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The Gospel Messenger

"THAT PACKET OF SWEETIES."

"**A**UNTIE, do you think God would forgive me, if I bought Him that packet of sweets, I saw in Ferguson's shop window yesterday?"

The questioner was a bonny little maiden, six years old. Her mother had gone out to tea, leaving the child under the care of her Aunt Georgina. Both mother and aunt were Christians.

Before the mother left, she gave instructions that Mary should go to bed at 6 o'clock. When the hour came her aunt said, "Come away, Mary, it's bedtime."

"I don't want to go to bed," replied the child.

"But mother said you must go to bed at this hour, so come along, my dear," replied the aunt, rising to go upstairs.

The child hung back, and when the aunt said again, "Come along," the wilful child replied, "If you put me to bed *now*, I won't say my prayers."

Her aunt, anxious to do the right thing, deliberated what course to take. On the one hand it would not do to let the child disobey her mother; on the other, the refusal to recognise God in prayer was a serious matter.

But the aunt, knowing full well that happiness

lay in obedience, said, "Come away, my dear, we must obey mother; and if you refuse to recognise the goodness of God in taking care of you during the day, and decline to commit yourself to His care during the night, that is your matter."

Within a few minutes Mary was safe in bed, without any turning to the Lord in prayer. The light was turned out, and the aunt went downstairs. Half-an-hour rolled by, during which time conscience began to speak loudly to the child, as it often does to sinners in the night season.

"Aunt Georgina, Aunt Georgina," was heard in pleading tones at the top of the stairs. Immediately the aunt responded, "What do you want, my dear?"

Then came the question, with which we began our little tale, "Auntie, do you think God would forgive me, if I bought Him that packet of sweeties, I saw in Ferguson's shop window yesterday?"

Some reader may smile at the simplicity of the child's question, but she voiced the thoughts of millions; the intellectual phrasing it in the language of the philosopher; the rank and file of humanity presenting the same idea in a thousand different forms, some blunt and plain, others *naïve* and ingenuous, but all conveying the same thought, viz., that, sin having produced a breach between the soul and God, something has to be done by the sinner to bridge the chasm, in order to meet the claims of an offended God.

The history of man bears witness to this all along

the line. For instance, Adam translated the thought into action, when, being afraid of God, he made fig-leaf aprons to cover his nakedness, and even after that hid himself from God behind the trees of the garden. He had the sense that his doings were ineffectual.

Again, Jacob, conscious that he had grievously sinned against Esau, said, "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me . . . peradventure he will accept of me" (Gen. xxxii. 20). He illustrates the all-too-prevalent idea that man must provide, or furnish something to set himself right with God. Fatal mistake!

The servants of Naaman, the Syrian general, interpreted the thoughts that filled the mind of their angry master, when they said to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee *do* some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean" (2 Kings v. 13)? The gospel, which the leper had heard, was very simple, "Wash and be clean." The very idea made him furious, because it really gave him nothing to do. Had he been told to do some great thing, he would have essayed to do it, but to be told to go and bury himself out of sight, was an insufferable blow to his pride.

A young ruler, somewhat anxious to get eternal life, came to the Lord Jesus with this query, "What good thing shall I *do*, that I may have eternal life" (Matt. xix. 16)? *Doing* was the predominant idea in his mind.

So was it in a far less zealous company, in reality a company of cavillers, who said, "What shall we *do*, that we might work the works of God" (John vi. 28)? Observe carefully the Lord's reply: "This is the work of God, that ye *believe* on him whom he hath sent" (ver. 29).

Believing, not *doing*, is always God's way of blessing.

The awakened multitude of Jews on the day of Pentecost were on the same line of doing when — pricked in their hearts — they sought extrication from their perilous position as the murderers of their Messiah. They said to the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we *do*" (Acts ii. 37)?

The second recorded convert in Europe was the godless jailer of Philippi. Suddenly roused by the earthquake, and about to commit suicide, for which his city was notorious, he heard the voice of grace, saying, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here" (Acts xvi. 28). Calling for a light, for it was the midnight hour, he sprang into the presence of Paul and Silas, and said, "Sirs, what must I *do* to be saved" (ver. 30)?

Their answer is God's message to every unsaved soul on earth, my reader included, "BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (ver. 31).

How universal is the thought in the minds of men that God wants us to do something for salvation! Little Mary of our story was only following the

example of her forefathers. Are you, my reader, also on that line? Allow me to tell you the gospel.

First, you can do nothing to obtain salvation.

Second, God does not ask you to do anything.

Third, Christ has done everything necessary for the sinner's salvation. Before He breathed His last on the cross, He uttered those wondrous words, "IT IS FINISHED" (John xix. 30). Glorious tidings for weary, working sinners! It is on the ground of those words that the Spirit of God can, later in Scripture, say, "To him that worketh NOT, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). The Apostle Paul explicitly states, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. ii. 16).

The breach between man and Himself, God has bridged by the atoning death of His beloved Son. The blood of Christ, not the works of man, atones for sin.

Mary's packet of sweeties was a totally wrong conception of the procuring cause of God's forgiveness. Is your idea, my reader, any better? I fear that many a poor troubled soul has entered eternity, resting on nothing more substantial than the little maid's packet of sweets, even if it took the form of floods of penitential tears, so-called good works in

abundance, countless prayers, manifest reformation of life, the dedication of vast sums of money to religious and philanthropic causes, or all of them put together. These are all right things, but valueless to obtain salvation.

Right well did Toplady present the truth in his immortal verse:—

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

See to it, my reader, that you rest on this foundation, and this alone. Then all will be well.

W. T. P. W.

ARE YOU LIVING FOR TIME, OR FOR ETERNITY ?

I REMEMBER, some forty years ago, being told by a fast young man of the world that, if when I (who had then been converted to God for a year or two) came to die, and found that there was no God, and no judgment day, I should feel a great fool because of having given up all the pleasures of the world for a delusion.

I replied that, if death meant oblivion, or annihilation, I should have, in that case, neither remorse nor satisfaction; but that if, on the other hand, there should be a hereafter, a judgment day, and a having

to do with God, how would such as he feel, who had spent his life in sin? Who would be the fool in that case?

Well it is to look these things in the face, and not to be a dupe of the infidelity of the day, which makes everything of time, and nothing of eternity; everything of pleasure (so-called), and nothing of God.

What has become of my fast young friend I know not. Whether he still lives, or has been mercifully converted to God, or has gone to his account before that God, whose existence he then tried to deny, I cannot tell.

Certain it is that "every one of us shall give account of himself to God," and he amongst them, even though that certainty be treated as folly to-day.

But his *summum bonum*, or his chief idea in life, was pleasure—that of a worldly and self-indulgent kind. Like multitudes of young men he believed in a merry life, if even a short one; no matter, let the future care for itself; let the risk be run; God is merciful; no one can be sure; and repentance on the dying bed will suffice.

Thus conscience is silenced, its loud inward admonitions are scorned; God and His well-known warnings are set aside; and, for the sake of passing pleasure, the soul is surrendered to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Ah, men, the exchange is ruinous, foolish, fatal! Are fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, or, perhaps, only ten years of the pleasures of sin to be your price for eternal woe?

For, mark, "the wages of sin is death," and, "after this the judgment." The risk is far too great, far too appalling! "It is," we read, "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Let me plead with you earnestly; do you mean to say that there is any real pleasure in drunkenness, in debauchery, in gambling? What are their effects even here? They are ruin—moral, mental and social! What are their consequences hereafter? Only damnation, temporal remorse and eternal pain! that is all.

"Such were some of you." True, but grace has met us, and saved us, and cleansed us from all such evils. We would now live to God.

But you may say, "The alternative to a merry life is a religious life, and it is far too dull. We can't mope!" A religious life dull! Agreed! For one I see no kind of charm in what is called religion. It may mean a miserable monastery, or, possibly, obligations which run contrary to every natural instinct.

There is an alternative far too little known—a happy, calm, pure course of life to be found in Christ and in His blessed ways.

I would not cross the street to make a man religious; I would seek diligently to lead souls of every kind, moral or immoral, religious or irreligious, to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why?

Because, first, they would get forgiveness, full and eternal! Second, they would become children of

God and heirs of glory! Third, they would receive the Holy Spirit, so that they would have power against sin! And, fourth, they would enjoy life in the best sense. They would walk with God and have His smile.

I would assure you, as the result of a good long experience, that there is no joy so deep as that which flows from a divinely given knowledge of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit—a knowledge that is open to all through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is life eternal.

Oh! the downright madness of choosing a life of sin and unbelief with a death of despair, and an eternity of misery, to a life of true, vital, and happy Christianity, with its certain and glorious consummation.

J. W. S.

"THE PROBLEM OF OUR BRAVE DEAD."

WHAT becomes of the souls of the fallen heroes on the battlefield is an acute problem with many to-day. The death-wave has rolled into many a home, and from the parched lips of wife and mother comes the anguished cry, "Where is my darling gone?"

As the dead are beyond our reach, the best thing we can do is to preach the old-fashioned gospel to *the living*, to put before them in tones of compelling earnestness the way of life, to warn them in no uncertain language of the way of death. Had the

fallen heroes received the only gospel God has got for them, there would be no question as to where they are to-day.

Nor indeed is there any question, whether they believed or not, if we go by the clear teaching of the Bible.

Alas! alas! there are men holding a very high place in Christendom to-day, and whose influence is great, and who command the attention of multitudes, who are preaching that death on the battlefield wins heaven.

Either this is a truth of the greatest blessing at this present time, or it is a most damnable lie. Either we are utterly lacking in our duty in not proclaiming it, or else we are doing the most fiendish work possible in proclaiming it. Either we are serving God or the Devil. Which?

Oh! the awful responsibility of speaking to a young life just on the verge of eternity. What need to ask divine guidance that one's words shall first be the truth of God, and these uttered in the clearest and most earnest way possible.

Not long ago I saw a dying soldier. His lungs had been pierced by the German bullets, pneumonia had set in, and when I saw him he was heaving piteously for very breath, his face flushed crimson with the effort of the heart to maintain the unequal struggle.

Possibly it was contrary to rules to speak to him, but moved by a mighty impulse, I went up to him, and what did I whisper into the dying ear of the

young soldier? Did I follow the example of some who have gone to the front, and told the men that death in battle saves. No, I pointed the dying lad to Christ, to His atoning work, to His cross at Calvary. I quoted slowly, distinctly, earnestly, tenderly, the very words of Scripture, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Was I wrong? I trow not. Three days later when I entered that military hospital, the bed was empty, the young soldier had died. How thankful I was to have been permitted to point him to Christ. I cannot do better than quote the words of a prominent preacher, recently spoken on a special occasion in Dublin, his subject being,

"THE PROBLEM OF OUR BRAVE DEAD."

He said:—

"How can we persistently believe in a God of love, who permits thousands of souls to be launched into a lost eternity? In this respect the war has raised no new problem. This problem raised the question of the presence of evil in this world. The pathway to a lost eternity is placarded by God's grace. There is the Cross of Calvary, and its appeal. God has placed every obstacle that it was possible for a Holy God to place in the pathway of man.

"The real perplexing problem is not the inconsistency of the divine character, but the inconsistency of the human heart. That brings us to the great problem that faces us to-day—the problem of the destiny of our brave soldiers, who have died on the battlefield.

"Some are proclaiming that every man, who dies on the battlefield, goes straight to heaven, irrespective of his repentance and his faith.

"This teaching is

PAGANISM REVIVED.

"Sin is eternally and universally sin. No human heroism or no sacrifice can change it. This war has not changed the nature of sin. It has simply revealed in an awful way its true character. There is no essential difference between sin on a deathbed on a battlefield and a deathbed in the city of Dublin this night.

"There is no salvation for sin apart from the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning death."

These are weighty words indeed! Two sentences stand out. Speaking of the Devil's lie that death in battle wins heaven, this preacher rightly describes it,

"This Teaching
is
PAGANISM REVIVED."

It is just another form of Mohammedanism, which offers a sensual paradise to the soldier, who falls in battle. The object may be pure plunder and pillage, no matter!

There is not a line of Scripture to authorise any man, however exalted his position may be, to make such a statement. One's blood boils to think of young fellows facing death being soothed with such a devil's opiate as this. Surely the very pit of hell is open, sending forth its poisonous fumes, more deadly than those employed by the modern Hun. They torture and destroy the body, and can do no more. These destroy the soul.

The other sentence that stands out is:—

"There is no Salvation
for Sin
Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ
and
His Atoning Death."

How true this statement is! One verse of Scripture will bring its truth home to each one. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

We cannot follow the dead. There is no second chance beyond the grave. There "the great gulf fixed" speaks of bliss or doom irrevocable. But we do appeal to the living. Believe not the Devil's lie. There is no salvation out of Christ. There is no Saviour but He. God is willing and able to save you; Christ died to save you. God's own words are, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

If you die on the battlefield an unbeliever, there can be no salvation for you, for your life has been one of rejection of God's Son and the salvation He died to win you. See to it that you receive Christ now, whether soldier, sailor, or civilian.

"Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

We repeat, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

A. J. P.

HOW THE CROWN PRINCE OF BULGARIA WAS "CONVERTED."

I DO not say that the Crown Prince of Bulgaria was converted to God. I say that some years ago, when quite a child, he was announced by the authorities of Bulgaria to have been "converted." Converted to what? we may well ask.

To be truly converted is to turn in faith and repentance to God; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; to receive the forgiveness of sins; to be cleansed from guilt by His precious blood.

But what happened in the case of the Crown Prince was as follows. His father, King Ferdinand, before he was called to occupy the throne of Bulgaria, was a Hungarian officer, a Roman Catholic by birth and education. His subjects, for the most part, belong to the Eastern "Orthodox" Church, as it is called. To give them pleasure, he arranged for his infant son to be transferred from one communion to the other, from the Roman Catholic Church to the Greek Church. This change was announced in the papers as the "conversion" of the prince. But the prince was but an infant, and the "conversion" was merely nominal, and carried out for State reasons.

Now it cannot be too emphatically stated that this sort of thing is not conversion, in the Bible sense of the word.

Read such passages as the following:—

(1) "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways,

and *sinner*s shall be *CONVERTED* unto thee" (Ps. li. 13).

(2) "*Except ye be CONVERTED . . . ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*" (Matt. xviii. 3).

(3) "Repent ye, therefore, *and be CONVERTED* that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19).

(4) "Their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes . . . and *should be CONVERTED*, and I should heal them" (Acts xxviii. 27).

Do these passages refer to a mere change of religion, as in the case of the heir to the Bulgarian throne? No, they refer to something infinitely more profound. They relate to a change so vital and radical that it can be produced by no power save that of the Holy Spirit. A man is "born again" by this power, and conversion to God is the result.

Have you been born again? Are you a converted man or woman?

I heard lately of a person, who had abandoned Mohammedanism and adopted Christianity, and of others who, ceasing to be Roman Catholics, had become Protestants. It does not follow that they were truly *converted*.

A really converted person has come out into the light, and discovered his sinfulness and helplessness. He has been "called . . . out of darkness into God's marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

He has had to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, coming to Him in all his need, and trusting Him as his Saviour. He is one of those of whom it can be said:

"Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. ii. 25).

See to it, reader, that you are satisfied with nothing short of *the real thing*.

Conversion, according to the Saviour's own words, clear and unmistakable in their meaning, is an absolute necessity for those who would enter the kingdom of heaven.

Do not then deem me intrusive, if again I ask you, earnestly and pointedly, *Are you converted?*

H. P. B.

A VILLAGE PARABLE.

THE village stands pretty high up on the hills in the midst of a manufacturing district of Yorkshire. It bears the somewhat curious name of *Stone Chair*, which it derives from the fact that a seat of stone, formed like a chair, stands in its midst.

The chair is ancient. Whether there are legends connected with it we are unable to say, not being familiar with the district, but a casual glance while passing it by moonlight enabled us to notice two things:—First, that it looked the very essence of discomfort; and second, that it stood so closely facing certain buildings that the unfortunate occupant would have to not merely suffer discomfort, but

submit also to having his view bounded by a dismal stone wall!

Comfort in this life, and a bright outlook beyond, are things that all of us desire. Yes, but do you possess them? Not if you have seated yourself in that "stone chair" called THE WORLD. When first you flung yourself down into it you imagined perhaps that it was an arm-chair of the most soft and luxurious type, or if not quite that, that at least it was a kind of wishing-chair, that would eventually yield you all that you desired. Have you lived long enough to be undeceived?

Undeceived you will be. The world is hard, and cold, and stony enough. A blank wall of death, entailing the dissolution of all earthly hopes and joys, lies before you, and yet you must not suppose that this means that there is nothing beyond it.

Proceeding only a little further that evening, we passed at a cross-roads an ancient pair of stocks, carefully preserved as a memento of the old days. They had a grim look under the pale light of the moon. It seemed to us as if they must have been well within sight of any occupant of the stone chair, had the dismal wall obscuring the view been demolished.

There are moments, depend upon it, when the man of the world, be he never so stubbornly indifferent, gets glimpses of what lies beyond death, and finds that judgment, on account of sin, and penal retribution are there!

The scenes above related struck us as peculiarly

forbidding, but then we viewed them by the reflected light of the waning moon. Had we visited them in a blaze of summer sunshine we might have thought differently.

We *might* have, but this much is quite *certain*—that to view the hard facts of life and the world, of death and judgment to come, in the warm and blessed sunshine of the Gospel makes a very vast change. To face the awful facts of one's own sins, and the death and punishment they deserve, in the light of God's grace, which has brought salvation within the reach of *all* men, and the blood of Christ which cleanses from *all* sin, puts an altogether different complexion on matters. It enables one to rejoice.

What is your attitude to these things? Have you yet received the "forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified" (Acts xxvi. 18) by faith in Christ? Or do you still sit in the world's "stone chair," facing the "blank wall" of death, with "the stocks" of judgment beyond?

"Count the myriad blades that glitter
Early in the morning dew ;
Count the desert sand that stretches
Under noontide's vault of blue.

"When thy counting all is done,
Scarce ETERNITY'S begun ;
Pause and know—'Where wilt thou be,
During God's ETERNITY'?"

"TOP SHELF" BIBLES.

A CERTAIN clergyman was in the habit of purposely not taking his Bible with him when he visited his parishioners, his object being to find out what place it had in their households.

He would say, "Mrs — I should like to read a chapter of God's Word with you before I go, but I have left my Bible at home. Will you lend me yours?"

Then would often follow some such scene as this. Mrs —, much embarrassed, would tell her daughter to go and find a Bible.

The Vicar would hear sounds of rummaging and running about in the adjoining room, and after a time the daughter would reappear.

"Mother, I can't find it anywhere. I never remember having seen it. *Where* is it?"

And the Vicar would catch the mother's whisper, "I think it is on the top shelf in the kitchen. You must get the steps, and mind you dust it well before you bring it in."

Alas! how many a Bible is kept on the "top shelf," whilst its owner lives his life *without knowing* of the salvation God is offering him through its life-giving pages, and that without knowing *that his acceptance of that salvation is what alone stands between him and a lost eternity!*

That Bible lying on the "top shelf" would show such their danger as unforgiven sinners before God, but it would also tell how "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 that "Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*" (1 Tim. i. 15), and that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth "*from all sin*" (1 John i. 7).

That Bible would show him that Christ had died, and shed His blood on Calvary's Cross to atone to God for sin, and that, in virtue of this, God offers full forgiveness, if only the sinner comes as repentant, and turns to Him in simple faith.

But who is to blame if the owner of a "top shelf" Bible fails to read it, and *knows not* of the tremendous issues for eternity, which hang on his acceptance or rejection of the forgiveness God offers?

What an awakening will be his should he die unsaved and stand before God with his sins upon him! For "*how shall we escape*, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3)?

F. A.

A MEMORABLE VISIT.*

LUKE xix. 1-10.

JERICHO city was all astir when Jesus entered there. Blind Bartimæus, whom everybody knew, had received his sight. Rapidly spread the news, and from street, court, and alley the

* Reader, we beg you to pay heed to this appeal. The writer of it, less than three months ago, passed away to his eternal rest. He will appeal no more by spoken word. Meet him in glory.—Eds. G.M.

curious crowds issued forth to see the Doer of this mighty deed.

The great concourse grew greater, and jostled closer together as each individual sought to see Jesus. Zacchæus was among them. Little of stature, his chances of beholding the gracious Saviour were small indeed. The man, however, was in earnest; and earnestness overcomes difficulties, and finds ways to secure the end in view.

Freeing himself from the crowd, Zacchæus runs before it, and climbing into a sycamore tree, ensconces himself among its branches till Jesus should pass by.

A word on this man's occupation. He was a tax-gatherer, and chief among them. This class was regarded

WITH PECULIAR DISLIKE,

for the sight of a publican reminded the Jew of his being under the hated Gentile yoke. Nor were their actions, in the main, likely to win them favour. Whatever their virtues, honesty was not one of them.

Zacchæus may have been an exception to the rule, and doubtless was; but whether so or not, we may be permitted to look upon him as a picture of a sinner—a great sinner—but one who through divine grace desired with his whole heart to see Jesus.

Are we as earnest in this thing as Zacchæus was? There is no matter beneath the sun that calls for such fervent thought, yet, alas! how seldom is it considered. We live in an earnest age. All around us

MEN OF THE WORLD

are seeking eagerly enough to reach the goal of their ambition, be it wealth or fame, or place or power; but who among them cares to think of eternity and the things connected with it?

Yet what is all and every earthly gain in comparison with Christ and the saving knowledge of Him? Earth's choicest gifts are but fading flowers.

Christ is not like that. The soul that has Him for its portion possesses eternal treasure, and to miss Him is to lose everything. Hold in your hand what you will of earthly good—money at the bank, houses in the town, land in the country, well-chosen investments at home and abroad—all must be left behind. Death's door is too strait for aught but the individual soul to pass through. Naked we came into the world, and naked we must go out.

But see! On comes the surging crowd. The place is reached where Zacchæus is, and Jesus looks up and beholds him. Was it by chance that He looked up at that very moment—a mere coincidence, and nothing more? From such a conclusion we instinctively turn away. He, who in an earlier day had seen Nathanael under the fig-tree, saw Zacchæus in the boughs of the sycamore, and He knew too what had led him there.

Not to gratify idle curiosity had this man of wealth

CLIMBED, LIKE A SCHOOL-BOY,

into this roadside tree. What he had heard of Jesus had more mightily moved his heart than perhaps he

himself was conscious of, and an unseen power had led him to that spot where he was to be blessed with the joys of God's salvation. "He looked up"—the eye of the seeking Saviour meeting the eye of the seeking sinner. Who shall tell us what that look did for Zacchæus?

And now the Saviour speaks. Burdened as we may believe Him to have been—for He was going up to Jerusalem, and all that should befall Him there pressed upon His soul—yet He would pause once again to pour into a sinner's empty heart the choicest treasure heaven's hand could give.

"Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" (ver. 5). Thus He calls this "chief among the publicans" by name, as if He had long known him. It is not hard to picture Zacchæus

TREMBLING FOR VERY JOY,

and wondering as he heard these gracious words. Had he desired to see Jesus? He should be abundantly satisfied; for the Saviour would be his guest, and enrich him with eternal blessing.

Is my reader one whom God has made anxious about salvation? Like Zacchæus, do you desire to see Jesus? to see Him as your own personal Saviour? Perhaps the deep sense of your unworthiness has hitherto kept you from Him; you have feared He would have naught to say to a sinner like you. Hark! Jesus calls thee by thy

name. By this printed page, by these words of an unknown friend,

JESUS CALLETH THEE.

He knows whom He calls.

Thou art not too bad for Him; and lest thou shouldst think so, He says, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*" (ver. 10). Lower than *lost* thou canst not be. Make haste, then, and come down, down at the Saviour's feet; for Jesus would abide at thy house to-day.

"*Make haste!*" Simple words, but how solemnly significant! Aged man, the evening of thy days has come, and the deepening shadows warn that night is near, and thou art still unsaved. "*Make haste!*"

"There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy's day."

And thou, dear sick friend, whose life is ebbing fast away, *make haste!* Dark indeed will be the valley of death to thee if thou hast not Jesus to brighten it with His presence and the knowledge of His love; and that dark valley leads to a darker land beyond. *Make haste*, lest the Saviour pass by, and then thou mayest wait in vain for His return.

And thou too, dear youth, or gentle maiden, to whom life is in the opening bud, and the world seems so fair, *make haste*, and answer to the loving call of Christ. Let there be

ROOM IN THY HEART

for Him, and take thou upon thyself His sweet and easy yoke. It will not make thy house less bright to have Jesus there, and His company will bring naught but gladness with it. Strange that any should say nay to Him, or not make haste to receive so great a guest!

In Zacchæus we behold the obedience of faith; for "he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully" (ver. 6). Note these two words—"RECEIVED HIM." The door swings on that hinge. How much is bound up with the soul's simple reception of Jesus! Salvation came to Zacchæus in that one way, and so with us; and it is thus we become children of God. "As many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John i. 12). Do any anxiously inquire, *What is meant by receiving Jesus?* We reply, It is to believe in Him; for both terms are used in this verse to express the same act. But we must receive Him as the Scriptures set Him forth before our eyes.

A stranger knocks at our door; he hands us letters of introduction from dear friends across the sea. Those letters tell us the stranger's name, his occupation, his object in coming to this country, and other things concerning him which our friends think we should like to know. Having read the letters, we shake the stranger warmly by the hand, we bid him welcome, and receive him, not as one

of whom we know nothing, but as one about whom the letters of our friends have fully informed us.

So it is in our receiving Jesus. The inspired letters, which God hath sent, speak to us of His Son.

DO YOU ASK HIS NAME?

It is Jesus—Jehovah, the Saviour. His home? The heaven of heavens. His mission to earth? "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (ver. 10). He has come to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind (see Luke iv. 18); He has come, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark x. 45); He has come into the world to save sinners, even the chief (see 1 Tim. i. 15); He has come to bear our sins in His own body on the tree (see 1 Pet. ii. 24), to be wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, to bear the chastisement of our peace, that by His stripes we might be healed (see Isa. liii. 5). It is as such that we must receive Him; and to those who receive Him thus the Saviour says, "This day is salvation come to this house" (ver. 9).

Angry were the murmurs of the multitude when they saw what was done. "He was gone to be guest with a man that is a *sinner*" (ver. 7), they contemptuously exclaimed.

WE OWE MUCH TO THEIR COMPLAINTS.

Jesus was wont to answer them by some of the sweetest sayings and parables of grace. Thus He showed the objectors that there was no harmony between heaven's thoughts and theirs.

The act that stirred their anger made all heaven rejoice. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10). Zacchæus was a sinner; he did not pretend to be anything else. And Jesus knew that He was inviting Himself to a sinner's house, and, as a sinner, Zacchæus received the Saviour. Reader, go and do thou likewise.

Nothing less than salvation did the Saviour bring, and anything short of it would have left Zacchæus where he was before—a lost sinner, and nothing more.

A tender conscience and a generous heart this "son of Abraham" had. If it chanced that he exacted more than was his due, he restored it fourfold; and with an open hand he gave to the poor, even to half his goods. But with these admirable qualities he needed salvation as much as *the most iniquitous publican* that ever breathed. He belonged to a class which the Son of Man came to seek and to save—a class to which we all belong, and which that word *lost* so faithfully describes. How suited to each other were these two—the lost sinner, and the Saviour of the lost.

In Him there is rest for the weary, health for the sin-sick, freedom for the slave, riches for the poor,

pardon for the guilty, cleansing for the leprous, life for the dead, and salvation for the lost. All fulness dwells in Him. Whatever your need, the answer to it is found in Christ. The free favour of God has treasured up in Him all that any can possibly require, and infinitely more. In receiving Him, we receive all.

Only a word more need be added. If Zacchæus had not received Jesus that day, he would never have had another opportunity. The Lord would pass that way no more. It was to-day or never with him. It proved to be *his last chance*.

So with us. The last invitation comes, the last appeal, the last warning, the last offer. It comes without our knowing it to be the last. We hope and think others are to follow. But if God says of a man, "Ephraim is joined to idols: *let him alone*" (Hos. iv. 17), then you may call, but he will not answer; you may show him his danger, but he will not see it; and you may reason with him, but he will not understand. His conscience, which once troubled him, is quiet now, the eternal future *awakens no concern*, his fears have fled, all is still; but it is the stillness of death, an oppressive calm, the sure precursor of a coming storm!

Lest it be so with you, unsaved reader, hasten to receive Jesus. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iv. 7). W. B.

AN INFIDEL AND A TEXT.

IN a Canadian city there was a company of so-called "free-thinkers," who employed lecturers and agents to advance their teaching. In the same city there was an association of young men, who met every Saturday night for a prayer meeting.

At one of these gatherings, as the young men passed into their building, these agents stood at the entrance distributing invitations to a series of free-thought lectures to be delivered the following week by a young American, who was a disciple, and came dangerously near being a rival, of Ingersoll. During the prayer meeting, more than one reference was made to these invitations, and prayer was offered that young men might not be led astray by this false teaching.

At the close of the prayer meeting there was considerable feeling aroused, and one man undertook to write a letter to the lecturer, whose name was on the invitations. The writer commenced his letter with a quotation from the Word of God. Then he went on to say that prayer had been offered that the lecturer might be put to confusion, and be led to faith in God.

The letter was mailed to the principal hotel, and when the lecturer arrived on the Monday evening, it was handed to him with others. Retiring to his room, the lecturer opened up his mail, and, coming in due course to the letter referred to, the first thing

he read was the quotation from Scripture. As soon as he read it, he said: "There is somebody in this city, who knew my father!"

Having read the letter, he proceeded to the hall to give his lecture. Imagine the surprise of that audience when, after twenty minutes' struggle to say something, this eloquent orator asked to be excused, as he was not feeling equal to the task, but hoped to keep his engagements for every other evening of the week.

The next morning at about nine o'clock he was over at the Young Men's Christian Association, asking to see the man who wrote the letter. He was shown into an office, and at once said to its occupant, producing the letter, "Did you write this?" He was answered in the affirmative. "Then," said he, "you must have known my father, for the Scripture text at the top of this letter is the very one my father repeated to us as we gathered about his death-bed!" But the writer of the letter said, "I never knew your father."

Again the young lecturer said: "You must have known my father, and this text so upset me last night that I could not deliver my lecture. I could not sleep. My father was what you call a Christian; and when he was dying, my brothers and I were called in to hear his last words, and they were the very words of this text that you have written at the top of this letter. If you never knew my father, how came you to quote his very last words to me and my brothers?"

In reply to this the writer of the letter said: "I will tell you what I believe. In the first place, the Holy Spirit caused those words to be written in the Bible. That same Holy Spirit caused your father, whom you called a Christian, to leave these words with you as his dying message; and further, I believe that same Holy Spirit of God, knowing this, moved me to write this word to you. And now, my young friend, what God wants you to do is to ask for the power and grace of that same Holy Spirit, that you may seek the pardon of your sin, and find peace in believing."

And there in that room, because of that Word of God, which is "quick and powerful," that young man passed from death unto life. His lecture engagements were cancelled, and he himself became a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Communicated by H. A. M.

"A COVERT FROM THE TEMPEST."

PASSING in a train over the Forth Bridge this afternoon, I was impressed by the appearance of a widow sitting opposite me with two little children by her side. Neatly and modestly dressed in mourning, she wore round her neck a small gold chain with a pendant, containing the portrait of a naval officer.

As we reached the centre of the bridge, a lady lifted one of the children to the window beside

her to view the great battleships anchored in the Forth. With a sad and dejected countenance the widow looked vacantly forward without turning her eyes towards the fleet, till presently they filled with tears, which rolled down her cheeks until she could restrain her grief no longer, and, hiding her face in her handkerchief, she wept in silence.

Oh! how I longed to pour into that heart-broken widow's ear the tale of Jesu's love to the sinner! How I longed to tell her of One, Who had given His life, not only for His country's weal, but to save the lost sinner!

We quickly reached the station at the northern end of the bridge, where the lady and children left the train.

This simple and touching incident impressed itself upon me, and I was filled with regret that I had not been able to embrace the quickly passing opportunity of telling out the love of Christ to that poor lonely heart.

May I turn to you, dear reader, and ask you the question: Have you a satisfied heart? Amidst the sunshine of life, or the dark shadows thrown by the horrors and results of this distracting war, have you found One, upon Whom you can rest your weary soul?

We cannot pass along the streets of any town or city without seeing the sad effects of the self-will of man displayed. The anxious and worried looks of many we meet; the mourning attire; the wounded

and maimed—all alike proclaim the one message that Satan has brought distress and destruction upon this sin-stricken world.

We would not, however, dwell upon that, which distracts more or less the whole habitable world, but we would seek to draw the reader's attention to the fact that "a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. xxxii. 2).

In prophecy, poetry, and song, He—the Lord Jesus Christ—was the One to Whom all Old Testament Scriptures pointed, and "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we [believers] might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5).

He was the bright out-beaming of God's love to a perishing world. He came forth to tell out God's heart to you, that He had nought but purposes of grace towards you, and that He so loved the world, and you as a part of it, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever, and that may include you, believing on Him should have everlasting life.

Thus in the tenderness and grace of His heart God has brought relief and salvation to you. He beseeches you to come and rest upon His Son for salvation, and present and eternal joy shall be yours.

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

C. S. R.

E.

A RAILWAY INCIDENT.

I WAS travelling by rail the other day, and found, sitting opposite me, two young fellows who informed me that they were on their way to enlist in a crack regiment of the line.

We spoke on various points in connection with their enlistment, &c., after which I told them that, having myself been a soldier, and knowing the nature of a soldier's life, it would be well for them to be "right with God," so that, in His strength, they might face, not only its dangers on the field of battle, but also, as His children, the terrible temptations to sin, which are incidental to that life.

The civilian, doubtless, has his temptations too, and he needs to be "right with God" equally with the soldier and sailor; but at a time when the widest war ever waged is claiming such hosts of victims, and the flower of so many lands is being plucked by the cruel hand of death, it is surely most proper that all, who are exposed to its shafts, should be prepared to meet their God.

They assented to the propriety of all this, but frankly admitted that they were not ready for death.

I asked them if they knew how to be saved. They replied as frankly that they did not.

How sad is such an admission in a land of, thank God, an open Bible, and a widely preached gospel. And yet this is the admission of the vast majority of the entire population of these so-called Christian lands. They know not.

I felt deeply thankful to God that I was able to tell these lads that, for a longer period than both of their lives put together, I had known in happy experience God's great salvation, that it had kept me from the temptations of a soldier's life, and had saved my soul for eternity. If I, why not they? Why not you, my reader?

They listened to what I had to say. Will *you* kindly read what I write? First, the salvation of God is for guilty and helpless sinners. "The Son of God is come." The Lord Jesus could announce, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke v. 32), "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). The "faithful saying, and worthy," mark, "of all acceptance" is this "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

Where are such to be found? Tell me, where are they not to be found?

"All have sinned," some more, some less; but there is not a man upon the face of the earth, who has not sinned in thought, word, and deed, every day of his life. If honest he will own it. If deceived he will plead his supposed goodness, and learn, when possibly too late, that his "righteousnesses" (all of them) were "as filthy rags," and that he had been blinded by the god of this world, lest the lovely, saving rays of the gospel of the glory of God should shine unto him.

No! the salvation of God is for such as are on the verge of damnation, and His mercy for those

without merit. It was the poor, ruined, helpless, friendless prodigal, saying in his heart of hearts, "Father, I have sinned . . . and am no more worthy" (Luke xv. 21), who found himself at once—spite of all—kissed and clothed and welcomed; while his self-righteous brother, who dared to say that he had never transgressed at any time, found himself outside the Father's house, and, in the dread sequel, lifted up his eyes in Hell (see Luke xvi. 23) on the wrong side of "the great gulf fixed." His doom was that of torment. It was the possibility of a doom so awful that led myself to get "right with God."

Reader, for your own sake, I beg of you to face this possibility. Ten thousand thanks to God that His salvation proposes the immediate and eternal security of the soul. Act as did the hapless prodigal—repent of your sins, great or small, few or many, and fling yourself on the mercy and grace of that God who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever" (wonderful word!) "believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). This is how God takes the beggar from the dunghill, and sets him among princes! The salvation of God begins with the forgiveness of sins (all sins), goes on to the justification of the believer, making him a son and heir of God, and placing him, eventually, in glory.

"It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33) on the sole merit of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24), apart absolutely from the faintest trace of good works or merit in the believer, though the effect of a free justification is, necessarily,

to constrain the redeemed one to evidence his faith by works, that is clear. The coin that has not both obverse and reverse is of no value in the market. A good old stanza says:—

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

Thus it is that faith, and faith alone, justifies before God; while works and works alone do so before men. They cannot see faith; they can only judge by works. God sees faith. He saw that of “the dying thief” to whom no opportunity was given to demonstrate his faith by a single day of testimony to his Lord and Saviour. He went straight to Paradise, and into the presence of the Lord, within a very few minutes of his salvation. God’s salvation is, therefore, immediate, it is also great; and it is eternal. It may well be asked: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (Heb. ii. 3).

Some despise it, some reject it; the mass neglect it to their endless confusion; but some, through grace, accept it, and find in it present peace with God, rest, joy, comfort, and life eternal. It carries the best of all things—the knowledge of God, the Father, and God, the Son, and that in the blessed power of the Holy Ghost. May this salvation, dear reader, be yours.

Delays are dangerous. Death is very busy. Life is uncertain. Your highest wisdom is to decide. Decide NOW.

J. W. S.

MY MOTHER'S CONVERSION.

ANYONE, who knew my mother, would unhesitatingly have spoken of her as a real Christian. To me her memory is sacred. Her brothers and sisters always spoke of her as being exceptionally good from childhood. Her interests, outside her home, were confined to church and Sunday school. As to her outward character, nobody could say that she ever did a mean or shabby act; while such was her amiability of character that I never once saw her even ruffled, although she had plenty to try her with eleven boys and two girls.

Soon after I returned from India (where I had been for about ten years, and where, through the grace of God, I had been converted), I invited my mother to some special gospel services held in a first floor room in a house in King's Inns Street, Dublin. The services were held on Sundays at 4 P.M. She came, accompanied by Mrs B——, a very old friend of hers. They attended regularly all the time the services were held, my mother usually going home to tea, and then going, as usual, to church in the evening. I naturally concluded that they enjoyed the meetings, which were for the most part conducted by a dear servant of the Lord, who dealt powerfully with the conscience, although always endeavouring to heal the wounds he made by presenting the

full and free salvation that God has for every one, who simply believes on the Lord Jesus.

Some time after these meetings were given up, I was speaking to my mother on the assurance of salvation, remarking what a happy thing it was to be saved, and to *know* it, when to my surprise she said—

“Well, I *know* that I am saved *now*; but a short time ago I could not have said that.”

“Why, mother,” I exclaimed, “I always thought you were saved!”

“Ah!” she replied, “what you *thought*, and what God *knew* are two totally different things. Of course I always wanted to be saved, but I was going the wrong way about it. Consequently I was never *sure*, and so I was never *happy*, though people might have thought I was. I was always full of doubts and fears; but now I know that I am saved.”

“Would you mind telling me,” I asked, “how you reached this happy state?”

She replied, “When you asked me to go to those special services I did not quite like to at first, as I preferred going to my own church; but as you were so interested in them I went, and induced Mrs B—— to go too. Little did I think how I was going to be helped.

“Mr T—— was the preacher the first Sunday. Never shall I forget what he said. It seemed to be all for me, though we sat right at the back where I thought he could not see us. After proving from Scripture that ‘there is no difference; for *all* have sinned’ (Rom. iii. 22, 23), he proceeded to show that

we could not save ourselves, as salvation was not of *ourselves*, 'not of *works*' (Eph. ii. 9). I left the meeting that evening with a very heavy and troubled heart, and had almost decided not to go again, as I felt it did me no good, but only harm.

"However, the following Sunday I felt driven there, and called for Mrs B—— on the way. Mr T—— preached again, and what he said then troubled me more than ever. One text I specially remember, 'By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight' (Rom. iii. 20). If that is right, I thought, I have been wrong all my life.

"On the fourth Sunday I went to church in the evening, but arrived rather earlier than usual, feeling the need of a little quiet before the service began. The bell was slowly and quietly tolling; the lights were low, but there was sufficient light for me to see the Ten Commandments over the altar. Oh! thought I, if I could only keep them *all*. I will try once more.

"So slowly and fervently I began to repeat each one in a whisper to myself, and then added with all my heart, 'Lord have mercy upon me; and incline my heart to keep this law.'

"As I read the tenth commandment a deep sense of God's holiness in forbidding *covetousness* came over me; and the thought forced itself upon my mind, that even if I had managed to keep all the others, I had broken this one (see Rom. vii. 7). I could only plead guilty in my inmost soul. Then I heard, as it were, a voice of thunder ringing the words into

my soul, '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), and 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in *one* point, is guilty of all' (Jas. ii. 10).

"Immediately an overwhelming sense of my utter failure filled my soul, and I saw that I was lost. So I closed my eyes in despair, and cried like sinking Peter, 'LORD, SAVE ME.'

"Immediately I seemed to hear a voice saying gently to me, I *have* saved you; for 'WHOSOEVER SHALL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED' (Rom. x. 13).

"From that moment," said my mother, "I have never had the slightest doubt as to being saved; and, like many more, I can truly say, 'My soul doth *magnify* the *Lord*, and my spirit hath rejoiced in *God my Saviour*.'" (Luke i. 46, 47).

It may be of interest to the reader to know that though my mother died a very *painful* death, yet she was *bright* and *happy* to the last. Her last words, gasped out between paroxysms of pain, were:—

"JESUS—LOVES—ME."

Reader, have you trusted the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour? If not, do not delay, but decide now. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. iv. 7). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). T. C. M.

“CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS.”

“YOU can have this book, Nellie; I shall not read it,” and so saying my brother thrust a copy of the *Gospel Messenger* into my hand, some fifteen years ago.

Little did I think that God was about to speak to my soul, and break in upon my carelessness and indifference. Yet so it was.

“PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD,”

were the words that laid hold of me, and arrested me on my downward course. These words were quoted in an address given by the Editor, and which was printed in the copy of the magazine, which my brother had handed to me. My anxiety deepened as months rolled on. I remember dreaming one night that the Lord had come, and had taken father and mother—they were true Christians—and had left me behind. I got out of bed, and went to my mother's room, to see if she was there. I felt it was the Lord's voice speaking to me.

I tried to keep the law, but, failing dreadfully, I decided not to worry about such things, throw off my anxiety, and be bright and merry like others around me.

But no sooner did I decide on this course than a voice seemed to say to me, “Go and open your Bible at 1 Cor. v. 6.” I had never seen the words before, but there they stared me in the face,

“YOUR GLORYING IS NOT GOOD,”

It seemed to tell me that my determination to be happy and careless was all a terrible mistake.

Thank God, peace came one Sunday evening. A dear Christian gentleman, now with the Lord, General H——, was preaching, and I felt that I must tell him that I was *not saved*.

He prayed much with me, and pointed me to Romans iv. 16-25, v. 1. What specially helped me was verse 2, in the earlier part of the chapter, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," and verses 23-25, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him for righteousness; but *for us* also, to whom it shall be imputed, *if we believe on him* that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

General H—— kept pointing me to those Scriptures, till at length, for I was very slow about it, I was enabled to cast myself upon the Lord, and trust Him as my personal Saviour, and found Christ indeed to be my righteousness before God.

May this simple narrative encourage those, who edit, write for, and distribute gospel magazines, for has not the Lord said that His word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish His pleasure (see Isa. lv. 11)?

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecc. xi. 1).

And if these lines catch the eye of an anxious sinner, may they be used to his or her help, and blessing.

THE LAMPLIGHTER AND THE TRACT.

WE were going our monthly round with *The Gospel Messenger*¹ one wintry Sunday afternoon, when a lamplighter came along the road to light the lamps. We offered him a copy of the magazine, with the remark—

"We are doing a similar kind of work to yours. You are going round lighting the lamps to show people their way in this world; we are going round with the magazine to show people, by the light of the gospel, the way to heaven."

"That's just what I tell them over there," he replied, pointing to one of his rounds. "I tell them it's all light with me."

"Sometimes," he continued, "I meet with opposition. A short time ago a resident thought he had cornered me. Says he, 'How do you make it out that it's all light with you: what about when you come round with your extinguisher just after midnight, and put out the lights?'

"That's just it," I replied. "If I look back, I see nothing but darkness, reminding me of my past life of sin; but if I look forward, all is light, reminding me of my bright future for ever with the Lord."

"But what about when you come to the end of your round?"

"Oh! the end's all right," I replied, "that's just the dawn of the day, and it reminds me of the dawn of the eternal day to which I am going."

¹ An example worthy of being widely followed.—Eds. *G.M.*

Reader, do you know what it is to be in the light? Can you give "thanks unto the Father, which hath made us [believers] meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins?" (Col. i. 12-14). H. S.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

NO. 1.—ALL THINGS NEW.

(Read Luke v. 27-39; vi. 39-49.)

THE Gospel of Luke presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of Man, in the midst of men, in lowly grace. Very largely, in this Gospel, does the Lord speak by parables. There are no less than thirteen so-called parables here found.

The first of these parables begins, if I might so say, at the bottom, revealing the need of man. His real state is one of sin, misery and irretrievable ruin; while the last brings in the blessed day that Scripture speaks of as "the world to come," that is the millennium. All, who bow to Jesus now, shall, in that day, share and be conscious of His glory, and will be blessed in relation to Him.

