set of things, but now there is something more. "Not only so." As well as having our history thus bound up with Christ, He says, now I regard all the troubles and trials I pass through here as the very best things for me. Instead of giving in because of them, I may just say, God has put all these difficulties and trials before me to show me how He can bring me through them. You cannot glory in tribulation though, unless you have first learnt to trust God. The man who trusts God believes that he gets everything that is best from God. "God has brought me through this difficulty," he says, "and I have full confidence He will bring me through the next."

As if one had dropped from another world, where there was no such thing known as the sun or moon, and he comes to this earth in the middle of the day, when the sun is shining brightly. An hour or two passes, and it still shines, but presently the day begins to close in. "What is this?" he says. An hour or two later, and the sun sets entirely. "What, are we going to lose the sun altogether?" he asks. "Oh dear, no," some one answers; "wait till to-morrow morning and it will be as bright as ever." He cannot quite believe that, but when he wakes up next morning, there is the sun shining just the same, brightly as before. This gives him confidence the next time he sees the sun setting, that he is not going

to lose it for ever, but that in a few hours he will wake up to find it shining again. And that is the way with a soul when it finds difficulty before it. "God has brought me through this, He will bring me through another, and another, and another ; in coming through one difficulty with Him I get fresh confidence in God." He has brought me through, He will bring me through again. The apostle argues the point. Do you think I am not more precious to God now than an unconverted man, when He has taken so much trouble for me, when He has done so much for me? Why, His Son has died for me. Do not let all the foul fiends of hell come in to rob you of what you have got from the Word of God.

In the first eleven verses of this chapter we have two sets of three things. The first two verses give us one set of three things, and the remaining verses give us another set of three things. Not only have we the whole standing and portion of a Christian, but the apostle says, "Not only so" (ver. 3). We get the experience of the one who has faith—and then he says "not only so" again (ver. 11). Nothing short of this will content him—joy in God, joy in God Himself. Not wanting anything from Him, but liking to be with Him, like a child who delights to be with his father, enjoys his father's company.

Do not you let in the thought that God is an austere man, for He is not. Do not you be robbed of the joy that is your privilege and title. All the powers of the devil cannot take away the fact that this is the portion of the believer. Is it the portion

of a firm believer? Yes. Of a weak believer, one who has not all the faith of another? Yes. He affirms that simply of the believer.

“We joy in God.” In nothing short of this. The world has lost its charm. It once was our world, but we have been turned to God from it; and find God is better than it all, and we look to be with Him, and like His Son. Oh, but, says one, I lack the confidence, and if you ever ask me if I am a believer or not I could not say, I am so far down, and the world has such a hold on me, and the devil comes so between me and the Lord that I could not say that I am a believer at all, and I do not know what to do. “Were you ever a believer?” I ask. “Yes, I know I did believe once, but now I have got down so low I could not say what I am.”

Well, there is just one other passage I would like to turn you to (Rom. viii. 31). All the fifth chapter of Romans and the blessings of it belong to faith. They are affirmed of all who believe, however weakly and feebly. When you come to the case of a person very weak, the devil is very strong, and attacks that one, as Amalek followed the children of Israel and attacked the hindmost and the feeble among them. But the Word of God supplies us with everything necessary for every case.

“What shall we then say to these things, if God be for us, who can be against us?” God for us, that is different from one being for God. This is entirely new ground, a new atmosphere. This is not what I am for God, but what God is for me. Suppose we

find a sickly soul, with a pulse so weak that you could hardly find out whether there was life at all or not, what a comfort this verse is. The fifth chapter argues from my faith up to God. Verse 31 of chapter viii. is from God downwards to me, and that is a great deal better. If you are absolutely not for God at all, never for God, you are an unconverted person. You are ripening for hell, and on your road there, but as a Christian even you know you are often not for God—what a comfort then to know that God is always for you. The very vileness of my heart only gives God occasion to show grace, though we are not to continue in sin that grace may abound.

This is quite another sphere that we are introduced into in chapter viii. "God for us." How shall not He, who gave His Son, who thought of all this grace up there, freely give us with Him all else that we need. Do I want patience? He will freely give me all things. Do I want strength? He will freely give me all things. Do I want courage? He will freely give me all things. Do I want confidence? He will freely give me all things. What do I want? He will give me all things, for He has given His Son.

I was converted some time before I got this confidence. I knew my sins were forgiven, I was happy often, though down at other times, but I shall never forget the day when I first got hold really of this, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" It is God's elect. Not my choosing now, but God's choosing. In Romans v. it is all my faith. In Romans viii. it is all God's love. I chose Christ,

it is true, but then He chose me first. He chose me, and that is far better.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." I remember so well, I just sat down and I pictured the court-house, and the Judge, and the audience, and the jailer, and the prison—but if the Man who sits on the bench justifies, who shall condemn? The jailer disappears, the prison disappears, and I saw only the One sitting there who gave His only begotten Son for me. From that day, many years ago, I never had a doubt. If the devil says, "You are a sinner." "God justifies," I say; "who can condemn?" If he says, "You are not for God." "I know it often, but God is for me," I say. "God is always for me."

God delights to justify. He gave His Son to get that joy to His heart.

"Who can condemn?" None. "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" None.

It is not who will separate me from my love to Him? Alas, a very little thing will do that in a moment, but who will separate from His love to me? A very little bit of self will come in and separate between my love to Him, but nothing can take away His love to me.