In order to learn the meaning and intent of these parables, we must observe their setting. That is, we must note the place where they were spoken, what was the occasion that led the Lord to speak in

this parabolic form, and then note the truth contained in the parable, and the antecedent and subsequent facts.

OLD BOTTLES.

The first parable (chap. v. 36-39) speaks about the folly of putting a piece of new cloth upon an old garment, or putting new wine into old bottles. It is connected very strikingly with what is presented to us in the previous part of the chapter, where we have the story of the call of Levi, which is exceedingly instructive, read in connection with this parable.

The Lord in passing along that day had already blessed three men. First He met Peter, *convicting* him of his sinful state, then calming his conscience. Then His path had been crossed by a *defiled* leper, and He had cleansed him. Then He came in contact with a *paralysed* man, whose friends had brought him into His presence, and of course Jesus met him in his need.

Whether it be the effect of sin that brings in *fear* upon the conscience, as in the case of Peter, or the *defiling* effect of sin, as in the leper, or the *paralysing* effect of sin, as in the case of the palsied man, the Lord perfectly and blessedly met the need of each. I do not doubt you get in those three men an illustration of what the various effects of sin are.

Peter's conscience was deeply affected. He learned the *guilt* of sin, and got the sense, "I am unfit for God." He needed justification. How could He get it? Only through Christ.

The leper had the sense that sin had *defiled* him. He needed cleansing. How could he get it? Only through Christ.

The paralytic knew that sin had paralysed him; that he was powerless. How could he obtain *power*? Only through Christ.

But there is more than that. Man is in a world where his heart is not satisfied. Nothing down here can satisfy it. There are tens of thousands of people to-day, who are passing through this world, just as Levi was, with an unsatisfied heart. It may be that you are one such. Money has not satisfied you. Pleasure has not satisfied you. There is a void in your heart. But oh! if you got to know the Lord Jesus you would learn what satisfaction really is.

Now see the way in which the Lord met Levi. "And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me!" (ver. 27). Just two words. What was their effect? Do we read that, "He rose, and left all"? No! The man that rises up first very rarely leaves all. What we read is this, "And he *left all*, rose up, and followed him" (ver. 28). The attractiveness of Christ, and the power of His word, broke every link with this world. Levi's heart was detached, and he *left all* to follow Jesus.

Have our souls known anything of this sort? If you and I are Christians, do you think God can record about us, that what commanded us in this world, as unconverted, has been eclipsed?

Perhaps you will say, "Yes, I think I can say that." I reply, "Have you gone in for the same line of things as Levi went in for?" Levi is a most wonderful picture of a heart that drops everything for Christ. At once his house became the scene of a gospel meeting, a spot for Christ to display Himself. Who bade him do it? Nobody. It was the outcome of a heart filled with Christ.

We read, "And Levi made him *a great feast* in his own house" (ver. 29). I do not think the Lord cared one bit what was on Levi's table that day. But I am persuaded that it was an immense joy to Christ to see the company that Levi had got round it. He had entered into the sense of who the Lord was, and what the Lord wanted. We read, "And there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them" (ver. 29). That is to say, he gathered round the Lord the very class of people that he knew Christ was so divinely suited to. Are you and I as keen about the gospel? God grant that we may be.

Now see what followed. "But the scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?" (ver. 30). Self-righteousness, and mere religiousness, would condemn that kind of thing. You can be wonderfully religious, and not have one scrap of the spirit that filled Levi's heart. I am not unchristianising you. I am only saying this: it is perfectly easy to move along with the knowledge of salvation, and yet the heart be not filled with the

sense that there is need on every hand, and that there is One divinely able and willing to meet it. I long that every one, who is really Christ's, should be possessed with the same kind of spirit as Levi was.

The scribes and Pharisees murmured against the disciples, but the disciples did not get the chance of answering. The Lord stood up for them. "And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (vers. 31, 32).

How solemn, if you are a self-righteous person. Christ is not for such. He said: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Are you a sinner? Yes! Thank God, then, He came to call *you* to repentance.

What is repentance? The acknowledgment of your true state. The honest and simple confession of what you are.

The truth is, if you are a sinner in your sins, you have got to take your place as a sinner. And what will happen? God will come in in blessing, and save you. When sinners are brought to repentance, they are always brought to salvation. Repentance in a sinner is always the harbinger of joy. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10).

Then the Pharisees said to the Lord, "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?" (ver. 33). That is to say,

the Pharisees were pictures of misery. But let me tell you this, Christianity is not misery. It is joy, divine peace and joy, in the Holy Ghost. As the Scripture says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13).

Many a person to-day thinks that Christianity makes men miserable. That is a profound mistake. I know there are some people, who have just enough of religion to make them unhappy, because they have not really touched Christ. They have not really touched the blessed Lord. That is the reason.

These religious people could say, "Why do the disciples of John fast often?" I do not doubt it was what was in keeping with the moment. "But thine eat and drink"; they said to the Lord. His disciples had the appearance of being happy. They were quite right. Why, my dear friend, we have every reason to be happy. Do you think misery conforms with the joy of Christ? Never. The disciples were wonderfully happy. And why? They had such a Saviour and Lord, and after the Lord's resurrection the knowledge of the Father becomes theirs, and power in the Holy Ghost is given. You have got no idea of what it is to be in Christ, "Whom, having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. i. 8).

Observe the question now put here, "Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while

the bridegroom is with them?" (ver. 34). If the Spring of joy is with them, can you make them fast? "But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days" (ver. 35). I have no doubt this applies to the Kingdom side of things. But on the other side, we Christians know His presence by the Holy Ghost. This is the joy of our souls, morning, noon, and night.

Now, then, let us go further. What we have just been considering led the Lord to take up a remarkable parable. He said, "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old" (ver. 36). Suppose you have a patch of religion. I daresay you have made a profession of Christianity. Have you got this joy? No. Then it is only the old garment with a patch. And whenever there comes a little bit of stress there is a rent, and it is perfectly manifest you have not got His strength and joy. You cannot add a bit of what is divine to man. What he wants is to be "born again." He will have to be a new creature in Christ.

But there is more. "And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish" (ver. 37). What is the meaning of that? You cannot put the new wine of God's joy into the old bottles of Judaism. You cannot put the joy connected with the revelation of God's love into the

forms and religious ceremonies that men have instituted. Christianity is an entirely *new* thing. It is impossible to patch man, and make a good job of him. He is utterly ruined. What is wanted is something altogether new.

In blessed perfect grace Christ gave Himself for us, that by His death He might sweep entirely aside all that we were, and meet in righteousness the judgment due to us. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are *in* Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). New wine must be put into new bottles. That is to say, the believer is brought into an entirely new sphere, into association with Christ risen and glorified.

And who would not have the new wine? "Oh!" you say, "the old is better" (ver. 39). You are wrong. The flesh, and the world, and sin, and lust, I quite admit, are not dropped in a hurry, unless, like Levi, you get a vision of Christ, and hear His word, "Follow me." Will you turn round by and by, and say, "Lord, You never called me"? Never! He has got His eye upon you. He calls sinners to repentance, and He says to all, who put their trust in Him, "Follow me." If you only heard His voice, you would leave the old wine, and what then? You would drink the new—the new wine of Christ in the joy of His Kingdom. How happy to have these new tastes supplanting the old. Then you will find also that "the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. viii. 10).

BLIND LEADERS.

Let us now look briefly at the next parable. There is a divine sequence in the order of these parables.

"And He spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (chap. vi. 39).

You ask me, "How can the blind lead the blind?" You have seen a blind man in the street led by a dog. But the dog was not blind. How disastrous it would be, if he were. How foolish men are, for there are multitudes of blind leaders of the blind in spiritual things. Christianity is a simple thing. It is not the blind leading the blind, nor is it the seeing leading the blind. Christianity is the seeing leading the seeing. For the Gospel opens the eyes of men.

Now I ask you a simple question, "Do you see?" "No, I am still blind." Take you care, who leads you. For the Lord said of both leader and led, if blind, "Shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (ver. 39). Then He added, "The disciple is not above his master" (ver. 40). If you follow the one that leads you, you won't get beyond him. "But every one that is perfect shall be as his master" (ver. 40). Disciple and master will be in accord.

I believe the end of chapter vi. is connected with this striking parable. The disciple is in accord with his master, as we have just seen. So here the Lord observes, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit. Neither doth a corrupt tree bring

forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit" (vers. 43, 44). That is, the nature of things is manifest. The tree and its fruit are in accord. If you are born of God, it will be seen at once.

And then He added, "For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor off a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil" (vers. 44, 45). That is to say, what you and I really are, comes out. Then He adds immediately, "For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (ver. 45).

Now let us ask ourselves, "Where are *our* hearts? Is it the things of this life that govern us? What is the object before our souls?" The Lord very soon lets us know that what fills our hearts will come out of our mouths. Our hearts and mouths are in accord. Solemn, searching truth! That is to say, the talk, the general conversation indicates what is in my heart. What do we talk about? Christ or the world?

And then we read, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (ver. 46). Now that is very serious. Then He said, "Whosoever cometh to me"—(have you ever come to Him? If not, come to Him just now. He is the only Saviour)—"whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently

upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock" (vers. 47, 48). What sort of foundation for the faith of our souls have you and I got? Is it rock? What is that? I answer in one word, Christ. He is the only safe Foundation.

When men are digging for the foundation of a house, if they are wise, they dig through the earth till they come to bed-rock, and then they begin to build. Many a man has built a house upon earth. He was not at the trouble to get down to a solid foundation, and the consequence was, through time, it all came down.

Had you walked down Princes Street, Edinburgh, a few years ago, you would have seen a tremendous mess at the corner of the Mound? Do you know the reason of that mess? The royal building there had been erected on a lot of rotten piles driven into the shore of what for many years had been "the old loch," and by and by cracks appeared in the building, the foundation having given way. If the authorities had not interfered, the whole edifice must have come down. But that is only a figure. There is many a person to-day, who has got a name to live, who has only got a profession of Christ, resting on a moral life, with the addition of profession without really knowing the person of Christ—the Rock.

Friend, the serious question I raise with you is this, Has your soul got down to bed-rock? With the honest confession of sin, and real deep repentance before God, have you come to God for blessing? I raise that question with every reader of these lines.

How solemn it is to build upon the earth, and not upon the rock. "But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that *without a foundation* built an house upon the earth: against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (ver. 49). The man, that hears the word and does not do it, has nothing before him but eternal ruin. Unless you believe on the Saviour, you will pass into eternity without God, without hope, without mercy. But he, that hears the word and does it, is safe, for Christ has saved him. Let the flood come, let the wind blow, he is on a solid foundation, and that foundation is Christ dead and risen.

Christ Himself is the foundation. "Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7). Is Christ precious to your heart? Have you learned by grace that Christ is everything? It is a wonderful thing, if you have indeed got to know Him, who is the foundation.

Then in your life and ways there will be that which makes perfectly manifest that you are what Scripture calls a doer of the word. The Apostle James says, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. i. 22).

May God in His great goodness exercise your soul on these lines, and bless you abundantly for His name's sake.

W. T. P. W.

THE WRONG DOCTOR.

A WARM September sun was absorbing the dew from lea and hedgerow, and dispersing the mist that floated above the winding river. From various directions workers were converging on a field of yellow grain, and soon the swish, swish of the scythe told that the harvest had begun.

At this time a decade had still to elapse ere the reaping-machine banished very largely the rural labourer with his scythe from the healthful harvest field. All day mowers, lifters, bandsters, binders, and stokers toiled, while many a snatch of song or pleasant jest enlivened the long day's work.

"What has gone wrong with you to-day, John?" said one of the workers to the farmer's son. "You are generally the liveliest on the harvest rig. One might think that you had lost the price of the colt at the market yesterday, so dull are you."

On the previous day when John had taken a colt to be sold at the market town, an unusual thing had happened. As he passed to the auction mart he halted on the outskirts of a crowd of people, who were listening to a street preacher. No one had ever heard of such a thing happening before, that an unordained man should preach on the streets.

Evidently he was uncultured too, for in rugged Scottish accents he reasoned of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," and as he finished he pronounced upon his hearers this solemn judgment:—"Your iniquities have separated between

you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isa. lix. 2).

As a huntsman wounds fatally his quarry, so did this solemn word of God pierce the young man's conscience. Day by day, as he worked in the harvest field, his mind was seeking after God, if haply he might feel after Him, and find Him (see Acts xvii. 27). Sometimes he would try to shake off the impression made by the preacher, but this he found to be impossible, for ever and anon there came to his mind the accusing word:—"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you."

"Try and get John in to see the doctor, I am sore afraid he is going into a decline," said John's mother to his father some weeks later, as the farmer and his son were preparing for market. As the two passed up the High Street of the market town, they encountered the genial old doctor standing at his surgery door.

"Take this lad of mine in, and overhaul him," said the farmer to the doctor. "He has been so dull all through the harvest that the women out our way say his shroud is breast high on him."

"I don't want to see the doctor," protested the youth; "I cannot tell him what is wrong with me."

"Come away, lad," said the doctor, as he shouldered his unwilling patient into his consulting room. "It is my business to find out what is wrong with you. If sick folk would only come sooner to see me, it would be much easier to cure them."

The doctor's brusque but kindly manner exactly suited the unpolished country people among whom he practised.

The medical examination proceeded. Never perhaps was stethoscope placed over sounder lungs, or more regularly beating heart; and the other organs proved to be alike healthy. The doctor was a little puzzled. He had ushered his patient into the world, and had piloted him, and the others of his line, safely through the full tale of childhood's ills. As no organic disease was apparent, he was forced to conclude that the trouble must be mental.

"What do you think about all day?" he asked.

"My sins," said the lad, taken unawares.

"Your sins," exclaimed the doctor. "Well, I am the wrong doctor altogether for you. I can do nothing for anybody's sins, I only cure the body. I don't know how the scales may dip with my own sins when it comes to the Judgment Seat, but I certainly see no need for you to trouble yourself about yours. But since you are worrying yourself about religion, I will tell you the very person to go to. There is a patient of mine, a bed-ridden woman, who lives in the next parish, and she has got a better grip of theology than anyone I ever spoke to. Now, instead of going to the church next Sunday, you walk up the water-side and see Janet W——. She'll expound doctrine to you, I'll warrant."

The invalid referred to was well known in the district as a woman of faith and prayer. While still a girl she had been employed in domestic service

in Edinburgh. There she took fever, and this was followed by various other disorders, for which she was treated in the Old Infirmary. The physician in charge of the ward in which she lay was a man of God, who not only cured the body, but was ever zealous in ministering to the more serious troubles of the soul. Through his conversation Janet was awakened to see her guilt as a sinner before God, and joyfully accepted Christ as her Saviour. Her disease proving not to be amenable to treatment, she returned to her native village in a paralysed condition.

For years she had lain thus in a little cottage by the wayside. The thatch roof, the sanded floor, the box bed, and the meagre appointments told of poverty, but the life and conversation of the invalid was that of one, who realised herself to be chosen of God in Christ Jesus (see Eph. i. 4), to be an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ (see Rom. viii. 17).

Her spirit rose above the infirmity of the flesh, and through time there gravitated to her the bereaved, the burdened, and the sin-sick, and she administered to them the comfort wherewith she herself had been comforted of God (see 2 Cor. i. 4).

The next Sunday found John wending his way to this place. He took with him for the invalid a print of butter wrapped in a cool cabbage leaf, for that was the way in the district. The fields were bare and cheerless, the river flowed with a sullen undertone, and the souging wind seemed to sigh a requiem for the departed summer. To his depressed

mind there came a verse, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. viii. 20). With an effort he put this from him, saying, "The summer is not quite gone, the harvest is not all passed, and I am going to be saved."

The village lay in silence, for the people were at church. He reached the cottage, and stood by its open door. He heard a voice reading, yet more in reverie than reading: "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up" (Ps. v. 3). "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God" (Ps. xiv. 2).

He knocked at the door, and at her request he entered. There was no one to give an introduction, but there was no awkwardness. He felt no diffidence in speaking to her, but told his errand simply. He was an honest seeker after truth, and to her fell the happy task of proclaiming to the needy, seeking soul God's joyous evangel.

"When the people cried to the Lord in their distress," she said, "'he sent his word and healed them' (Ps. cvii. 20). We will look at God's Word, and you will get blessing through it. You remember the Lord Jesus said: 'He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised'" (Luke iv. 18).

"What about my sins?" he asked, and he repeated

the Scripture that had troubled him for weeks: 'Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.'"

"You have thought long enough on that verse," she said, "we will read the one before it now: 'Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear' (Isa. lix. 1). Think on the love of God, who gave His only Son to die for you, and think on the work of Christ. Hear what God says to the believer: 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed' (1 Pet. ii. 24). And again what He says to the sinner: '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). Thus did Janet talk to the young man.

There was a meeting that day between a seeking sinner and a seeking Saviour; the sick soul found the healing touch of the Great Physician—the right physician this time, the soul physician—and that lowly cottage became a Bethel over which even the angels could rejoice.

The very face of nature seemed joyous as John retraced his steps. The river no longer moaned sullenly, but rippled merrily over its shingly bed; the leaves danced in gay eddies round his feet, and the wind seemed to re-echo the grand redemption

chorus: "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (Luke xv. 24).

We would point burdened hearts to Christ, and entreat such to trust simply in the Lord Jesus, and they will find out the truth of the following lines:—

"Ye shall find in Him the filling of the aching void within;
In Him the instant antidote for anguish and for sin;
In Him the conscious meeting of the soul's unuttered
need;
In Him the All that ye have sought, the goal of life indeed.

"As the key is to the lock, when it enters quick and true,
Fitting all the complex wards that are hidden from the
view,
Moving all the secret springs that no other finds or moves,
So is Jesus to the soul, when His saving power it
proves."

M. M.

HAVE YOU A SOUL?

THE well-known Indian missionary, Samuel Hebich, was on one occasion invited to the officers' mess for a special dinner. Being chaplain of the regiment, he accepted the invitation.

A young officer, somewhat under the influence of the wine of which he had partaken, found his delight in boasting of his unbelief, and in mocking the man of God. There was no God, he asserted. A Redeemer and Saviour he had no need of, because man had no soul.

For a time, Hebich listened to his godless remarks in silence, but when the young officer grew bolder and more insulting, Hebich, without saying a word, took his own chair, laid it on the floor and placed it again on its feet. A strong, powerful man, he then went over to the officer, took hold of him with his hands, lifted him high up, and placed him, like his chair, upon the floor, and then again upon his feet. Enraged, the young officer sought to take summary vengeance for the insult to his honour, but was held back by the others present. Hebich then called on them all to witness how the braggart had declared that man was matter, like stone or wood. If that were true, said he, there could be no such thing as honour; the soulless chair had made no objection whatever to the same treatment.

The vain talker was completely nonplussed. He did not know how to answer the ready-witted and logical servant of the Lord, but happily the occasion was used, through the goodness of God, to his salvation.

With a mortal wound in the chest, the young officer fell at the storming of Delhi. A comrade, bending over him, heard his last request. Handing his notebook to him, the dying man asked him to send it to his Christian mother in England, with the last loving greeting from her only son, with the assurance that he was departing to be with Christ, with firm faith in Him as his Lord and Redeemer.

And then he sent one more message, and hearty expression of gratitude, to the missionary to whom

he was indebted for having been awakened to a sense of his sin, and for having through him found salvation in Christ, as he had been the one, who had given him such a convincing proof of the fact that he had a soul, and thereby caused him to turn to Christ as his Saviour.

Reader, have you turned to that Saviour? Remember, you have a soul.

Contributed by H. A. M.

SAVED UPON THE BATTLEFIELD.

AT the outbreak of the present war a young man, full of enthusiasm, answered the call of the country, and enlisted in an Irish regiment. Without any desire after God, or concern about his soul's eternal welfare, he had lived a most reckless, ungodly life, making the most of the "pleasures of sin." As every one experiences, who has sought after the enjoyment of the world, instead of being satisfied, our young friend was discontented, and the more he followed the course of this world, the more discontented he became.

Thinking that now he would find an opportunity to gratify the desires of his heart, he was delighted when, after a few months of training, his regiment was ordered to France, but he had not counted the cost. Almost immediately after arriving upon the Continent, he found himself in the trenches, and

face to face with an ordeal, which he had not anticipated.

For days the roar of the artillery was perfectly deafening; the sky overhead was brilliant with the bursting of shells; men were falling around him dead and wounded. The subject of our narrative had never before considered being placed in such a position, and now the longing after pleasure, which had previously filled his heart, gave place to serious thoughts regarding his sins, and his future.

During the battle of La Bassée he thought that his last day in this world had really come, so terrific was the conflict. For a few moments he gazed upon those who had fallen at his feet, and wondered when his turn would come. The thought filled his mind that he must meet God, and of this he was certain, that if killed at that instant he was altogether unprepared. He had lived for himself, and his only object in the world had been pleasure. What was he to do? There was no gospel preacher there—no one to whom he could turn for help and advice; if he cried to God, would God hear him?

In an instant he was upon his knees, and amongst all his comrades in the trench he cried to God for mercy. Amidst the din of battle, God heard that simple prayer, and the young man arose from his knees feeling as if he were a new man, and possessing courage and strength to stand firm.

Wounded shortly afterwards, he was invalided home, and the writer, to whom he told his story, met him at a military camp in the north of Ireland.

His face beamed with a heavenly joy as he narrated the story, and he said that never previously had he been so happy. He was preparing to leave for France again, but this occasion under quite different circumstances. Instead of going to seek satisfaction, his heart was fully content, and he had with him a Saviour, who promises never to leave nor forsake those who trust Him.

The young man had cause to be happy ; he had discovered the only source of satisfaction. Perhaps the reader is feeling that the world, with all its pleasures, cannot give what he has expected. Let me tell you of One, who loves you—One, who has died for your sake—One, who now asks you to trust Him as a Saviour, and seeks to make you happy in this world and the next. No matter what you have been, the Lord Jesus will receive you just as you are.

The Lord Jesus Christ is willing to receive you now. Through the work accomplished at Calvary's Cross, and in virtue of His precious blood shed, He is able to save the guiltiest sinner.

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10).

A VOICE FROM THE CATACOMBS.

WHEN Christianity first made its appearance in Pagan Rome it found itself in the midst of a state of most incredible immorality and wickedness. The contrast between Paul the martyred,¹ and Nero the murderer, is just the contrast between Christianity and Paganism. Nero was a monster of cruelty, intemperance and debauchery. To describe his conduct is to defile the page, and bring a blush even to the cheeks of the abandoned and wicked. And what characterised Nero was but the general condition of the age. It constituted the flower and fruit of Paganism. A tree is known by its fruits.

Contrast the frightfully cruel public games, the acts of Nero, his murders, his cruelties, his abominable excesses of unspeakable depravity, and Paul's epistle to the Romans—its purity, its altruism, its lofty note, nowhere approached either in kind or degree by heathen writers, its revelation of a God we can admire and adore, its presentation of a gospel of grace founded on *righteousness*, and then ask yourself the question, if Christianity must not be of divine origin? A tree is known by its fruits.

The answer is overwhelming and irresistible. *It MUST be so.*

A description, though very brief, of the catacombs

¹ It was in the reign of Nero that the Apostle Paul was martyred.

will further illustrate this. The catacombs of Rome were under-ground galleries, used as hiding-places or burial-places exclusively by the Christians. Their use proves the terrible persecution of the Christians; their extent, the wonderful way in which God worked in those far-off days.

Mr Withrow states that there are forty-two of these subterranean cemeteries. Signor Michele De Rossi "computes the entire length of all the passages in the Catacombs to be 876,000 mètres, or 587 geographical miles, *equal to the entire length of Italy*, from Etna's fires to the Alpine snows." This shows that ancient subterranean Rome—the Christians' cemetery—is greater in extent than Rome as it exists to-day.

The number of Christian bodies, awaiting the glorious second coming of Christ—awaiting the resurrection—is computed by Signor De Rossi to be about four millions. For nearly three hundred years, or for ten generations, the entire Christian population of Rome was buried there. In times of persecution Christians were hurried to the graves in crowds. As a writer says, "In this silent city of the dead, we are surrounded by a 'mighty cloud of witnesses,' 'a multitude which no man can number,' whose names, unrecorded on earth, are written in the 'Book of Life.' For every one who walks the streets of Rome to-day are hundreds of its former inhabitants calmly sleeping,

'Each in his narrow cell for ever laid':

till the archangel awake them, they slumber,"

We may well ask how Christianity got such a footing. Amid such terrible surroundings, faced by bitter persecutions, entailing loss of business, friends, health, and even life oftentimes, opposed by the natural inclination of man, how comes it that Christianity, without force of arms or lofty patronage, made such headway? There can be only one answer.

"The gospel of Christ . . . is *the power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

Yes, the blessed gospel with all its sweetness and quietness is the mighty dynamic power of God.

Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the contrast seen between Pagan and Christian inscriptions. In the Vatican Museum of Rome there is a most valuable collection of mural inscriptions in the Lapidarian Gallery, or gallery of stones, the sides of which are completely lined with slabs plastered to the walls. On the right hand are arranged Pagan inscriptions; on the left, those of the primitive Christians. The testimony of the latter is a rebuke to the corruptions of the Roman Catholic system, a standing refutation of the character of the place in which they are exhibited.

A writer well says, "In nothing is the difference between the two systems [Paganism and Christianity] so striking as in the spirit in which death is regarded by the professors of the two faiths. With the Pagan it is extinction of existence, the termination of all that is desirable, and a feeling of disappointment with, or revenge against, the Great Disposer of life

and death is manifested; with the Christian all is peace, hope, anticipation of happiness, and vindication of triumph. It has been well said, 'Turn where you will in the catacombs, all is PEACE, PEACE, PEACE, everywhere.'"

To illustrate, examine the following:—

PAGAN.

I, PROCOPE, LIFT UP
MY HANDS AGAINST GOD,
WHO SNATCHED ME AWAY
INNOCENT. SHE LIVED
TWENTY YEARS.

PROCLUS SET UP THIS.

CHRISTIAN.

(Fragment.)

WHO GAVE AND HATH
TAKEN . . . BLESSED . . .
OF THE LORD . . . WHO
LIVED . . . YEARS . . .
IN PEACE, IN THE CON-
SULATE OF . . .

What a contrast! The Pagan inscription regards death as an injury, calling for resentment against God, and man's puny fist is shaken in the face of the Creator. How different is the Christian epitaph! Though a fragment, how beautiful is its spirit, that of submission and thanksgiving. Through tears, the voice is heard, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). How beautiful this is!

Take another contrast:—

PAGAN.

CAIUS JULIUS MAXI-
MUS [AGED] 2 YEARS AND
5 MONTHS.

O RELENTLESS FOR-
TUNE, WHO DELIGHTEST

CHRISTIAN.

PETRONIA, A DEACON'S
WIFE, THE TYPE OF
MODESTY.

IN THIS PLACE I LAY
MY BONES, SPARE YOUR

IN CRUEL DEATH, WHY IS
 MAXIMUS SO SUDDENLY
 SNATCHED FROM ME?—
 HE WHO LATELY USED
 TO LIE JOYFUL ON MY
 BOSOM. THIS STONE NOW
 MARKS HIS TOMB. BE-
 HOLD HIS MOTHER.

TEARS DEAR HUSBAND
 AND DAUGHTER, AND
 BELIEVE THAT IT IS FOR-
 BIDDEN TO WEEP FOR
 ONE WHO LIVES IN GOD.
 BURIED IN PEACE ON
 THE THIRD BEFORE THE
 NONES OF OCTOBER, IN
 THE CONSULATE OF
 FESTUS.

In the Pagan inscription, repining and despondency are marked. There is no note of joy or peace. All is despair and darkness. In the Christian inscription how different! The nearest relatives are forbidden to weep, and consoled by the conviction that the loved wife and mother "*lives in God.*"

Reader, have the catacombs no voice to you? Rather, listen to their testimony, and consider whether the Gospel, that can ennoble men and women, that gives the believer joy and peace in believing, that enables him to face even death with confidence, is not worth considering.

Let me assure you it is the only thing that can stand between you and an eternity of woe. From the days of the catacombs to now, from century to century it has been repeating its triumphs a million times over. May you be swept within its reach, and brought a penitent sinner to the Saviour's feet.

The catacombs witnessed at least one miracle in comparatively recent times. In 1798 a party of French officers, atheists, disciples of Voltaire and

Rosseau, visited the place. They behaved shamefully, drinking, and singing their low songs in the very crypts and galleries where sleep the Christian dead. One of their number, a daring young officer, fearing neither God nor devil, for he believed in neither, resolved to explore the remoter galleries.

He was lost speedily in the winding galleries, and his companions had to leave him to his fate. Imagine his despair. In the dark, with nothing beside him but the bodies of the dead, in almost certain prospect of death, his scepticism utterly failed him. His soul became filled with solemn awe. No longer could he scoff. He had to pray.

God answered his prayer, and he was rescued the next day, but was for long ill. He rose from his bed an altered man.

Seven years later he was slain in the battle of Calabria. A copy of the Gospel was found next his heart.

In pleasant surroundings, in health, and strength, it may be, may the reader face the great matter of his soul's salvation, than which there can be none greater.

Or, if in weakness, with death staring you in the face, perhaps at the battle front, in the trenches, within sound of death-dealing missiles of war, we beseech you to turn to the Lord at once. There is no time to lose. Come just as you are.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). To-morrow may be too late.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

No. 2.—THE SOWER, THE SEED AND THE SOIL.

(Read Luke viii. 1-21.)

THE greatest Evangelist, whose feet have trodden this earth, was the Son of God—One, too, who gave His life to win souls to whom He had brought the word of God. The Lord Jesus in His own person and life was the perfect example of the doctrines which He promulgated and unfolded.

And, as the Sower of the seed, in this scripture there is something exceedingly beautiful in seeing the way in which the Spirit of God presents Him to us, before opening up and giving us the record of this remarkable parable, which the Lord spoke.

I do not know any verse in all the Bible, that, in a certain way, moves my heart so much as the first verse of Luke viii. Listen! "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout *every* city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." Blessed, blessed Master!

What do we, Christians, think of our life and pathway, as we view the tremendous need of sinners all around us? There is something exquisite in this verse. His blessed feet carried Him to *every* city and village. Think of it. A country much larger than Wales, and there was not a city or village that God's blessed Son did not travel to. What to do? "Preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." He brought the tidings of

the precious truth—the unfolding of what God has made known in love.

It is not here so much a question of the authority of God, as God revealed and made known, and when He preached the kingdom it must have been an exquisitely sweet tale He told about God's rule. If nothing stirs our hearts in the gospel, this should stir us up. And I am bold to say we need stirring up. Oh! how easy we take it. How calmly and quietly you and I can sit down, and how much concern have we got for the souls of others? Mighty little when all is told. But oh! look at Jesus. "Every city and village." Blessed Master! Blessed Saviour!

Well, friend, He is not now upon earth, because He has passed out of the scene; but He had companions with Him in that day, those who were associated with Him and His precious work. And I do not know anything more wonderful than being "put in trust with the gospel." May the Lord move all the hearts of His people with a greater desire to spread the good news all abroad.

In that day not only were the twelve with Him, but "certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities" (ver. 2), accompanied the Lord. God is careful to tell us of these women. What a good place the women in that day had. It is not a question of preaching, but attachment to Christ. So, dear sister in the Lord, you see to it that Christ governs and controls you, and get

attached to Him. Then you will serve Him according to Scripture.

In verse 4 we read, "And when much people were gathered together . . . he spake by a parable." There is a wonderful lesson in this. We see the mighty power of the Gospel. Look at the crowds. What drew them? The grace of Christ, the sweetness of the words of Christ. We are told they came from every city. A remarkable statement. And then the Lord enunciates this wonderful parable.

"A sower went out to sow his seed" (ver. 5). You get at once the reason of the coming of Christ to the earth. If you get in your soul a glimpse of what the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world for, I think you would get blessing.

"A sower went out to sow his seed." What is the very first thought? God coming and claiming something from man? Oh! no. The first thing we naturally think is, God wants something from me. He does not. "A sower went out to sow his seed." What does He ask of the ground? Nothing. What does He do? He puts something into it. What does He want to put into you? The word of God. Not the thoughts of man. No, the word of God, and if you got that into your soul, there would be new life and fruit also. If God's word got right down into the right soil, as the end of the story shows, there would be fruit. And that, of course, leads into eternal life, no doubt about it.

But see, first of all He sows. He is not demanding anything. The day of the law has gone by. What

does God do? He begins a new work—communicates something by His word. As the Apostle Peter puts it:—"Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23). And I believe that is the instrument. God uses His word, by His Spirit. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5).

I am not going to say what bit of God's word He will use. It differs in almost every case. What do you think was the means of my soul being reached? A verse that had not got a scrap of gospel in it. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19). Not much gospel in that, is there? "Thou believest there is one God." Of course there is, I believe that. "Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." The devils in hell, the damned, believe all that I believed. They were damned. And I tell you what I saw. I saw what terrible company I was in. And I am not ashamed to confess that I fled from that company on the spot. That was the word God used to convert me. God is sovereign. Oh! my friend, if you get into hell, you will never get out. You may not have a chance to-morrow. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. ix. 17).

Remember, you must be born again. How? His Word will do it. Oh! the sovereignty of God is wondrous in the way He meets souls. He

will sometimes use a dumb creature to be the instrument to carry His word to souls. But He uses His word.

Stop, how have you treated the word of God? He may not always deal as He has dealt with some. His tender mercy is unlimited, I know. But the Scripture says, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18). Lose no time in coming to Jesus. You may have your doubts about Scripture, but there is nothing like a sick-bed or a death-bed to dispel the doubts out of your heart.

Come with me to the death-bed of an infidel. A blatant infidel he had been. His brother had been expelled from his house because he loved the name of the Lord Jesus. But one Sunday evening the believer got a message to go and see his brother. He went, and when he got there he found his brother was very ill. He went up to his bedroom, and there saw the infidel with the very dew of death on his brow, and the horrors of hell gleaming from his eyes.

"Robert," said the dying man, "I am dying. There is a God, and I have to meet Him: and there is a hell, and I am going there."

"Oh!" said the Christian brother, "listen," and he spoke to him of God, and of the Lord Jesus, and of the gospel. He bent on his knees, but the heavens seemed brass over his head. Ah! no, it was in vain. And as he got up off his knees, the brother said, "It is no use. I am dying and there is a God."

And then he turned and, pointing to his only daughter, he said, "When I am gone, read to her the Bible, the Word of God, and promise me this, that you will burn all the books in my house, the infidel books," And with that prayer upon his lips the poor fellow died.

Sinner, hell is an awful reality. Escape it. You cannot tell how soon you may go into eternity.

You will notice there are four classes in this parable. I do not dwell upon the parable so much as upon the interpretation of it. Only this I will say, that in verse 8 we read, "And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." It is a call of the most urgent and solemn nature, for those who do hear His word to give heed. Now the question is raised, have you ears to hear? If so, hear. The man that hears lives. He will get saved. He will find the Lord Jesus Christ as his own Saviour. Let me ask you, Have you ever heard really? Have you listened to His voice? Have you pondered over the solemn importance of listening to the word?

The disciples then say, "What might this parable be?" The Lord replies, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand" (ver. 10). The mass of the nation of Israel would not have Him, but there were souls, who wanted the truth, and they got it. There are **always some** who want the truth. Are you one

such? Do you desire salvation? You are welcome to it. You may have it, sinner of the deepest dye though you may have been.

But stop a bit, how will you get it? "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (vers. 11, 12). There are four classes that hear. Wayside hearers, rocky ground hearers, thorny ground hearers and good ground hearers. How many there are who hear. *You* are listening, as it were, to this message from God. What are you going to do with this good seed of the gospel?

I tell you plainly, "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). Scripture says again, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. ii. 12). Again, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Again, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). What tidings for unsaved sinners are these! Again, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

Next we read:—"Then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (ver. 12). The effect of the

gospel is to bring a man salvation. The object of the gospel is to bring the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins. Salvation is a big word. Of course it is salvation in time and eternity too. And why? Because of what the alternative is. What is that? Damnation. I know it is not fashionable to preach it. But I am going to present the truth earnestly to you, my reader. Make no mistake. If you do not get God's salvation you will have damnation. How serious! And the devil is ever watching to catch away the word, lest you should believe and be saved. May his fell purpose be defeated in your case. May you not be proved a wayside hearer.

But then there is another class. We read, "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (ver. 13). These people make a profession. Yes, perhaps just like you. You thought you received the truth. Yes, but what has happened since? You got out into the world, and temptation came, and you fell away—gave up your profession. Do you know what was the matter? "No root." The ploughshare of conviction had never done its true work.

Oh! man, who bears the name of Christ, whose ways are careless, say what you like, your case is written out here. "No root." See to it that you are not a stony ground hearer.

Alas! there is a larger class still. "And that

which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (ver. 14). These are a little more serious than the former class. The good seed is choked by what Scripture calls "The lust of other things." Cares, that trouble the poor; riches, that relate to people that are well off—these are like weeds that choke the good seed of the word. Cares! We all know them. Do not you let cares keep you from Christ. Riches! Can riches save you? Trust them and you will lose everything, and your soul to boot. The pleasures of this life! And what is their effect? The seed choked and no fruit. Such, as are thus described, may carry on a profession of Christ, but there is no fruit to perfection. They are not marked off as those in whom God's Spirit has really wrought.

But there is a beautiful class, which closes this story. "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (ver. 15). What is an honest heart? Is your heart honest?

"But," you say, "how do you describe what is an honest heart?" I believe that an honest heart is one that knows it is dishonest to the core, and a good heart is a heart that is persuaded it is bad through and through. And a man, that knows he has got a heart like that, loves to get Christ, to know Jesus and His love. Oh! you cannot trust your own heart. Do

not trust it, but trust in the Lord. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. xvii. 5).

An honest and good heart looks away from itself, believes what God has said, and receives the gospel. Such keep the Word. They feel everything hangs upon their believing God's testimony, and receiving Christ, because the one is the *written* word of Scripture, whilst the other is the *living* Word, the Lord Himself, and you cannot disconnect the two.

And what is the next thing? "Bring forth fruit with patience" (ver. 15). What is the fruit? That which suits God, divine love, joy, peace, and the like.

And what next? If you have got the truth, it comes out. Because the Lord says, "No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light" (ver. 16). Thank God, the seed is not choked in this class, but take heed that the light is not covered. Let us beware of the bushel and the bed. What is the bushel? I think it is business. A Christian may let his business cover up the light. And then there is the bed, a figure of sloth, a want of diligence and earnestness.

Then the Lord says, "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken

even that which he seemeth to have" (ver. 18), and then they come and say, as it were, "Here are some of those that are linked with you, who want to speak to you." Do you know how He closes? "My mother and my brethren are these which *hear* the word of God and do it" (ver. 21).

This is very beautiful. The Lord owns relationship with anyone, who hears God's word, and does it. And when I say does it, I mean the word getting in and forming the life and the character.

Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? When you have salvation in Him, you have passed from death unto life, and the exhortation comes to you, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). A Christian is not saved completely until he gets out of this world, that is to say, as to his body. By and by we shall be taken out of this world, but whilst here we need the word of God to feed upon. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word" (Ps. cxix. 9). The word of God is the guide of the soul in that sense. Feed upon it.

Friend, if you have received the word of God, cleave to it, feed on it. It will guide you and keep you, and you will get the sense of what it is to be in relationship with Christ where He now is at the right hand of God.

God give you, indeed, to be a good ground hearer of His word, for His name's sake. W. T. P. W.

WHAT I SAW IN THE ALBUM.

IT was in a cosy sitting-room in a remote Norfolk village, some years ago, that the writer sat, turning over the pages of a young lady's album. It contained the usual poetical and artistic contributions, more or less interesting. But one page arrested his attention. The very brevity of the inscription seemed to indicate that behind it lay a very interesting story. Nor was the writer disappointed in his surmise. On the page stood out the following quotation from Scripture, with two initials appended thereto :—

“When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion (Luke xv. 20).—R. M.”

The writer turned to the owner of the album, and inquired the meaning of the page, which had arrested his attention. Let him tell the story, which was elicited by his question. It made a very deep mark on his memory, all the more because both the sweet young Christian lady, who told the story, and R. M., the writer of the inscription, have both since passed away to be with the Lord.

R. M. was the son of a well-to-do northern manufacturer. Fragile, very fair, and delicate in appearance, he gave one the idea of Dresden china. Well educated, with a rich Christian father, there was every reason why he should have good advantages in the start of life.

But he flung all to the winds, and became a prodigal,

and had to learn that the way of transgressors is hard. He got out to South Africa, and at one time this cultured youth with rich parents earned a rough living by being a bottle washer in a remote inland South African hotel.

Drink and debauchery told upon R. M.'s delicate frame. He went from bad to worse, till he found himself penniless and ill in the streets of Cape Town. He had no money wherewith to procure food and a night's lodging, so he cast about what to do. He espied some timber lying on the wharf, and he determined to seek a shelter for the night.

Evidently the same idea had struck another. Dirty, ragged, aged, he evidently belonged to that frightfully degraded class of persons constituting the genus tramp. He accosted R. M. with the remark, "Well, old pal, seeking a night's lodging?"

The word, *pal*, grated upon R. M.'s ear. What had he come to that such a wretched specimen of humanity should claim him as a *pal*! He ensconced himself among the timber, but not to sleep. It was a brilliant moonlight night. Hour after hour R. M. faced the question of his past. Sin, *sin*, SIN, filled his memory, and appalled him as he thought of it. His fill of sin had brought him neither prosperity nor happiness. He faced the future. Hungry, sick, penniless, the future life seemed near. Where would he spend eternity? It could not be heaven. It must be hell. Awful prospect!

And then he recalled the gospel. Often had he heard it faithfully preached by God's servants. He

had heard of God's mercy, His long-suffering, His grace, His rich provision of forgiveness and salvation for needy sinners, through the finished work of Christ upon the cross. All this exactly suited his need, and appealed to the mood his bitter reflections had brought.

Blessed be God, His Holy Spirit worked in the young man's heart. Repentance, bitter and deep, filled him with concern and grief. Then he was led to cast himself in simple faith as a poor, needy, lost sinner at the Saviour's feet, and in that strange bedroom, in that far distant land, he received the knowledge of pardon and forgiveness.

How plain are the terms of Scripture, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "Through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). How simple! How blessed!

"Joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13), became R. M.'s happy portion. Reconciled to God, his first concern was to be reconciled to his earthly father. He joined on as a stoker of a Cape liner, and worked his passage home. Soon he was at the old familiar home of his childhood, seeking forgiveness from his earthly parents, obtained it, and when I knew him, he was earning his living in a respectable way, and preaching the gospel to others as he had opportunity.

Alas! his early excesses told upon a naturally delicate frame, and after a few years he passed away, inexpressibly happy in the prospect of being with Christ in the "far better" portion.

No wonder that, when R. M. was asked to write in

the album, his grateful heart found expression in the wonderful words of Luke xv. 20, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion."

Reader, have you found the Lord to be your Saviour yet? Have you trusted Him yet? If not, you have behind you a lifetime of sin, before you an eternity of judgment. Remember, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but AFTER THIS the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

God waits to have compassion. He is ready to pardon. Christ has died. Atonement is effected. Will you not trust that blessed Saviour? Do so, here and now. He is ready to save you, here and now.

A. J. P.

"WHICH THIEF?"

"O H! of course, I intend to be saved some time; but there is no use being in a hurry about it. There is always a chance, even at the eleventh hour. Remember the dying thief!" carelessly said a young man at the close of a meeting, when spoken to about his soul.

"*Which thief?*" pointedly asked his questioner.

"Why, I had really forgotten there were two. I mean the saved one," was the reply, as an anxious expression came over his face.

"Yes, one was saved, and is in heaven now. The other, who had an equal opportunity of salvation, missed his opportunity. What warrant have you that you will not spend eternity as he will, rather than as the other?"

It was a word fitly spoken, an arrow that pierced the joints of his harness; and the young man was led to see the folly of further procrastination, and that night was saved for eternity, through receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour.

Thousands, like him, forget there were "two thieves." They remember the mercy of God that saved the one, while forgetting the judgment of God meted out to the other. Carelessly they wander on, hoping to be saved at last; but, alas! how many are cut off in sin, and are lost for ever, to whom the gospel had been often presented, but who, presuming on the patience of God, rejected it until "there was no remedy."

Which thief, reader, we affectionately ask, would you be like? We recollect speaking once to a very refined and elegant lady on a steamer, who asked, indignantly, "You do not mean to say I have got to go to heaven like the dying thief, do you?"

"No, madam," we replied, "you do not have to. If you reject Christ, you will have to spend a lost eternity with the other."

And so we would remind the reader:

The saved thief believed on the Son of God, and is with Christ now.

The lost thief scorned a Saviour, and is in the depths of woe.

You *must* be with one or the other for eternity.

"Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18).

AN INVITATION, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

A GOOD many years ago a few Christians hired a first floor room in a house in Kings Inn Street, Dublin, where they held a gospel service every Lord's Day afternoon, to which I invited my mother. She, in her turn, invited Mrs B——, a very dear friend of hers.

One of the preachers at this room was well known for using "great plainness of speech" in dealing with souls. He was one who believed in "ploughing" before "sowing." Mere surface work was not his method of presenting the gospel, and with what result this story will show.