Nothing can separate me from the love of Christ. The soul turns there and rests—I am persuaded it is right now, and right for ever. Nothing can separate me from the heart and the love of Him who gave His only begotten Son for poor, wretched, miserable sinners.

"IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

(Read 1 Sam. xvii.)

THIS question fell from the lips of David when he reached the valley of Elah, and was chidden by his brother Eliab for coming on the scene at all. How much that question contains.

For forty days, morning and evening, had Goliath issued his bold challenge, "Choose you a man for you. . . . Give me a man that we may fight together" (vers. 8, 10). No one responded. How could they? Certain defeat would have followed, so Saul, Jonathan, and all else declined the combat. Their feelings are well described, for "When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were *dismayed*, and *greatly afraid*" (ver. 11).

Tell me not that they were all cowards. It is not bravery to enter the lists when you know you must be defeated, but folly. "Discretion is the better part of valour." Jonathan even was no match for Goliath. Are you a match for Satan, my reader? Verily, no! If unsaved, he is still your master. God's object, by the gospel, is to deliver you from his sway. Ponder these words of our Lord, "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).

Who is the strong man? Satan. And what is his

palace? This world with all its sinful pleasures and gilded follies. And who are his goods? Sinners. This explains the command of the Lord Jesus to Paul, regarding "the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from *the power of Satan* unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins . . . by faith that is in me" (Acts xxvi. 17, 18).

If this be so, why is it so few know present forgiveness? Again, we see Satan's work, and "hidden gospel" as a consequence. Mark these words: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them which *are lost*; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which *believe not*, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). These Scriptures affirm man's bondage to Satan, through sin, and Goliath illustrates the sad fact.

It was, however, when on the fortieth day the giant rang out finally his challenge, "Give me a man," that his victor, David, appeared—true and striking type of the Lord Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God also. How sweetly do verses 17-23 of our chapter bring to mind the Apostle's words: "We have seen, and do testify, that *the Father sent the Son* to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14). When did He send Him? is an important inquiry.

It was when Israel's utter incompetency to meet Goliath was absolutely manifest that David came on the scene. It was after four thousand years of

weakness, sin, folly, and evil on man's part—Satan being his master all along the line—that Jesus appeared, to deliver man and destroy his oppressor. Yes, “when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for *the ungodly*” (Rom. v. 6) is God's explicit statement.

Eliab's angry query, “Why camest thou down hither? Thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle” (ver. 28), but reveals his true state. “To see the battle” was impossible. There was none to see. He is but the figure of a self-righteous sinner, who does not know his own weakness and has shut his eyes to the fact that he is weak, overcome, and lost, and needs a Deliverer. “Is there not a cause?” was David's reply. So is it to-day.

Why did the Son of God come here? “To seek and to save that which was *lost*” (Luke xix. 10) is His reply to that question. If Christ do not intervene, there is no salvation for any. The cause is manifest; the foe is too strong for man. It was love that brought the Lord Jesus here. *Need* on our side, *love* on His side.

The way He delivers us is by His death on the cross. There He was “made sin,” and “bore the sins of many.” Thus was redemption accomplished. David wrought deliverance for Israel by a smooth stone and a sling. Those who saw him then step out against Goliath judged his course to be crass folly. He himself disdained him (ver. 42), but “David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but

there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith" (vers. 50, 51).

What men judged as foolishness then turned out to be salvation for them. So it is to-day. "The preaching of the Cross is to *them that perish* FOOLISHNESS; but unto us which are *saved* it is the power of God. For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of the preaching (*i.e.*, the thing preached) to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 18-21).

My dear unsaved reader, you may count the tale of Jesus' dying agonies as foolishness. To me it is salvation. Who is the wise man to-day? The man of faith, or the sceptic? The man of faith, for the preaching of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Let me urge you to at once believe in the Lord. If you see in Him what Jonathan saw in David you will surrender to Him absolutely.

It is a great thing to see that by Christ's death on the cross the power of Satan was broken. Satan's masterpiece of evil and of folly was putting Christ on that cross. Thereby his own head was cut off with his own sword. Death was his power over man. By His dying Jesus annulled death, for He rose out of it, the mighty conqueror over it and Satan, who till then had the power thereof. A risen Saviour, an empty tomb, and a rolled-away stone

are the proofs of that victory, which the simplest believer in Jesus is entitled to enjoy.

Jonathan *enjoyed* David's victory and was then *devoted* to him. Notice these five points in his history. When David came into the camp he was *trembling*. When he went out to meet the giant he was *hopeful*. When he saw him slain, and his head cut off with his own sword, he was *delivered*. Next he was *enriched* (ver. 53), and when he saw David with the head of the giant in one hand and his sword in the other (ver. 57) he became *devoted* to him (xviii. 1-4).

May I inquire, my reader, Have you ever, like Jonathan, stripped yourself? Have you ever yielded yourself absolutely to Christ?

It is a wonderful moment in the soul's history when, compelled by love, it enters the stripping-room and surrenders all to Jesus. Is He not worthy? Ten thousand times, Yes. If you have not yet surrendered yourself and your all to Him—"Now then do it" (2 Sam. iii. 18).

Shall 1910 come to its end and find you still a stranger to the Lord Jesus? God forbid! As and where you are, come to the Lord Jesus, believe on Him, surrender yourself to Him. He will receive you, pardon you, wash away all your sins, give you eternal life, and seal you with His spirit; so that you may henceforth walk worthy of Him.

God grant that it may be so.