This servant of the Lord was the preacher when my mother and Mrs B—— went for the first time, and he continued to take the services for some weeks afterwards, during which time my mother and her friend attended regularly. We concluded that they were quite interested, and had no idea of the deep work of God that was going on in their souls, and especially that of Mrs B——.

Some time after the preacher, Mr T——, finished his turn of preaching at the room, I called to see Mrs B——.

During the conversation I referred to Mr T——, when she told me that the first time she heard him, she almost *hated* him, "but now," she said, "I love to hear him, although for weeks he caused me more sorrow than anybody else I ever knew."

"Well," I exclaimed, "you do surprise me! Why, Mr T—— wouldn't knowingly do anybody any harm. What do you mean?"

"Well, Tom" (she always called me by my Christian name, having known me from a boy), she replied, "I will tell *you*, although I have told nobody else, not even your mother. I was always a good girl; in fact I scorned to tell a lie. Of course I believed, in a sense, that I was a sinner, because the Bible says so; and I believed in the Saviour, in a sort of way, though I had a lurking thought in my heart that my good life would go a long way towards helping me to get to heaven. But God loved me too much to allow that idea to remain in my heart.

"Now you know, Tom," she went on, "I was always a very true churchwoman, and when your mother asked me to go with her to that room, I felt like refusing at once. But, out of respect for your mother and you (for I knew you were interested in it), I thought I would just go *for once*. Oh, dear! if you only knew what a struggle it was to me as I went down that street (not a very select locality by any means), and then walked up those steps, along that passage, up those creaky stairs, and into that dimly-lighted room—so unlike our beautiful church. Ah, well! it is all over now, but I tell you if I had not seen *you* standing on the steps, I believe I should have gone back; but, thank God, you were there.

"Then Mr T—— got up and gave out a hymn, and

afterwards prayed. Why, he spoke to God as though He were near, and as if he *knew* Him; and then he read a portion of the Bible as though he was determined to force it home on us. Well, thought I, I have no business to be in such a place!

"But when he began to speak in such an informal way on the verses he had read, he seemed worse still. He seemed to single *me* out, and speak to *me* alone. 'Yes,' I can almost hear him repeating it, 'you pride yourself upon your upright, moral life; you flatter yourself that you are not as bad as your neighbours; that you have not committed any *big* sins at any rate; and you think that your church-going, Bible-reading, and praying will go a long way towards saving you. You think that when the great day of judgment comes you will stand before God, and plead your good life, and if that is not enough you will fall back upon the death of Christ as a sort of 'make-weight,' and God will accept your two pleas, and forgive you!

"Let me tell you that He will not. God will not have *your* works (good or bad) put side by side with the work of *Christ*. You must take your stand on either one or the other, but not on both. If you stand before God to be judged according to *your* works, you will be lost for ever. For God says that salvation is "not of *works*," "not of *yourselves*" (Eph. ii. 8, 9), that it is "*not* by works of righteousness which *we* have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Tit. iii. 5).

"Ah!" continued Mrs B——, "this was terrible

for me to listen to; but I felt it was *true*. It was just what I had been doing all my life—building my hopes for heaven in the main on an outwardly blameless life, forgetting that God had said, ‘there is *none* righteous, no not *one*’ (Rom. iii. 10). So you can imagine with what a sad heart I left that room that evening. Within one short hour I had been brought down from the heights of self-righteousness to the depths of despair as a convicted sinner. But not only was I sad; I was bitter as well, and especially angry at Mr T——, and vowed inwardly that I would never go to hear *him* again. All that week I felt miserable, but still determined not to go to that room.

“But on Sunday afternoon your mother knocked at my door, put her cheerful face inside, and said: ‘Are you coming to the service, Mrs B——?’ How could I refuse! It would grieve her if I did; so I got my things on, and we went together. On the way I consoled myself with the thought that Mr T—— might not be the preacher that afternoon.

“But when we got into the room there he was sitting near the little table from which he spoke. That afternoon he spoke about people trying to save themselves by keeping the law, and seemed to be more pointed and personal than before. He pointed out from Scripture that ‘*as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse*’ [not under *salvation*] ‘for it is written, 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).

"I left that room that evening more miserable than the first, and more determined not to go again. But the next Sunday your mother called again, with the same result, except that I seemed more miserable still.

"The fourth Sunday your mother called again, and once more I went with her to that room, which I now seemed to have such a horror of, and yet I was compelled to go. That afternoon Mr T—— seemed worse than ever. He seemed to sweep away every bit of ground from under my feet, and I was left helpless and hopeless.¹ Your mother asked me to go in to tea with her, but I said No; I wished to be *alone*.

"I went up to my room, and was *alone*, for even God seemed to have forsaken me. I paced the room in an agony of despair till ten o'clock, when I went to bed, but not to sleep. I never closed my eyes, afraid lest I should die in my sleep, and wake up in hell. About midnight I got up, and paced the room for some time, and then threw myself by my bedside, and tried to pray, but the heavens seemed like brass. God would not hear me. At last in my agony of soul I cried out, 'Though He *slay* me, yet will I trust in Him' (Job xiii. 15). Then I got up, and walked down to the end of the room, where on

¹ Not but that I believe Mr T—— presented the *remedy* as well as the *ruin*, but Mrs B—— was absorbed with thoughts as to her lost and ruined condition before God.

the sideboard I saw by the bright moonlight a tract which you gave me the first Sunday I went to the room. Why I had not read it before I cannot say, or how it came to be on that sideboard a month after, I know not. I picked it up, and for the first time noticed the title was—

‘*God is satisfied ; are you ?*’

“Almost against my own will I was compelled to turn up the lamp, sit there in the cold at midnight, in my night-dress, and read that tract right through. Never shall I forget the interest with which I read it. It seemed as though it were written for *me* alone. As I saw what the writer so clearly pointed out, that God wanted *nothing* from the sinner, that He was *satisfied* with the work of Christ *alone*, light streamed in upon my soul, dispelling all the darkness, the distance, and the despair of the past month, and I was *filled* with joy and peace in *believing* (see Rom. xv. 13). I could really say—

‘God is satisfied with Jesus,
I am satisfied as well.’

“No sleep for me that night ; I was too happy. In fact the room seemed like heaven, and God felt so *near*.

“And the meetings in Kings Inn Street ! Yes, I have gone to them ever since, and always shall as long as the Lord gives me strength. What a difference the *fifth* Sunday was to the other four ! Why I seemed eager to get there ; and those dull steps seemed to

almost shine, and the creaky stairs seemed to sing, while that shabby room seemed bright with the glory of God. Yes, and dear Mr T—— preached again. Was I afraid of his searching words this time? Not at all. They only showed me the *value* of the Saviour I had found; who had saved me from the curse of a broken law, by being made a curse for me."

Reader, have you found this Saviour, or are you still resting in your own self-righteousness? If the latter, turn to the Lord here and now. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 13).

T. C. M.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

NO. 3. THE FOOLISH FARMER AND THE WISE SERVANT.

(Read Luke xii. 1-48.)

IN this scripture we have two parables, one concerning a foolish farmer, who evidently thought only of time and disregarded eternity, the other regarding a wise servant, who looked at eternity, in time, and lived in view of it. Each reader will soon find himself or herself for eternity in the company of the one or the other, as depicted in these two parables. Which shall it be?

In the first place note that the Lord has here an immense crowd gathered round Him. There never was a preacher like the Lord Jesus, so winsome, so

tender, so wonderful. With what power the word came out, and oftentimes his hearers were cut to the heart. There is wonderful power in the Word of God. It lays bare. It does not leave a man in a fool's paradise, if he will only listen to it.

Have *you* ever listened to God? No. Remember, one day you will. You will assuredly hear His voice, though it may not be on this earth. God grant that you may hear it in this, the day of His mercy. I warn you. The soul that now makes light of Christ is in an awful case. Come and listen to His words of wisdom. Follow Him down this chapter, and see how He opens up the blessedness of having to do with Himself, and having the knowledge of God.

Mark the way He speaks of the things that naturally affect us as we pass through this world. First of all there is hypocrisy. Secondly, there is the fear of man. Thirdly, covetousness. And lastly, there is care.

What is a hypocrite? A man who is neither what he seems to be, nor seems what he really is. This is a danger with us all. Because, mark, if we were not in danger, the Lord would not have said, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (ver. 1).

The Lord says to you and me, Be what you are. If you are not a converted person, do not pose as such. He says, "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be pro-

claimed upon the housetops" (vers. 2 and 3). That is, He brings in light. He cures hypocrisy in this way. Everything is coming out.

Do you object to everything in your life coming out? "Yes," you say, "I decidedly do." Then your life will not do. That is clear. There is something going on that ought not to be. Do you think that the Lord Jesus Christ objected to anything in His life coming out? He could say, in effect, "I am absolutely what I say unto you" (see John viii.). Did the Apostle Paul object to anything coming out? He says, "We are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. v. 11). He says, as it were, "My heart is like a piece of transparent glass, I have nothing to conceal." Yes, my friend, all is coming out. Do not forget that. Do not cloak up your sin, but get into God's presence about it. There is nothing but blessing for you if you do.

What is the next thing here? The fear of man. Often a man may be convinced of the truth, but is afraid of the consequences of answering to it. How is that met? By a greater fear—the fear of God. You say, "Well, I should not like to do anything that would be against God." Thank God; it is a great thing to have the "fear of God" before your eyes. The unregenerate man has no such fear.

Then there comes out another thing. The confession of His Name. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (vers. 8 and 9).

Beloved friend, bow to God's Word, I implore you. Believe in and confess Christ truly before men, and He will confess you in a future day.

All this leads up to the remarkable parable we are about to consider. At that moment, when the Lord was unfolding these beautiful principles, an interruption took place. "And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me" (ver. 13). The Lord had been speaking of that which carries the soul really into heavenly scenes, which are eternal and abiding. This man introduces the earthly side of things. No doubt his brother had got hold of the inheritance, and selfishly was determined to keep it. This man wanted half of it. Perhaps *all* very possibly. But whatever it was, it was earth. Unconcerned about the wondrous heavenly things, he seemed engrossed about earthly things. Are there not multitudes like him? Are you one such? The Lord simply says, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (ver. 14). He had not come to be the Judge then. He is going to be the Judge by and by. God "hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31). But Jesus had not come to put things right down here then. What then did He come for? The answer is beautiful. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might

be saved" (John iii. 17). He came to save sinners. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10).

This incident gives occasion for a solemn warning. The Lord says, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (ver. 15). What an important principle comes out here. What is covetousness? It is simply this, I would like to possess a little more than I have. That is "the lust of the eyes." Lust and pride are really what the world is made up of to-day. A servant of the Lord once said, "Slave and gather is the world's motto." You know perfectly well this is what marks the world. "Sell and give" are the Lord's instructions to His own (ver. 33).

But Christ brings out a totally different order of things altogether. He says, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (ver. 15). And then He puts forth this parable of the rich but foolish farmer. His ground brings forth plentifully. He has prospered immensely. The harvest time has come, and he is confronted with an enormous difficulty. He says, "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?" (ver. 17). Where is he to put all this wealth? Are there no poor at his door? Is there no Lazarus near by? Apparently the thought of helping others had never troubled him. The one single thought of this man was *self*. That was his centre. He was utterly selfish.

He solves the difficulty. "This will I do: I will

pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods" (ver. 18). In imagination the building rises before him. Down comes the old building, and he sees these huge barns built, and the goods brought into them. Aye, he even goes a little further, for he says, "I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (ver. 19). How he calculates! Much goods, many years! And then apparently a voice, that he did not reckon on, disturbs his calculations, and God says to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (ver. 20). By whom was his soul required? By God. You know you owe your being to God. You may have a lease of your house, but you cannot take a lease of your life. You are not your own. Your barns may be yours. Your house may be yours. But *you* are a creature of God, and responsible to Him. Remember that.

This man left God out altogether. And in that moment God's voice is heard. And this poor fellow in a moment has to leave all, and pass into eternity. And as he goes into eternity, how does God brand him? As a fool.

How is a fool known? By his folly. So God tells us. They feed on folly, and then pour it out. "The mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Prov. xv. 2). "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii. 34). What is in comes out. What was filling that man's heart were the things

of time and sense. What of eternity? He had not a serious thought as to it. Have you? Mark you, eternity is before you. Where will you spend it? Perhaps a man says, "I do not know." Why do you not know? Are you not serious enough to inquire where you will spend it? Is eternity mere chance work? No one can deny you are a sinner. I implore you, reader, think of eternity.

"Pause and know, where wilt thou be
During God's Eternity?"

To make a mistake here is fatal.

The next thing the Lord says is, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment" (vers. 22 and 23). And then He passes on to say, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (ver. 33). It is wonderful how thieves break in and steal the things men think are secure, and which they love to have. Everything passes away in this world sooner or later. They either pass from us, or we pass from them. How insecure is life! How short it is! Let me have something solid and eternal that will not fade away.

"Ah!" says Christ, as it were, "see to it that you have a treasure in the heavens." For mark, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (ver. 34). And what is the treasure of a Christian? Christ. Is that not so? The believer loves Christ.

His heart delights in His grace. He has saved him, delivered him, and brought him to God. He is the joy of his heart. In life or in death He is everything to him. But the person who does not know Him, what is his case? You may have a great deal down here, but it must soon go. Or you must soon go. One or the other must take place. There is no doubt about that.

Then the Lord says, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (vers. 35 and 36). The rejection and absence of the Lord is here contemplated by Him. Christ is absent now. He has died. The work of atonement has been effected by Him, and He has gone up on high, and the Holy Ghost has come down. He says, as it were, "While I am away, I want you, Christians, to wait for me." This is a word for Christians.

Then He adds, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching" (ver. 37). He not only has saved the believer by faith in His name, but He makes him a servant. There is no honour like it. It is the greatest honour of God conferred upon man. "Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (ver. 37). When the Lord takes His own to Himself by-and-by, we shall find He is the same Jesus then, as we have

seen Him upon earth, as depicted in the gospels, and the blessed One we know now.

Then He says, "And this know, that if the good-man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (vers. 39 and 40). Are you ready? That is the question? Are you ready for His coming?

We read, "Then Peter said unto Him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" (ver. 41). And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord *when he cometh shall find so doing*. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath" (vers. 42-44). It is a great thing, dear reader, instead of being a selfish fool, to be a wise servant. And if I have only been a selfish fool, what a happy thing to cross the line, and get into touch with Christ, and to be in His service, and do His bidding and will. That is the idea of the faithful and wise steward here.

I pray God that every one of my readers may make up his or her mind that if they have been in the circle of the first parable till this hour, they will leave it at once, and step into the circle of the wise servants, receive Christ as Saviour, and make Him the Centre of their life and the Object of their heart.

W. T. P. W.

"GOD HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL."

EIGHT men were travelling in company through one of the huge canyons of Colorado. On each side of the wāggon track towered the mighty rocks, seeming almost to pierce the heavens with their jagged summits, their rugged sides seamed with the convulsions that had given them birth, worn here and there by the downward rush of the mountain torrent, and in other places clothed with the dark foliage of giant trees. An awe-inspiring scene, and fitted to impress the traveller with a sense of his own littleness, and the power and majesty of the great Creator.

These eight men, however, gave little thought to the wonders around them, and the time was passed in light conversation and jest.

One of them, feeling heated by the oppressive atmosphere of the rock-girt valley, took off his coat, and threw it down beside him, forgetting that there was a loaded pistol in the pocket. This exploded, wounding the unhappy man fatally.

His seven companions did all they could for him, but they soon saw that it was beyond their power to save his life.

"All we can do," said one of them, "is to stay with you until you die," and, hushed and solemnized by the approach of death, they watched by the side of their comrade, conscious of their inability to help him.

All at once the dying man raised himself, and

expending all his remaining strength in the effort, he cried aloud: "*God have mercy upon my soul!*" and immediately expired.

The air around them reverberated with the thrilling intensity of the last cry of their now dead companion, thus actually echoed with terrible distinctness in the ears of the seven. Gradually the echo died away in silence, deep, solemn, impressive, and the awe-struck listeners could not but ponder upon what they had heard.

Was it the despairing cry of a lost soul? Was it even so that the echoes of Eternity might take up the agonized wail of those who, too late, are awakened to consider their eternal interests, repeating it for ever in their ears?

One by one those seven men threw themselves upon their knees, and then and there cried, "*God have mercy upon my soul!*" and yielded themselves up as helpless and lost sinners to the God who alone could save them. The one, who afterwards related the story, testified that he had indeed entered upon a new life that day in the canyon of Colorado. To those seven men it was as if the veil had for a moment been lifted, and they had had a glimpse of the immense importance of eternal things. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36).

Reader, have you been awakened to see things as they stand clearly revealed to you in the light of eternity? Or are your eyes still blinded, and is your prospect bounded by the things of time?

Remember, it is written, "Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

The Cross of Christ presents a marvellous exhibition of God's saving mercy, but for those who persist in rejecting it, what further mercy can there be?

God's mercy is linked with the sacrifice of Christ.

If you will not accept the latter you cannot have the former; but if you receive the one, the other is yours.

The nature of your eternity will be decided by your relation to a crucified Saviour. Reject Him, and you are lost, let your morality be ever so high. Accept him, and you are saved, though your sins have been many.

M. E. M.

A MISLEADING SIGNAL.

AMONG the many trading ships sunk during the war by German submarines was the barque, "William T. Lewis," owned by Messrs Rolph, of London. She was sunk off the Irish coast after having been at sea for one hundred and sixty days.

The "U" boat approached the barque, fired two shots across her bows, and then inquired, by signal, as to her nationality. In reply the ensign of the British mercantile marine was hoisted.

The submarine next ran up another signal, which meant: "*Can your damages be put right at sea?*"

Whatever could be the intentions of the Germans

in signalling such a question? Captain Manning, of the barque, naturally wondered, and hesitated as to the answer he should give. The delay in answering caused the submarine to open shell-fire upon the barque, and the spars were smashed.

Now accidentally, or perhaps through ignorance, the signal had been hoisted upside down! Reversed it would have meant: "*Abandon ship*," and this clearly is the message that was intended by the Germans.

The crew, twenty-six men, took to their boats, and after fourteen hours were picked up by a Danish ship, and transferred later to a patrol boat, which landed them in safety.

You will wonder, perhaps, why we speak of this incident to the readers of a magazine like this. The reason is that every reader is in reality a voyager, sailing over life's ocean, and that *many are being trapped and deceived by misleading signals*. There are lots of people who profess to be anxious to do good to their fellow-men; their endeavours may be undertaken in all sincerity, yet, alas, how deceptive are their signals!

One will speak to you of your shortcomings, perhaps, and entreat you to make up your mind to live a better life. Such a signal resembles that of the submarine: "*Can your damages be put right at sea?*" Damaged you most certainly are. *Sin* has damaged you. But cannot the damage be put right? Cannot you "turn over a new leaf," and "start afresh?" This is what the misleading signal

suggests. You are thereby set to do an impossible task; you are occupied with your hopelessly bad self, under the impression that by persevering effort you may succeed in reforming and improving yourself.

This signal is upside down! The advice that would set you upon this track is all wrong! Let us reverse the signal, and make it read thus:

“ABANDON SHIP.”

Let us compare you to a ship, not only damaged, but *irretrievably* damaged by sin. You cannot mend yourself. Your only remedy is to *abandon yourself* in the sense of giving up all hope of safety through any efforts such as I have referred to. The well-known hymn puts it thus:—

“Leave the poor old stranded wreck,
And pull for the shore!”

Explanatory of what is meant by this is the verse of another hymn:—

“Man is a total wreck; can never reach the shore,
All who trust in Jesus Christ are saved evermore.”

If “the shore” stands for salvation, *that* is the direction in which the sinner should set his face, rather than in the direction of self-improvement. But, of ourselves, we can never reach “the shore.” We can never obtain salvation by anything that we can do. But faith in Christ can save.

Turn then from self-effort in every form and phase. In this sense of the word, “Abandon ship!”

Make Christ the sole object of your trust. Claim Him as your Saviour. Then you will not only be delivered from the wrath to come (see 1 Thess. i. 10), but God will give you His Holy Spirit to guide and teach you, and help you in a hundred ways. We learn this from Ephesians i. 13, which tell us that those who trusted in Christ (on receiving the glad tidings of salvation through faith in Him) were "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

H. P. B.

TAKING THE FIRST CHANCE.

IT was one summer morning, in the beautiful Scotch holiday resort of D——, that we set out for a walk to some rising ground in the rear of the town from which a good view is obtainable. Not being in a hurry, we took a seat by the roadside for a little while. We found the seat already occupied by an old lady, whose appearance and manner betokened the typical Scottish housewife. Formalities, such as are the rule in bigger towns towards the south, being dispensed with, it was not long before we got into conversation, and were not slow in finding out that the old lady was a happy believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who had known the Saviour for many a year, and now, nearing the end of her earthly pathway, was looking forward to meeting the Saviour whom she loved.

The old lady recounted with joy how the Lord

had found her. She told us that in her young days she had been very busy, as she thought, working for her own salvation, and doing the works which she thought would curry favour with God. One day, however, the words of the Lord Himself, in John vi. 29, were brought prominently before her "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent."

She thought, "Here am I, trying to do the work of God, and I have never believed on Him whom He has sent." She then turned to the Lord Jesus in true heart-acceptance of Him as Saviour, saying, like one of old, "Lord, I believe." From that moment the peace and joy, which flows from simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, filled her soul, and she was, as we found her, rejoicing in the grace that saves and keeps.

I wonder if any of my readers are of the same mind as the old lady was, that through some works of their own they can merit the favour of God. You have never yet done the works of God in truth, because you have never yet taken the *first* step, and "believed in Him whom He has sent." Faith in Christ must come first; then life-works follow.

Perhaps, however, some who read this may be labouring under another delusion, besides that of thinking it possible to win heaven by their own efforts and good deeds. Satan's emissaries are everywhere, and the pretty town of D—— was no exception. The old lady told us that some preachers had visited the place, who had been proclaiming

that although people might die in their sins, yet they would have another chance of salvation after death.

How captivating to the natural mind such a suggestion as this is! "Now then," they will say, "we need not trouble about religion. We can just go on and enjoy ourselves, and have a good time, because we shall have a chance after death, and that will be good enough."

But our old friend proved to be too deeply grounded in grace to be caught by such a seductive doctrine as this. Meeting her brother, who was also travelling on the road to glory with Christ, the new doctrine was at once discussed. "What is this we hear about people having a second chance after death? We will take the first chance."

Wise decision! Let it be yours. If you have put off deciding for Christ, and trusting in Him as your own personal Saviour up to this moment, consoling yourself with the idea that it will all be right in the end, wake up while it is time, and "take the first chance." "When is my first chance?" you may say. Your first chance is NOW. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). God does not promise you to-morrow. Still less does He promise you a second chance after you leave this world.

Do you think that men, if they were offered something in this life, which would be greatly to their advantage from a financial point of view, and the offer was only open for a limited time, would

wait until it was withdrawn, saying they would get another chance at some other time? No, they would study their own interests, and take the first chance. If it is important to take the first chance in that which affects us only for a brief number of years, how much more important when our soul's eternal destiny depends upon our taking the first and only chance.

Come to the Lord Jesus Christ NOW. He is ready and waiting to bless, and will welcome every sinner who turns in faith to Him. Do not be deluded by any suggestions of the enemy that you will have another chance when you leave this world, or even a chance later in life? Take God's offered mercy NOW.

The Saviour said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). Come to Him, owning yourself in His presence as a guilty and lost sinner, and claim Him as the Saviour you need. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10).

"Thou Holy One of God !

The Father rests in Thee,

And in the savour of that blood

Once shed on Calvary,

The curse is gone—through Thee we're blest ;

God rests in Thee—in Thee we rest."

W. M'D.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

No. 4.—GOD'S CALL AND MAN'S RESPONSE.

Read Luke xiii. 6-9, xiv. 7-24.

THE two parables which we find in Luke xiii. 6-9 and xiv. 7-24 are very different in what they unfold. But in a certain sense they are exactly alike in the response, which man makes to God when approached by Him.

God approaches man in two ways. *In the law*, He called on man to furnish something for Him.

In the gospel, He is calling man to receive blessing from Him.

In the law God was claiming and looking for fruit *from* man. In the gospel He is bringing what is the fruit of His own love, expressed in the death of His well-beloved Son at Calvary's cross *to* man.

In the first parable, that of the fig tree, you will see that it illustrates what God has a right to expect from His creatures, that is, fruitfulness in his life. But there was none. The next parable, that of the great supper, illustrates how God has come out to minister His own grace to man. And what can be more gracious than that? Alas! whether it was when He sought fruit from man, or secondly, when in grace he sought the company of man, in both approaches of God there was no response.

Was God defeated then? No; because the end of the story is this, that though those that were bidden did not come, yet eventually God gets His own way, and unworthy guests are compelled to come in, and the house is filled.

Now do not suppose that God is looking for anything from you. That day has gone by. I know there is a thought in many hearts that the gospel comes claiming something. When a man hears the voice of God, his first thought is this, What does He want? But God does not want anything from you. He brings something to you.

The parable in chapter xiii. stands in contrast to this. It illustrates how God in days gone by was seeking fruit from man, and man failed to yield it. It says, "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard" (Luke xiii. 6). And who is that "certain man"? He stands clearly as a figure of God Himself. He put the fig tree in the vineyard—figure of God in relation to Israel in this chapter; He it was who spread the feast in Luke xiv.—figure of God's provision of grace in the Gospel.

In Israel God had planted, as it were, the fig tree—figure of His own people, who were brought under the cultivation of the hand of God in a wonderful way. He had a right to expect fruit. How did Israel respond? They did not want Him, they cast Him out.

But the point was this, there was no fruit. And then He said to the dresser of the vineyard, "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (ver. 7).

Do not deceive yourself. There is nothing in you fit for God. You may think it is a very hard saying. People do not like to feel that there is not some fruit

about them for God. But it is the truth. Bow to it. It is your wisdom to do so.

My friend, if you never were converted before, God save you as you read these lines. Do not put off the question of your soul's salvation. Remember this, no man ever entered heaven unrepentant, and no repentant man ever went down to hell. What is repentance? It is a man bowing beneath the testimony of God that he is a good-for-nothing fruitless sinner. There may be leaves, that is, you may have an appearance of religious respectability, but that does not alter the fact that, unsaved, you are a good-for-nothing fruitless sinner. The Lord spoke of "leaves only" in Matthew xxi. 19. The point is not religious respectability, but have you been converted? Nothing short of that will do.

Now in Luke xiv. we see the wonderful way the Lord brings in that which is exceedingly blessed to His own heart, the unfolding of the story of the grace of God. In His own peculiar graciousness He went into the house of a Pharisee to eat bread. And now mark. "They watched him" (ver. 1). Was it with loving interest? No; it was to catch Him in some way. In this we get a revelation of what man's heart is.

In the Pharisee's house there was a man with the dropsy, and the Lord said to the company assembled, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" (ver. 3). They were sticklers for form and orthodoxy. What did they do? "They held their peace. And He took him and healed him" (ver. 4). Blessed Master! I hope He will take you and heal you.

The Lord knew these Pharisees were judging Him, so He said, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?" (ver. 5). He said in effect, If you look after your own property, nobody will blame you; and are you going to judge Me for letting out My heart to this poor man, for healing him, and delivering him from his sin and misery? The world has never understood the attitude of God. We all naturally look upon Him as a Judge. We think He is hard, cold, stern, revengeful. How contrary is the case! He is full of love, grace, pity, tenderness, compassion.

How observant the Lord was! "And He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms" (ver. 7). Do not forget this, the eye of Christ marks you. He knows all your history. And the principle of it is this, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (ver. 11). Did you ever notice that verse? If not, notice it now. It is the history of man wrapped up in one verse. Take the lowly place as a confessed sinner at the feet of the Lord, and you will be assuredly blessed.

The Lord says, "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (vers. 13, 14). That is to say, He unfolds what was the principle on which His Father acted.

“And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God” (ver. 15). Evidently one of His hearers was for the moment touched. It may be you think it must be a happy thing to be a Christian. You are quite right. Act upon your thought. Don’t delay this question of your eternal blessing.

In response to all we have been looking at, the Lord brought out this parable. He began, “A certain man made a great supper, and bade many” (ver. 16). In this is indicated the largeness of the heart of God. It is a *great* supper. *Many* are invited. The gospel might well be called the supper of salvation. And why supper? Supper is the last meal of the day. And the gospel is God’s last dealing with man before the night of judgment. As it were, God found man in the *morning* of innocence. But he fell, and became a sinner. You find him at *noontide* under the law. He broke the law, and became a transgressor. You find him in the *evening* of his sin, and the Son of God came in blessed grace to this earth to woo and win him. And now God, as it were, makes a supper—the supper of His grace and salvation. It is the *last* dealing of God with men. And you are going to be tested by it. The gospel is a test, because it will bring out whether you want the company of God or not; whether you care to feed in His house or not. Do *you* want to sit at His table? Will what is on His table satisfy and charm you?

Then we read that he "sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come: for all things are now ready" (ver. 17). It is interesting to see in this chapter that you read only of a servant, but when you come to chapter xv. we read, "The father said to his servants." I am sure there is very distinct teaching in this. The great Agent in divine things is God, the Holy Ghost. He is *the* Servant. He may use all kinds of vessels, but there is in truth but one Servant.

The Holy Spirit of God, the third Person of the Trinity, is in this world, but unseen. The world does not know Him nor see Him. And what does He say? Listen! "Come: for all things are now ready" (ver. 17). His testimony is that the door of salvation is open; the gospel feast is spread; the table of God's grace is laid. God wants you. He invites you to come into His company, to come and feast upon that which His love furnishes. Nothing is left for you to do.

You may ask, "What about my sins?" We answer; "Christ died for our [the believer's] sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3).

"But then, what about the judgment I deserve?" Hear the divine reply: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. ix. 27 and 28).

"But then I am afraid I shall not be accepted." You are already rejected because you are not fit for God. CHRIST *is accepted*, and you will be accepted

when you accept Him. "He hath made us [believers] accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

Let me tell you there is only one thing wanting, and that is decision on your part to come. That is all. The only lack is on your side now.

"We read in our parable, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse" (ver. 18). You say, "To make excuse in a matter of this sort is wicked." Assuredly! But are *you* converted yet?

"Not yet." Have *you* come yet? "Well I could not say I have come yet, but I am thinking about coming." Have you not been invited? "Oh! yes, but I am too young." That is an excuse. Will that excuse stand by and by? Another man says, "I am too busy." Ah! you are so busy in the world. So said a man once. Somebody came in and told him a friend of his was dead. He said, "I am too busy to die," and with that he stooped to tie his bootlace, and fell lifeless to the ground. Oh! what paltry excuses will men make. The devil will give you ten thousand excuses for not coming.

Look at the excuses of these men in the parable. The first says, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused" (ver. 18). He allows something connected with earth to come in between his soul and God. And now, forsooth, having bought a piece of ground he is going to survey it. I know what I should call that man in plain language—a fool.

The next says, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me

excused" (ver 19). I suppose this is the kind of man you would like for your steward, is it? He is going to prove his oxen after he has bought them. What a senseless man! Ah! he was no wiser in that excuse than you are in the excuse that has kept you back from Christ till now.

Another says, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (ver. 20). All are very polite. One is engaged in earthly things. Another has calls, claims, and relationships. But this man makes his wife an excuse. If he had been in earnest he would have said, "Where I am wanted, she will be welcome too." And I tell you something else, when a man really gets converted, that always happens. He desires his wife's conversion: and if it is the wife, she desires her husband's.

Some years ago I was speaking in London to a very large company of people one Lord's day afternoon, when God arrested and converted a very nice, sober young Scotchman, then living in London. As he bade me good-bye, I said, "You'll come back in the evening, will you not?"

"I will stay at home," said he, "and let my wife come to-night."

"Oh! you are married," said I.

"Yes, and you know we have got two children, a little girl, and a baby about five or six months old. I will look after the children, and the wife will come, and may God save her soul."

Well, the meeting came on. From the platform I noticed my friend of the afternoon with his wife

and little girl and the baby. And I said to a friend by my side, "Why, the whole family is out to-night. God save her."

In the middle of the meeting that babe began to cry most piteously, but I am thankful to say it did not disturb me much. The man got up, dropped the little girl into his own seat, whipped the babe into his arms, and left his wife behind to be converted. And, thank God, she got saved on the spot that night. When I came down presently, she said, "Thank God, I am saved. My husband found Christ in the afternoon, and I have found Him to-night."

I remember another striking case. A dear woman in Ireland was blessedly converted. She went home and told her husband of her new-found joy. "All right," said he, "it's the correct thing to be decent and religious."

When he came in next morning she was bubbling over with the joy of the love of the Lord Jesus, and she began to speak to him again. But he got angry, and said, "Look here, wife, I will not have any more of this: I will be master of my own house."

Like a wise woman, she held her tongue. She went and talked to the Lord Jesus about Joe, and never said a word to Joe about the Lord Jesus.

And what then? After a week or two, still bright and joyous, her ways commending Christ, she saw a cloud come over her husband's face. The Spirit of God was working with him, and he had a very miserable look. One day he came in, the

picture of misery, and she said, "Why, Joe, what is the matter with you?"

"I want to be saved!"

"Then why don't you come to the Saviour, my dear?" said she. And he came to the Lord on the spot, and was saved.

It is very beautiful to see the commission the servant gets in our parable. He goes and tells his master of the excuses made, and He says, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (ver. 21). What a blessed thing to be the means of bringing souls in. You may tell me that is the work of the Holy Ghost. Of course it is. But what an unspeakable privilege it is to be the vessel in which the Spirit of God can move. Beloved Christian friend, God fill us with the sense of the privilege of it. To bring into the house of joy, and peace, and gladness, redolent with the savour of Christ, a house of love and life, where every guest is welcome, is indeed a privilege.

And now the servant says, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room" (ver. 22). How true that is to-day. What a lovely word for the sinner! Is my reader unsaved? Would you like to be a child of God? Would you like to be a Christian? Listen! "Yet there is room." Dare I say, To-morrow there shall be room? I dare not. There is a seat for you, take it. And mark, God will have that seat filled. If you do not fill it, He will get somebody else.

He speaks once more to the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (ver. 23). Here is illustrated the urgency of the grace of God, and the universality of the offer of salvation. I do not know the limit. I was struck to-day in reading His Word, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). Are not these lovely words? "All the world." And carry the gospel to whom? "Every creature." The heart that knows Christ carries out the tidings of His love.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." The Holy Ghost can do the compelling. I know I cannot bring you to the Lord, but He can.

Will you not bow to His claims? Make up your mind, friend. Believe His grace just now. You have nothing to do but receive him. Accept Him. Again I say, "Yet there is room." It is the sinner's word. "Compel them to come in." That is the servant's word. Oh! for grace to be more and more in downright earnest in seeking to bring them in. Come to the arms of love. Come to the bosom of love. Come to the God of love, and you will find pardon and peace, and forgiveness of sins, and eternal life.

W. T. P. W.

WILLIE, THE BUGLER.¹

A TRUE STORY.

WILLIE H—— became a bugler in the —— Regiment during the Indian Mutiny. He was a delicate lad, but being born in the regiment it seemed fitting that he should adopt the military calling. Shortly after Willie became a bugler, his father, as brave a man as ever lived, was killed in action, and his mother died six months later. She was the daughter of an Army Scripture Reader, and had brought up Willie in the fear of God, and he liked better going to prayer meetings with her than joining in the horse-play of the other boys. This made the lad unpopular, and he suffered many coarse taunts and mocking gibes in consequence.

After his mother died, his life was made a misery to him by the scoffing sneers and rude jokes of the men of the regiment. When Willie was fourteen, the regiment was removed some miles away from the camp for rifle practice, and the Colonel wished to leave him behind, but the Sergeant-Major pleaded for him to be taken along with them. "There is mischief in the air, Colonel," he said, "and rough as the men treat the lad (and they do lead him a life), his patience tells on them, for the boy is a saint, sir!" "I don't believe in saints and their influence," the Colonel answered shortly, "but let him go."

¹ To be obtained from our Publishers in separate form. 8 pages, 2s. per 100, 17s. 6d. per 1,000. Post and carriage free.

These were stirring times during the Indian Mutiny, and before the regiment had been away from camp many days several acts of insubordination had been brought to the Colonel's notice, and he determined to make an example of the next offence by having the culprit flogged. One morning it was reported that the targets had been thrown down and mutilated so that the usual practice could not take place. This was serious, and the rascally act was traced to a man, or men, in the tent where Willie H—— was billeted, two of them being the worst characters in the regiment. The whole lot were put under arrest to be tried by Court-Martial, when enough evidence was produced to prove conclusively that one, or more, of the prisoners was guilty of the crime. An appeal was made to produce the culprit, or culprits, all to no effect; and the Colonel, turning to the prisoners, addressed them thus: "If any one of you, who slept in No. 4 tent last night, will come forward and take his punishment like a man, the rest will get off free, but if not each man in turn will receive ten strokes of the cat."

For a couple of minutes dead silence followed, then from the midst of the prisoners, where his slight form had been completely hidden, stepped Willie H——. He advanced to within two yards of the Colonel, and said, "You have passed your word that if any one of those who slept in No. 4 tent last night comes forward to take his punishment, the rest shall get off scot free; I am ready, sir! and please may I take it now?"

For a moment the Colonel was speechless, then, in a fury of anger and disgust, he turned upon the men and said, "Is there no man among you worthy of the name? Are you all cowards enough to let this lad suffer for your sins, for that he is innocent, you know as well as I." But silent they stood, with never a word.

The Colonel's word had to stand, and a second time Willie repeated, "I am ready, sir!" and he was led away for punishment. With bared back the lad bravely stood as one, two, three strokes descended. At the fourth a faint moan escaped his white lips, and ere the fifth fell a hoarse cry burst from the group of prisoners, who had been forced to witness the scene; and with one bound Jim S——, the black sheep of the regiment, seized the cat, and gasped out: "Stop it! Colonel, stop it! tie me up instead; he didn't do it, I did," and with anguished face he flung his arms round the boy. Almost speechless, Willie lifted his eyes to Jim's face and smiled. "No, Jim," he whispered, "you are safe now, the Colonel's word will stand." Then he fainted.

The next day as the Colonel was making for the hospital tent where the brave young bugler lay, he met the doctor. "How is the lad?" he asked. "Sinking, Colonel," he replied quietly. "What!" he ejaculated. "Yes, the shock of yesterday was too much for his feeble strength."

"I knew it was only a question of time," he muttered, "and this affair has only hastened matters." Then gruffly the doctor added, "He is more fit for heaven than earth."

"I shall never forget that sight," said the Colonel. "In the corner of the hospital tent, propped up on the pillow, lay the lad dying, and half kneeling at his side was Jim S——. The boy's face was deadly white; he was talking earnestly, but neither of them saw me."

"Why did ye do it, lad?" muttered Jim, the drops of sweat standing on his brow. "Because I wanted to take it for you, Jim," Willie's weak voice answered tenderly. "I thought if I did it, it might help you to understand a little bit why Christ died for you." "Why Christ died for me?" repeated Jim. "Yes! He died for you, because He loved you as I do, Jim, only Christ loves you much more; I only suffered for one sin, but Christ suffered the punishment for all your sins; the punishment of your sins is death, Jim, but Christ died for you."

"Christ has naught to do with such as me, lad; I'm one of the bad 'uns, and you ought to know that."

"But He died to save bad ones—just them. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance' (Mark ii. 17). '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). Dear Jim, shall the Lord have died in vain? Listen! He is calling you, He has poured out His precious life-blood for you, He is knocking at the door of your heart. Won't you let Him in? Oh! you must, and then we shall meet again."

Standing there in the shadow the Colonel's own heart became strangely stirred; he had heard such

things from his mother long, long ago, and the words seemed a faint echo of her own. Suddenly Jim raised a hoarse cry, and then it was seen that Willie had fainted. "I thought he was gone," the Colonel added, "but a few drops of cordial revived him, and he opened his eyes, now dim and sightless." "Sing to me, mother," he whispered, "'The Gates of Pearl.' I am so tired." "In a flash the words came back to me," said the Colonel; "I had heard them often in the shadowy past, and I found myself repeating them softly to the dying bugler lad:—

" 'Though the day be never so long,
It ringeth at length to evensong,
And the weary worker goes to his rest,
With words of peace and pardon blest.
Though the path be never so steep,
And rough to walk in and hard to keep,
It will lead when the weary road is trod,
To the gates of pearl : *The City of God.*'

As the last words fell from my lips, his eyes met mine gratefully. 'Thank you, Colonel,' he whispered, 'I shall soon be there.' "Where?" I said involuntarily. "Why, in heaven, Colonel," he answered with a smile. "The roll-call has sounded for me, the gates are open, the price has been paid." Then softly he repeated—

"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."

Once more the dying lad lifted his eyes to the

Colonel. "You will help Jim, sir, you will show him the way to—the—Gates—of—Pearl."

Suddenly a glorious light flashed into his dying eyes, and with a radiant, happy cry—"Mother, O Mother!"—he flung out his arms as if in welcome. That voice thrilled the heart of each one, who heard it. The light faded from the shining eyes, and the brave spirit of Willie H—— had fled to God.

By God's mercy, the frozen heart of Colonel H—— was melted, under the power of redeeming love. He turned to the sinner's Friend, as the only way of escape from the wrath to come. He rested his guilty soul on the atoning work of Christ, and lived for several years afterward to tell to those around him what a Saviour he had found.

Jim S——, brought to a sense of his guilt, was led to see that the Lord Jesus died for him on Calvary's Cross, bearing the judgment and curse due to him, and by believing on Him, who did all, and paid all, he was saved. What eventually became of Jim, I do not know. This I do know, that the Colonel, Willie, and Jim, through faith in the precious blood of Christ, will meet again when the Lord Jesus comes.

Dear friend, this is a true story; is not your heart touched as you read it? The height and depth of human love is reached in dying for a friend, but I want to tell you, that though greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, the Cross of Calvary tells of love that far outreaches all human love, for it takes in all,

whether charitable, religious, moral, ungodly, infidel, blasphemer, or drunkard (all alike are sinners by nature). "But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

The Cross of Calvary takes in the betrayers, and murderers of the Son of God, giving expression to language known only to love divine. "Father, forgive them" (Luke xxiii. 34), was His prayer. Well may the Christian, once an enemy, now reconciled to God by the death of His Son, exclaim, "Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"

Dear friend, look at the nail print in His hands and feet, and His spear-pierced side; these speak of His atoning death that He might rescue you from eternal misery and despair. Millions have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Substitute, and have believed that He died in their stead; and it is my duty and privilege to tell you of the Saviour, who was wounded for the believer's transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities (see Isa. liii. 5).

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." If you turn a deaf ear to Christ's entreaties, and warnings, and perish in your sins, you will never be able to say you were not warned. Look then, to the Lord Jesus, who died on Calvary's Cross for all your crimson sins. He is now in the glory, proof that God has accepted the work done by Him on behalf of unworthy sinners like you and me. Repeat to yourself in faith those beautiful lines that fell from the lips of the dying bugler, Willie H——.

“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 !”

Jesus said, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out” (John vi. 37). Receive Christ now. Believe and live.

J. J. P.

PRIVATE W—— AND HIS NEW TESTAMENT.

PRIVATE W—— was offered a gospel tract by a Christian, who thus sought to get into touch with him, and to speak of the eternal welfare of his soul. W—— readily gave his name, regiment, station, and so on, and added that he had lately returned from the East, having been seriously ill, and that he was now on sick leave.

The donor of the tract then took out of his bag a New Testament, and wrote in it the details that had just been given, and added his own name and address, so that if W—— wished to write to him in the future he could do so.

After urging him to read prayerfully and carefully the little volume, they parted.

Nothing was heard of W—— for some months, when unexpectedly a very surprising letter was received from him.

It began with a reference to the interview just described, and then went on to say that all the

details then given—name, number, regiment, sickness, &c.—were all lies. He had deliberately made the wrong statements because he had no fear of God before him, and did not wish to have anything to do with the things that had then been brought to his notice.

But God had His eye on him for blessing, and had spoken to him, and had shown him his unfitness for heaven, and his inability to do anything to earn that forgiveness of which he was so much in need.

Happily he paid attention to what God had been pleased to bring before him. He learnt of the grace of God, and of His eternal salvation through Christ Jesus, so sweetly unfolded in the precious little volume he now loved, but which he once despised. He believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. In his New Testament he read, too, of the believer's prospect of eternal glory, the new life, and the new relationship with God and Christ into which the work of the Lord Jesus had introduced him.

But even while rejoicing in his newly found possessions, the lies on the cover ever stared him in the face. How he longed to tear them out, or to erase them, but he could not without spoiling the page. To think that he had disgraced the story of God's infinite love with a tissue of lies was very bitter to think of. And how would his action be regarded by a God of truth, purity, and holiness! If HE had a horror at such writing, how far more repellant it

must be to One, who cannot look upon sin, and who is too pure to behold iniquity!

Hence the letter of confession, the desire for forgiveness, and the request for an unsullied copy of the Word of God. These were speedily forthcoming.

And now W—— is quite happy, his heart filled with the love of God, his spirit strengthened with that quiet confidence which the Holy Spirit imparts, which in turn gives a readiness and boldness to speak of Him, of whom he was once ashamed, and to boast in Him from whom he once sought to hide. He now says with the Apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

This is conversion—a complete change of mind and heart—a blessed exchange of darkness, distance, and death for light, liberty, and life. s. s.

TWO DEATH-BEDS—A CONTRAST.

ONE of these I wish I had never seen. It was that of a young man in the prime of life, dying from the effects of a wound received in action. Others were dying around him, but none of them manifested the hatred to God that He did.

He threw himself out of bed, rolling about, and cursing God with all the might of which he was capable. Many went to his aid, but his blasphemy

was too much even for soldiers, and he was let alone. He seemed to possess a soul from the pit.

While his paroxysm continued, which it did till his death, nothing was noticed in the ward but this man. Other patients were neglected; the noise of the conflict outside, and the bursting fragments of shell passing over the beds, were unheeded in presence of this awful scene. Even the lull, which preceded a charge, and the shouts of the enemy, who were in overpowering numbers, did not call off our attention to this truly awful case. He passed away thus.

This young man was not what the world would call a bad man. He was esteemed a good fellow with his comrades, but he was an enemy of God, and had spent his time in catering for the amusement of the frivolous and gay.

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The other case was that of a young man of twenty, who passed away in triumph, though his sufferings were intense. The night previous to his death he slowly repeated the words engraved on his monumental stone, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, hath cleansed *me* from all sin." This was his last testimony.

During the whole night he had sung the songs of the redeemed, asking all in the room to join him. When a pause occurred he would point to his mother, and tell her to sing. "What shall we sing?" would be asked, to which he replied, "Jesus." Jesus so filled his soul that there was no room for aught else.

Then in a sudden rapture he pointed upwards. What did he see? Whatever it was, it so filled him with unspeakable joy that a beauty, not of this world, shone from his face, making it beautiful beyond any artistic skill or imagination. His utterance was so imperfect at this time that he could not make us understand what it was that he saw when he looked up, while he broke out into an ecstatic exclamation of wonder. We, who were watching, believed that he saw the Lord Jesus.

From this, till the next night, which was his last on earth, he never ceased speaking and singing words of praise. Psalm ciii. 1-5 was repeated by him slowly, and we felt that we were in close touch with heaven.

The thoughts of college and grinders, which had previously engrossed his mind (for he was a university student), were all abandoned. Books and study were as if they had never existed. His conversation was redolent of heaven.

The sweet strains that floated from his lips through the room are now gone to the upper sanctuary, though they seem to linger still in the chamber when it is visited.

What made the difference between these two death-beds? The blood of Jesus applied to the conscience. The reception of the Lord Jesus as a personal Saviour.

Reader, do you know anything of this? You may. It is all for you. God waits to be gracious.

IS DEATH A TURN IN THE ROAD?

A WORD TO SÓLDIERS AND OTHERS.

I NOTICED the other day, in a letter from a newspaper correspondent at the Front, a remarkable statement. He had given his impressions of many things he had seen, and then, moralising on the havoc and destruction of human life, he said that after all, "death was only a turn in the road."

I had seen the idea before, but what does it mean?

Simply that, as you tread life's journey, you reach a certain point where the road twists, and you pursue it in another direction. That is all. You had been going, let us say, south, but now you have to move east or west, but personally you are unconscious of any other change. It is merely the road that turns.

The turn does not alter conditions. If, when it is reached, you were going on the level, you continue on the level; if on the slope, up or down, it is still up or still down. Death is only a turn. But why a turn at all?

Is death a turn of the road? Is it not far rather its end? Undoubtedly.

It is the end of life here, but only here. The man lives on. He, in spirit, lives to God. Life is indestructible. "The spirit," we read, "shall return unto God who gave it" (Eccles. xii. 7). But, instead

of a turn, it is a complete and absolute termination of every conceivable activity here on earth. The serious thing is that when a man dies he remains for ever what he was before death, and so we read:—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. xxii. 11). The unjust and filthy condition of the sinner adheres to him. His slope is downward. That of the righteous and holy is also true of them. They move upward.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi. 7); and, for proof of this fact, you need only look on the fields. These teach a mighty spiritual lesson. The harvest is always according to the sowing, whether in time or in eternity.

"A turn of the road!" Far more! The traveller, having reached its end, has to face judgment. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12). "Only a turn of the road!" Only! far more! The road has, perforce, to be left. Time, for the traveller, is over. A turn of any kind—whether that of a new leaf, or of a new life, or of vows and resolutions, repentance or religion—all that is a thing of the past.

After death is judgment, and sentence, and harvest, and eternity, and God! Escape from this there is none.

As sure as God lives, every one of us must, after death, give account of himself to God, and if, as

a sinner, your case is utterly and for ever hopeless, mercy, pardon, salvation, neglected in life, are absolute impossibilities, when the hand of death has arrested the action of the heart and mind. You step off the road into the dread issues of eternity—the long eternal *now*!

There the filthy are filthy still, and the holy are holy still. The tree has fallen; as it fell it lies.

Speak of a turn! Now is the time to turn, the only time!

But whither? To the Lord! “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa. i. 18), is what He says. There is with Him forgiveness and abundant mercy. He “came to call sinners.”

Men, you are reading the words of one of yourselves—once a soldier, who, under deep conviction of sin, and in dread of the hell he consciously deserved, turned, by sovereign grace, to the Lord, and was pardoned. All glory to God. Oh! it is blessed beyond words to know that all is well for eternity; and this unspeakable joy will be yours, if only you come in simple faith to the Saviour of such as we are. He will in no wise cast you out.

“Come to the Saviour *now*!
 No longer make delay,
 Life's tide is ebbing fast,
 Near is the judgment day;
 Wouldst thou escape His ire
 Who then will fill the throne?
 To Jesus, then, now come,
 Henceforth be His alone.”

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

No. 5.—BLESSING ON EARTH AND JOY IN HEAVEN.

(Read Luke xv.)

IT was a wonderfully suited audience that the Lord had that day, as He presented to His hearers the lovely parable, as given to us in Luke xv. The whole point of it is very simple, viz. :—God finding His joy in the blessing of man.

The parable begins, "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him" (ver. 1). Were they repulsed? Assuredly not. What did they hear? The loveliest ministry of grace. The unfolding of God's heart. What an encouragement! *You* need not be afraid. If you have the sense that you need a Saviour, do not be afraid to draw near to the Lord Jesus.

"And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (ver. 2). Thus they sought to cast a stigma on the Lord. If I might so say, the Lord takes up those words, "This man receiveth sinners," and by this lovely parable expounds them. What men flung at Him as a reproach was indeed a glorious truth full of blessing: "This man receiveth sinners."

The Lord, so to speak, emblazons those words on a ribbon of blue in letters of gold, and He binds them on His brow—a veritable crown of glory—and says, "Yes, it is quite true; I do receive sinners."

How beautifully the Lord puts the way of blessing. We read, "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the

ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" (ver. 4). Thus he presents, in parable, His own ministry. He had come into this world to seek man for he was lost.

But some one may say, "Surely men are not lost *now*. I do not like to think I am lost."

My dear friend, it is not what you think, or I think. It is what God says. Would that every soul, that has not really learned what God's salvation is, might have the sense before God of its lost estate. Would that *you* were ready to confess, and own it.

A lost sheep! A sheep is a very silly creature. How it will wander away, and not know how to retrace its steps. An apt picture of man. He has wandered away from God. He does not know how to get back. He wanders further and further away from God.

In the parable the shepherd goes after the lost sheep "until He find it" (ver. 4). Searching, seeking, over mountain and valley, and stream, and deep ravine, no matter what the difficulties are, the shepherd goes on till he find his sheep. So the Lord Jesus came into this world to find the lost sinner.

Tell me this, has He found *you*? If He has not found you yet, let Him find you just now.

And what will He do? Do what the shepherd did here. "And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing" (ver. 5).

I shall never forget going into a large churchyard in Germany, and seeing a remarkable piece of sculpture over a grave. I was thankful to see the gospel graven in stone in a spot like that. It was

a figure of the Saviour, and the sculptor had got the sheep beautifully placed on His shoulders. I could only say, Thank God for the Gospel in stone.

Remember, it is not that the sheep holds on to the shepherd, but the shepherd holds on to the sheep. Apt picture of the security of the believer. "I give unto them [My sheep] eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28).

But there is more than this. "And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me: for I have found my sheep which was lost.'" Thus the Lord illustrates with His own lips the joy that fills His heart in saving sinners. Then He adds, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (ver. 7). What causes the joy to spring up in heaven? When the sinners begin to repent, heaven begins to rejoice. You say, "I am very miserable about my soul." Thank God for that. Heaven has taken out its harps. There is joy in heaven. Another wanderer is coming home.

The next bit of the story tells us, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (ver. 7). Who rejoices? It is God Himself. Wonderful truth that God rejoices over the salvation of a wretched hell-deserving sinner like you and me.

Now we come to the second part of the parable, that of the woman finding the lost piece of silver.

The lost sheep illustrates the truth of man's *lost* condition. The piece of silver brings out the more deeply solemn truth, his condition of spiritual *death*. The sinner needs life. There is no link with God whatever, until formed by Him. This is the great truth you get in the second part of the parable.

So we read the Lord's question, "Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it" (ver. 8). There are three things the woman does. She lights a candle, sweeps the house, and seeks diligently—all typical, doubtless, of the activities of the Holy Spirit in the gospel.

And when the woman finds that piece of silver, what then? "She calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost" (ver. 9). Fancy the Spirit of God, under the figure of a woman, saying, "Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost." No work is of any real value, but what the Spirit of God does.

It is the work of the Spirit of God to quicken, to set apart, and give the sense of relationship, enabling every believer to say, "Abba, Father." The work of Christ is *for* us; the work of the Spirit is *in* us. The work of Christ for the believer is perfect. The work of the Spirit in the believer goes on to the end. Let me ask you a closing question or two. Has the Saviour found you? Has the Spirit of God quickened you? Do not put off these all-important questions, I beseech you, but face them at once. W. T. P. W.

THE INFIDEL'S MOTHER.

WHEN preaching the gospel one Saturday evening in the open air in Manchester, I noticed amongst those standing about after the meeting was over, a respectably dressed middle-aged man. On speaking to him upon the most important question anyone could speak about to his fellow-man, namely, the question of his SOUL and ETERNITY, he said words to this effect:—"I am an infidel but I do not despise your meeting, nor would I scoff at anyone, who speaks as you do. My mother was a true Christian. If anyone ever went to heaven it was my mother."

Again and again he repeated, "Oh! if anyone ever went to heaven, it was my mother." Evidently her life, her prayers, the peace she found in Christ as her Saviour, had made a deep impression upon her still unbelieving son.

Again we pressed upon him the fact that infidelity could do nothing for him when he came to lie on his dying bed, and urged him to trust the Saviour, who had brought peace and joy to his mother's soul.

To die without Christ, to be buried without Christ, and to spend eternity without Christ, is a thought so awful, that one cannot contemplate it without a shudder.

Come now, by simple faith, to the Lord Jesus, and trust Him as your Saviour. He has said, "*Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*" (John vi. 37).

F. G. B.

DEATH: IS IT TERROR OR TRIUMPH?

YES, he was dying, and no power on earth could parry the fatal blow that was soon to lay him in the dust. A life of self-indulgence, and worldly prosperity had beclouded his vision. Forgetful of God, the interests of his soul in view of eternity were totally neglected. Blank hopelessness writ deep on his countenance, and proclaimed in despairing accents by his tongue, described the tragic end of a ruined, blasted life.

“Call this a nightmare, should you find
Hallucination of the mind
A better word to use?
I care not what unhappy name,
The sceptic mind of man may frame
Those fears to disabuse.”

Summer was on the decline, and the ripening harvest soon to be gathered as golden grain, when an urgent call for best medical and nursing skill reached one of our city hospitals. A country gentleman had taken seriously ill. An experienced nurse was selected for the case; thank God, one who knew and loved the Lord Jesus. That week was to be an eventful one for her, when stirring scenes, never to be erased from her memory, were about to be enacted.

A SAD DEATH.

Going out on Tuesday morning she found her patient unconscious. He lived in a fine house, sheltered amongst trees, with every earthly comfort;

but alas! like the rich farmer of Luke xii., in the midst of prosperity he had forgotten God, in whose presence he was soon to be with his sins upon him.

My reader, if this were to be *your* last week upon earth, how would you spend it? It may be so; who knows? "For it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. ix. 27).

The patient remained in a comatose state from Tuesday up till Friday afternoon, when he took a fit about four o'clock. After it had passed off he slowly regained consciousness. Then commenced the death struggle. He clenched his fist, and smote the bed clothes with all his energy, shouting at the same time in deepest agony the one monosyllable, *Hell!* HELL!! HELL!!! A relative tried to soothe him, but it was all of no avail—the only response being *Hell!* HELL!!

The servants in the house, and others in the sick-room, now terrified, hurried out as fast as possible, leaving the nurse alone with the dying man. Although they fled from the presence of their master, they could not shut their ears to that terror-stricken cry, for his voice sounded quite distinct in every corner of the house.

The combat was an unequal one; his voice strong, and arm powerful at first, soon began to get weaker. He had been crying out, and smiting the bed clothes without intermission from five o'clock, and it was now nearing six. Still he went on, not another word escaping his lips. It could not continue, however. His strength was fast ebbing, his voice

getting feebler, until only in a whisper his last words were *Hell! HELL!! HELL!!!* ceasing only as the breath left his body.

Does not Isaiah, the prophet, drawing aside the veil, show distinctly the cause of the dark foreboding that agitated the soul of the subject of this true narrative? "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth. . . . All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?" (Isa. xiv. 9-10).

"Eternity! And am I doomed,
In vaults of fire to be entombed
In banishment from God?
Him I abandoned, must it be
My measure He shall mete to me
Within that dread abode?"

A BRIGHT SEQUEL.

The servants were moved by what they had seen and heard. They expressed their surprise that the nurse could have remained in the room while their master had been in such agony when entering eternity. Her reply was that death had no terror for her. She knew the One, who had taken the sting out of death, and between her soul and God there remained not a question to settle. Further, she was the happy possessor of that peace, which Christ had made by the blood of His cross. Thus, there was an opportunity of laying the gospel before these inquirers.

On Saturday morning while the nurse was out for a walk, she found the farm overseer engaged on some work in a field. On seeing her, he beckoned the nurse to come and speak with him. The lady responded to this request, when he immediately alluded to his master's death, and stated he could not banish it from his mind. Seeing this was a favourable opportunity, she asked if he ever thought of his *own* soul. He answered that he was greatly troubled, and that he had passed a sleepless night. Two years previously the same exercise was gone through when his former master died, and two of his own children were taken from him. The time of sorrow had, however, been used to the conversion of his wife, but, though troubled himself, it had left him as it had found him.

It was pleasing work for her to tell of the love of God in sending His Son, of the Saviour's love in coming into the world, of His atoning death upon the cross whereby divine justice was satisfied, and the need of guilty man met, of His triumphant resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God—exalted a Prince and Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. Continuing, she related how that forgiveness, and all consequent blessings, could be his through faith in Christ. On hearing the terms on which he could be saved, he exclaimed, "Then I too must have it."

The conversation lasted over an hour. As the nurse was making her way down the field, she heard the overseer's voice calling her. The light had

dawned upon his soul, and he was now rejoicing in the knowledge of his salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He then went joyfully to his own home, to tell his wife of his new-found joy, and that they might rejoice together over what was now their common portion.

Their joy was complete so far as the question of salvation was concerned, although they were about to pass through a season of trial in their own household by the Lord removing other two of their little ones. During the evening of that day the message came that the youngest of the family was taken to that scene where sin, sorrow, and death are unknown.

The nurse had been previously invited to see the overseer's wife, and the same evening went to pay her visit to the family. Not only had the youngest member of the family gone, but the other child, a little girl of tender years, was found to be in a grave condition. Being experienced in children's troubles the nurse was asked if she thought the child would recover. Her reply was, "No, I do not think you will have her long." Taking the child on her knee, the little girl repeated to the nurse that well-known favourite hymn:

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest."

The period of waiting was but a short one. On the following day—Lord's Day—she passed away. Thus

this little lamb of Christ's flock was laid gently to sleep, and she is, doubtless, now "Safe in the arms of Jesus," for does not the Scripture say—"He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom"? (Isa. xl. 11). Her last words on earth were those of the hymn she had recited so sweetly the previous evening.

My reader, how do you stand before God? Has death any terror for you? Do not deceive yourself. Let thine eyes look on to the time when thou wilt meet God, and say what is thy hope for eternity. If resting on anything apart from the atoning death of God's holy and well-beloved Son, you will find to your utter dismay that your confidence has been misplaced, and your day on earth misspent. If, on the other hand—even as you read these lines,—you claim the Saviour as yours, an eternity of bliss will be your inalienable portion. And if your pathway to glory be long or short, we cannot bespeak for you a happier or holier occupation than companionship with such a Saviour and Friend. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13).

"Where will you spend eternity?

This question comes to you and me!

Tell me, what shall your answer be—

Where will you spend eternity?

Eternity! eternity!

Where will you spend eternity?"

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST TRACT.

STARTING from England, a long and tedious voyage of eight and a half months landed the first little party of over one thousand souls at Sydney Cove, Australia, to begin life afresh in an unknown land. Five years later, Parramatta and Toongabbie were the outposts of the little Colony, and the interior had not been explored further than a distance of fifty miles. Meanwhile other ships had brought their human cargoes, and, the population increasing, it was impossible to reach all by one individual's effort. Realising this, Mr Richard Johnson, the first preacher of the gospel in Australia, printed Australia's first tract at Port Jackson on 30th October 1792. In the quaint language of that day, it bore the title, "To the British and other European inhabitants of New South Wales and Norfolk Island."

It began with the words, "Your souls are precious. They are precious in the sight of God. They are precious to the Lord Jesus Christ. They are precious in my esteem. Oh! that you yourselves were equally sensible of their value."

But though over two hundred years have rolled by, and the writer and readers of Australia's first tract have all passed to that bourne from whence no traveller returns, yet the gospel message still remains the same; and your need of it, unconverted reader, is great. For *your* benefit let me comment on the opening words of Mr Johnson's tract—

"YOUR SOUL IS PRECIOUS."

But are you sensible of its value? This is what we are anxious to know. The near approach of death often raises the question of the value of the soul in the estimation of its possessor. Queen Elizabeth on her deathbed said, "All my possessions for a moment of time." The dying infidel, Charteris, said, "I would gladly give £30,000 to have it proved to my satisfaction that there is no such place as hell." What do these expressions mean but that those who gave utterance to them were waking up in some measure to the value of their own souls. Oh! reader, have a care for your own soul.

Would that you could exclaim with King Hezekiah of old, "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isa. xxxviii. 17). Note two things here. He connects his deliverance with the removal of his sins from before God. How can this be? It can only be explained in one way, and that is, that his soul was

"PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD."

The marvellous truth is that the One, against whom we have sinned, has Himself undertaken to meet our need, thus proving that our souls are precious in His sight. How did God, then, meet the sinner's need? We read, "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). The requirements of God's righteousness demanded the death of the sinner, or that of a sinless substitute,

and, blessed be His name, He Himself, knowing that we could do nothing to meet the need, provided a substitute in the person of His own Son. John the Baptist, looking on Jesus as He walked, exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29).

Our souls are indeed

"PRECIOUS TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,"

for He came into the world to save sinners. Blood was required, and He, the sinless, spotless One, "poured out *his* soul unto death" (Isa. liii. 12). At Calvary the whole sin question was taken up, and settled. In that perfect sacrifice offered there, all God's righteous requirements were fully met, and God was glorified.

Dear reader, do *you* know that Saviour? Are you able to say to Him, "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back?"

Some time ago a servant of the Lord was preaching in New Oddfellows' Hall, in Sydney. Two young men were amongst the audience. A greater contrast between them morally you could not find anywhere. One had been brought up in a Christian home in England. Godly parents had nurtured and cared for him. But unsaved he had left England for Australia for health reasons. The other had been seen standing outside the hall waiting for some friends, as he afterwards told the writer, with a pack of cards in his pocket, to spend the evening over the card

table. No thought of God had entered his head for many years, and he was well-known to the guardians of the peace as a bad character. A kindly invitation decided him to enter the hall. As he entered the congregation were singing—

“Oh ! I pray you count the cost,
Ere the fatal line be crossed,
And your soul in Hell be lost,
BE IN TIME.”

God wrought that night, and the souls of both those young men were saved.

At the invitation of the preacher they both remained to have some conversation, and both were enabled to rest their souls on the finished work of Christ. How this shows the power and suitability of the gospel to meet every case. Has it met *yours* yet ?

Doubtless Mr Richard Johnson's tract was blessed to many souls in those early days of Australian history. He seems to have been a godly and faithful man, and he will, assuredly, reap his reward in due time. But we are concerned about *you*. Do not put off the question of your soul's salvation any longer, but in simple faith turn the eyes of your heart to the Saviour. Trust Him, and then you will find the words of the Apostle Peter to be true of you—
“In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. i. 8, 9).

W. M. R.

BODY AND SOUL SAVED BY A BIBLE.

A FRESH draft of troops had arrived at Gallipoli. Before going into action orders were given that all books, papers, &c., bearing names should be handed into store.

Private J. C—— of the 7th North Staffs. Regiment was among the number. He emptied his pockets of all matter bearing his name, till he came to his pocket Bible. When on his last leave home he had exchanged Bibles with his wife, promising never to be without it. They were both Sunday School prizes.

He looked at the Bible, remembered his promise, and decided to keep it. He was but a short time in the firing line when he was wounded. The bullet went through the muscle of the upper part of his left arm, and then struck the Bible, entering the front cover where the word Bible was printed, and out through the side. Every page was pierced up to Jeremiah xlix. 2.

Thank God, his bodily life was saved by the Bible. But now a far deeper question agitated the young soldier's mind. As he gazed upon the bullet-pierced Bible, and reflected how near he had been to death, the question rose from his inmost soul, "What must I do to be saved?"

He knew he had sinned all his life. Thank God, he believed the message that the Bible brought; he learned that the Lord Jesus Christ had died for him on the cross of shame. He trusted Him as his own

precious Saviour, and he learned by happy experience the meaning of the answer to his question of "What must I do to be saved?" in the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). Believing on Christ he was saved for ever.

In the hospital ship where Private J. C—— lay, there were nearly one hundred brave young fellows wounded, some severely, some slightly. A request was made for reading matter. None was on board. But one of the R.A.M.C. suddenly remembered that a Christian friend had given him a packet of tracts before leaving the North of England. Every man was eager to get one.

A voice was heard in derision, "Mates, they're only tracts." A chorus of voices with one accord replied, "That's just what we want." Ah! the dear young fellows had just returned from the jaws of death. That had sobered them, and made them anxious for the gospel. We wonder how many, like Private J. C——, turned to the Lord.

But what about you, reader? Whether you be soldier or civilian, man or woman, youth or maiden, young or old, death has to be faced. Whether you die amid the roar of cannon and the bursting of shells, or peacefully in your bed, the beyond is just one of two places for all—either heaven with its joys and delights, or hell with its gloom and sadness. Which shall it be? There is no time for delay. Would that all would face this matter *now*. "Behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

A. J. P.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

No. 6.—THE GREAT RECEPTION.

(Read Luke xv. 11-32.)

IT is very striking, that while Luke xiv. 16-24 gives us the invitation to the feast,—“Come, for all things are now ready”—Chapter xv. 11-32 brings before us the guest, who did come, and the great reception he got.

The third section of the parable says: “A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country” (vers. 11-13). Here we get a picture of what every man desires to do. And what is that? To get away from God, and enjoy himself apart from Him. Adam and Eve did it in the garden of Eden. Hence the fall, and hence the question, “Adam, where art thou?” He was away from God. And from that day to this man has wandered from God, gone astray, taken “his journey into a far country,” and tried to be happy without God.

The younger son goes away and tries to make himself happy away from his father. Very possibly, my dear reader, you are still on this line. You have tried to be happy without God. Has money satisfied you? No! Has pleasure satisfied you? No! Again, has a *Christless* religion satisfied you?

No! The Lord shows in the most solemn way what is the effect of getting away from God. It is invariably dearth, famine, distance, misery, and companionship of the worst possible kind.

We read, "And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living" (ver. 13). When was this younger son morally worst in all his history? Perhaps you would say, when he was in the "far country." I do not agree with you. I think the worst moment in his history was when he gathered up his goods, turned his back on home, and started to put distance between himself and his father. Why? Because the recollection of grace and love was fresh in his heart. He had just received half of his father's living, and now abused his father's bounty by using his patrimony in complete disregard of his father.

Of course this younger son had plenty of friends as long as his money lasted. We know very well what the world is. I heard of a man, who had been a very good customer at the public house. He had spent many scores of pounds in the place. He began to go down in the world, till he was reduced to his last three halfpence. His thirst was raging. He went to the publican, and asked for a two-penny drink, requesting credit for the odd halfpenny. It was refused. Mortified he had to leave the public house, but the incident opened his eyes to what the world is, and in the end he turned to Christ, who saved him from his sins, and from the raging love of drink too.

Yes, and when your money is gone, and your coat has got threadbare, you will find your friends become suddenly very short-sighted; they will pass you in the streets. The world is a poor affair. It is the scene where Satan rules, and where God is not known. And now see how it works out.

"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want" (ver. 14). It was a wonderful day in the history of that younger son when he began to be in want. I wonder if that moment has ever come in your soul's history? I have no doubt that more people are turned to the Lord by the sense of need, than by the sense of the love of God. Sin does not satisfy. I have come across thousands of immortal souls, and have asked them, "Are you satisfied? You are in the world, but are you content?" And the reply invariably has been in the negative. The heart of man is too big to be filled with what the world can furnish. The world does not give satisfaction. That alone springs from the knowledge of Christ, in the enjoyment of the favour of God.

What did the younger son do when he was in want? "He went and joined himself to a citizen of that country" (ver. 15). I do not doubt but that this is a picture of what the sinner does when left to himself. He goes arm in arm with Satan. Little as he may know it, in seeking the help of the world to get on without God, he is seeking the help of the devil.

And what does the citizen do? "He sent him

into his fields to feed swine" (ver. 15). He was put to the most degrading work that a Jew could put his hand to.

But he gained no satisfaction by it. He was so miserable, and hungry, that "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him" (ver. 16). Graphic picture of a man, who has got away from God, and has embraced the company of the devil. In that condition man cannot help. "No man gave unto him." Sinner, mind that. Away from God, arm in arm with the devil, man cannot help you.

What happened to the prodigal? His misery and want, and his discovery that none would help him, opened his eyes. "He came to himself." Thank God! Now he has got to the critical point in his history. Yes, my reader, it will be a great thing if you get alone with God. Let me ask you seriously, *Have you come to yourself?*

The prodigal begins to repent. Hear what he says, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger" (ver. 17). There you have conviction. But if you were only convicted of your need as a poor sinner in misery, and guilt, and moral pollution before God, it would be a very poor thing. See! There comes in this man's soul the sense of his father's goodness. I believe in every man's soul, when the Spirit of God is working, the conviction comes, that there is goodness with God, although there is nothing but badness with the sinner.

The prodigal is now thoroughly aroused and stirred to the very depths of his being. And I tell you when a person is really in earnest about his soul's salvation, you may depend upon it he is moved. The prodigal was deeply moved by hunger. His every sensation said, "Go home!" So, "I will arise and go to my father" (ver. 18), at last is the cry of the prodigal. He makes up his mind. He affirms what he will do and say. Listen to his acknowledgment, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee" (ver. 18). That is *confession*. "And am no more worthy to be called thy son" (ver. 19). That is *repentance*. And then he adds, "I will say . . . make me as one of thy hired servants" (ver. 19). That is *presumption*. Why? Because if he had been a bad son, would he make a good servant? Assuredly not!

Then we read, "And he AROSE, and *came* to his father." That is CONVERSION. People do not like the word conversion nowadays. If a man turns over a new leaf he thinks he is converted. Ah! the life tells the tale when a man is converted. He is changed, thoroughly, radically, inwardly changed. Reformation is not conversion. Reformation is outward; conversion, inward.

And how did his father receive the prodigal? We read, "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (ver. 20). In this we get a lovely picture of the wondrous welcome the blessed God gives the returning sinner. So far

the Lord has been showing what goes on inside a man's heart, his feelings, his exercises, his emotions, and how he is a great way off from God. But now we are let into the secret of God's feelings and emotions, and what goes on inside *His* heart.

"When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him." Methinks I see the scene. That loving father, oh! how he was longing for the return of that son. And has not the Lord longed for your return, that you should be brought to Himself? Ah! the keen sight of the father saw the returning prodigal. Look at that prodigal as he returns, wretched, miserable, and starving. How did he come? As he was.

And mark, friend, that is how you must come, just as you are in your sin and misery. Do not try to improve yourself before you come. You will never come, if you do.

Now look what the father does. He runs to meet him. I think I see that poor dejected prodigal coming up the road, and as he lifts his eyes he sees a figure running towards him, and he says, "I think I know that form. Why, it is my father!" And I think he stands still for a moment, and at length he is in the father's arms. And how? As he is. With dirtied garment, and unwashed face, the prodigal is received just as he is. Any word about his feelings? No. Any word about his sin and guilt? Not one. And when the silence is broken, it is not by the father's voice. Oh! it seems as if the feelings of the father's heart at this moment are too deep for expression. He has got the lost one

back, and he is content with him in his bosom, and he covered him with kisses. Surely the love of God, that sent an only Son to die for you and me, is indeed unfathomable love. May you know that love. The knowledge of it is indeed heaven upon earth.

At last the silence is broken. The son speaks. "Father, I have sinned" (ver. 21). It is a wonderful moment in the soul's history when the true confession of sin is made. Did *you* ever get into God's presence, and say, "I have sinned"? That is confession. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

And what next did the prodigal say? "And am no more worthy to be called thy son" (ver. 21). That is repentance. There is the soul bowing down before God in self-judgment, in the deep sense of what guilt is. But he did *not* say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants" (ver. 19). No, he drops that bit. It would have been presumption to have told his father what to do with him. He deserved nothing. Moreover, how could he ask to be made a servant, when he was being welcomed as a son?

The father's voice is heard now. With joy he cries to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." What is meant by the best robe? It is typical of Christ. Christ is the righteousness of the believer. "Of Him are ye [believers] in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). Christ is everything for the

believing sinner. How wonderful! "The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ [is] unto all and UPON *all them that believe*" (Rom. iii. 22). What a robe for the believer. Surely it is the best robe.

"And put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet" (ver. 22). Ring, type of endless love; and shoes, illustrative of sonship, relationship—wonderful blessings. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). What a wonderful thing to be a son, and to know it. What a welcome this son got.

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (vers. 23 and 24). Thank God, the merriment will never end. Look at the joy that fills the father's heart. The kiss tells all is forgiven and forgotten.

When the elder son came near, and heard the music and dancing, he began to inquire what it meant. And one of the servants said, "Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound" (ver. 27). That is very lovely. What is the Christian now? "Safe and sound." That is a wonderful thing. Alive and found, and safe and sound, are four lovely words. May they be true in your case.

W. T. P. W.

A GALLANT RESCUE.¹

AMONG the stories of marine rescue, none is more remarkable in its way than that which took place from the boat "Salvor" No. 1, of Hull. She had put into Peterhead Bay early in the week through stress of weather. Late on Friday night she drifted from her moorings. The crew, save one, were all washed overboard in the few moments that elapsed between the cables giving way and the ship striking a low reef of rocks.

The ship's cook had gone below when the "Salvor" drifted from her anchor, and when the vessel somersaulted over the reef, ultimately turning keel up on the sand, he found himself imprisoned in the hull.

There was no possible outlet from the 12-in. porthole, but he could see the foreshore 500 yards away. Every time a wave struck the ship she was submerged, and his view obscured. From the shore, where a crowd had collected, it was noticed by a blacksmith that a hand had been thrust out of the porthole, apparently waving for succour. Fortunately there was present another blacksmith, who had come to Peterhead a year before, after a thorough training in America. He had extensive knowledge of the latest appliances in cutting through steel linings, and brought this to bear on the upturned hull of the ship. A rescue of this nature is believed to be unparalleled.

¹ To be obtained from our publishers in separate form—
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The imprisoned cook's narrative is as follows :—

"We put into Peterhead through stress of weather, and had lain there from Tuesday night. I don't know exactly what occurred. I was down below, cooking in the foc's'le—we had no galley, so the cooking was done there. I felt a tremendous surge strike the boat, then everything went topsy-turvy. I was knocked from end to end of the foc's'le, and found the floor where the ceiling should be. I could not get out. I did not know what to do, and within a couple of seconds the boat was grating on the rocks inshore.

"We had turned over so quickly that plenty of air was left in the foc's'le, so that even if I were imprisoned for a good many hours I still had enough oxygen to keep me going. As the boat lifted to the swell, I could see the light through one of the portholes, and I put out my hand and waved it. Every minute or so the boat dipped beneath the water, but when she lifted again I repeated my efforts to attract the attention of whoever might be watching the wreck from the shore.

"This went on for three hours. I was dazed and practically gasping for breath. I heard tapping outside the hull of the boat. Then some one spoke through the porthole. The voice said, 'Where shall I cut open the hull?' I indicated this to him, showing him how to keep clear of the stanchions. It seemed hours before I knew anything else. There were fumes of acetylene gas blown into the vessel, and then some one gripped me by the neck, and pulled me out of the dark dungeon of the hull,

where, for a time, death seemed to be my only hope of release. I found afterwards that my rescuer was Mr M'Robbie, a Peterhead blacksmith. To my skilful deliverer I cannot express sufficiently the deep thanks I owe him for my life. It is beyond words."

Among the multitude of stories of magnificent courage and heroism it would probably be difficult to find one to exceed in interest this thrilling tale.

We question further if, from real life, a finer illustration could be found of the still more thrilling story of how a perishing sinner may be rescued from eternal doom.

In the first place, be it noted, the "Salvor," as its name indicates, was designed for the salvation of others, yet in time of stress it proved untrustworthy. Possibly you, dear reader, are aboard a "Salvor." A young soldier said recently, in reply to an inquiry, "I *am* a Christian. I have been baptized, confirmed, and am a member of the Church; what more do I want?"

This young soldier is representative of a vast class. They are passengers, as it were, on a large vessel, which is manned by an immense crew—the unconverted church member, the unsaved Sunday School teacher, the baptized communicant, who has never been born again. If you are one such, we have to tell you that you are in a rotten vessel, which, when the storm rises, will belie its name, and you are heading straight to destruction. The vessel might well be named, "Christless Religion."

Secondly, the "Salvor" put into a harbour of

refuge in course of construction, and which was supposed to be a place of safety, but was proved unreliable. So there are travellers on the ocean of life, who, seeing storms of judgment ahead, proceed to construct for themselves a harbour of refuge, hoping that thereby it may be all right in the end. They are regular in their church attendance, constant in their Bible reading, they say prayers night and morning, they contribute liberally to funds for the conversion of the heathen—very admirable things indeed in their right time and place—but utterly useless as means to secure salvation. Alas! when the awful storm of judgment breaks, they will discover to their dismay that the harbour to which they are trusting is of absolutely no avail, and that they are *drifting*! DRIFTING!! DRIFTING!!! to eternal doom. Thank God some of us have been aroused to a sense of our danger before the hour of death has approached, and before the storm of judgment has for us actually arisen.

We found ourselves alone in the “dark dungeon” of sin, without light, without strength, without hope, with the dread certainty of being lost, unless help came from without; and we did what a correspondent told us the subject of this narrative did, we cried to God for deliverance.

Just as the sailor’s cry was heard, and God caused the blacksmith to see the waving of his hand through the porthole, and to secure his deliverance, so when we turned from ourselves, from our efforts, from our disreputable hulk, and our discredited harbour of refuge, and raised our eyes Godward, then it was

that the wondrous tidings of the Saviour's love, and the Saviour's atoning sacrifice fell like music upon our ears, and brought peace to our troubled hearts.

We learned that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had seen our plight. He beheld us in the "dark dungeon" of sin, drifting on the stormy sea of life, to sure and certain judgment; He left His home in heaven, became a Man, went into the surging billows of divine judgment, and not only risked His life, but laid it down in order that He might rescue us.

What a difference between being in a sinking ship drifting on to judgment, and being in Christ speeding on to glory. Reader! where are you? Our sailor friend is reported to have said: "To my skilful deliverer I cannot express sufficiently the deep thanks I owe him for my life. It is beyond words." This aptly expresses the feelings of every saved soul towards his or her Saviour. To our Almighty Deliverer we cannot express sufficiently the thanks we owe Him for *eternal* life. It is beyond words.

Reader! if you are still a prisoner in a "dark dungeon," on a doomed ship, in a deceptive harbour, wave your hand to-day to the Lord Jesus Christ. In your utter helplessness turn to Him, who alone is the Saviour of sinners, for "there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Again, "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).

THE FATAL VOW.

A WAY in the sunny south of France lies the beautiful cathedral and university city of Montpellier. Louis XIV., King of France, has made it famous by the attention he paid to it, and the beautiful buildings with which he adorned it.

In the heart of the city, surrounded by most lovely terraces of houses, in the middle of a splendid promenade, composed of avenues of beautiful trees, stands a bronze equestrian statue of the great monarch, erected on a lofty marble pedestal. He is depicted as sitting on his horse, with his finger pointing seaward, and his famous arrogant saying, "*L'État, c'est moi*" (meaning, "The state, it is myself"), inscribed on the pedestal of the monument.

The architect, who erected this statue, was a very proud man. He made what proved to be a fatal vow, declaring that if he forgot anything in connection with the statue he would kill himself. When his work was finished, one of his friends pointed out that the spur on one of the boots of the statue was missing. The architect quickly mounted to the top of the monument, threw himself down from the height, and killed himself.

To this day the spurless boot on the statue stands as silent testimony to the truth of this story.

It was an extraordinary coincidence that the statue of a vainglorious monarch, represented as giving expression to such an arrogant boast as

"L'État, c'est moi," should have been allowed to be minus such a small detail as a spur; and that the architect should have been so proud, and should have been allowed to make this mistake.

It seemed a small thing, but we may well ask the question, Does not God allow such things to humble men's pride? The bones of the great monarch have long ago crumbled into dust. To succeeding generations the spurless boot has pointed a moral. Alas! how few pay heed to these things.

Long as the great monarch lived and reigned in absolute power, it is as nothing compared to the long silent eternity into which he has entered.

And as to the architect. Proud and boastful as he was, we should have judged it next to impossible that he could have forgotten to put a spur on one of the boots of the statue. Yet he did. His pride went before a fall; aye, a fall into eternity.

Both monarch and architect are in eternity. The statue lacks one thing, and because of this the architect killed himself.

I am pretty sure the reader will condemn the foolish man for acting as he did. He forgot one thing, and humbled pride and mortification led to his death.

But I will ask one question. Are there not untold thousands to-day forgetting not merely one thing, but **THE ONE THING NEEDFUL**, the one thing that counts when everything else will be forgotten? I refer to the question of the soul's salvation. Nay further, may I ask my reader earnestly, solicitously,

Are *you* forgetting the one thing needful? Are *you* absolutely careless and indifferent about your soul's salvation? Have you no care as to where you will spend eternity?

The lack of a spur on an equestrian statue is the merest trifle compared to the loss of the soul for all eternity. The two things are not comparable. The one is finite, the other infinite; the one is a mere nothing, the other is everything, *everything*. The death of the architect is as nothing compared to the second death, which surely awaits every unpenitent soul—that living eternal death, for in no case does death mean cessation of existence.

Reader, will *you* not be warned in time? God waits to be gracious. He has made provision for every sinner through Christ. The Lord Jesus has died on Calvary's cross. Atonement has been effected. Will you not avail yourself of all this?

Well might the Apostle Peter ring out the words before the Jewish Sanhedrim:—

“There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12).

There is no Saviour but Christ. Come, be concerned about the one thing needful. Else, whatever success you may attain, whatever position and wealth you may have arrived at, all is worse than useless, if the one thing needful is lacking, and you find yourself, at length, a poor, lost sinner in hell, your indifference all gone, but too late for ever to rectify your awful mistake. God save you from such a doom.

A. J. P.

A GERMAN STATUE OF A BRITISH ADMIRAL.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE is perhaps the best known of the band of daring sailors who, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, carried the flag of England from victory to victory. Constituting himself champion of the Protestant cause, he attacked on both sides of the Atlantic the seaboard and the fleets of Philip of Spain, that miserable tool of the Romish Inquisition. Honoured by his Queen and country for his long succession of heroic exploits, he added fresh lustre to his name by the skilful manner in which he led the ships under his command against the great Spanish Armada, and thus contributed to the deliverance of England from the cruel yoke of Popery, which Philip was seeking to reimpose upon her.

A grateful country holds the name of Drake in high honour. But it comes rather as a surprise to learn that a statue of the famous British admiral stands in the market-place of Offenburg, a German town near the borders of the Black Forest.

It is not, however, in the character of a British admiral, the hero of a hundred fights, that Sir Francis Drake is thus honoured in Germany. Besides contributing to the safety of his country, and preserving her freedom by beating off the attacks of those, who sought to enslave her, he introduced that useful article of food, the potato, into Europe. The statue at Offenburg represents

the admiral in this character, holding in his right hand a map of South America, and in the left a potato plant, with some fine tubers attached.

A very similar thing has happened with reference to One infinitely greater than Sir Francis Drake. I mean the Lord Jesus Christ. No mightier victory has ever been won than that which HE achieved against the powers of darkness. Alone he entered the conflict, and alone secured the triumph. None can share with Him the glory of that victory, but millions shall share for ever in the happiness that is the result of it.

The battle was fought, the work was done *for us*. The Saviour came from heaven for the express purpose of seeking and saving the lost. In order to accomplish this He had to shed His blood to make atonement for sins. This He did, and in doing it won His mighty triumph, and gained for Himself the right to be our Saviour, our Redeemer.

For this we honour and love Him. We think with grateful hearts of the heavy ransom which He paid on our behalf, and of how He wrought deliverance for us at the cost of such suffering, and of His life.

But in some quarters we hear of those, who would fain honour our Saviour and Redeemer, *not as such*, but as a great Teacher, and as one, who set a good example by His life. True, He was the greatest of teachers, and no one can have a better example than the holy, self-sacrificing life of the Lord Jesus here on earth. But to honour Him *in this character* ALONE is in reality to give Him no honour at all.

His greatest glory is that He laid down His life *for sinners*. "Christ died *for the ungodly*," in order that He might *save* them.

As our Helper, our Guide, our great Example, we seek to honour Him. But foremost of all we bear His name inscribed upon our hearts as our SAVIOUR, the One, who bled to deliver us, who laid down His life to procure our salvation.

Do you honour Him thus? You admire His life and teachings, maybe, but can you speak of Him as your Saviour?

Men may rightly show gratitude to Drake for bringing the useful potato to their knowledge, but what are potatoes compared with national safety and deliverance from the intolerant yoke of Rome? In the same way men may rightly admire the Lord Jesus Christ for the benefits brought to the world by His life and teachings, but all this avails nothing unless we have Him as our Saviour, and have been personally set free by His grace and power from the iron bondage of sin.

"Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3). "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . to him be glory!" (Rev. i. 5, 6). Have *you* trusted that Saviour yet?

"Blessings abound where'er He reigns ;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains :
The weary find eternal rest ;
And all the sons of want are blest."

A MESSAGE FROM THE FRONT.

“**N**O, thank you, I do not want that rubbish,” said a young private to me in the barrack-room as he refused some gospel literature I offered. He continued: “I used to believe it once, but am now a free-thinker. I’ve seen what a sham the whole thing is, and the failure of your professors of religion to live decent lives.”

Turning to the sergeant by my side I said, “Now, sergeant, tell me, if I were to dress up in your clothes, would that make a sergeant of me?”

“Certainly not,” he replied.

“Just so,” I continued. “It is not the dress that makes the sergeant, any more than the mere profession makes the Christian. You men would discover my ignorance of military law and discipline the moment I opened my mouth, and I should not only become liable to prosecution for degrading the King’s uniform, but should deserve punishment. To become a sergeant I must enlist, submit to the King’s regulations, and by theory and practice qualify for that position. So a Christian is not merely a professor, but one who accepts Christ as Saviour, Lord, and Master, who shall control the whole of his life and being. And just as a man who degrades the King’s uniform will be punished, so ‘the hypocrite’s hope shall perish,’ and he will suffer the penalty of God’s violated law.

“To show you that it is not all sham,” I said, “I should like to read you an extract of a letter

written from the Front by a chaplain there. He says:—

“The war is unspeakable in its horror. . . . Tell soldiers at home they must know God before they come out, if they are to face adequately the work that lies before them. A corporal, who was laughed at and jeered at for saying his prayers in barracks, has proved himself in this war one of the finest soldiers, and the men of his regiment are now asking him how to pray. Men who were ashamed to pray before are praying now. After an address on prayer a soldier said, “You need not rub it in, sir; all pray at the front. There are no atheists here.” Seek to get our soldiers to fear God, and to pray before they leave home. It is too pitiful to have a dying man, with only a few hours to live, saying, “Tell me about religion, sir.””

There is no sham about this letter. The writer has been brought face to face with the truth of Heb. ix. 27, 28: “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

A preacher speaking from those words said: “We have here four striking facts. First, Death—‘It is appointed unto men *once to die.*’ Second, Judgment—‘And after death *the Judgment.*’ Third, Atonement—‘So Christ was *once offered to bear the sins of many.*’ Fourth, The Lord’s Return—‘And unto them that look for him *shall he appear the*

second time. The first *all* believe. Many do not like the second. Some believe the third, and others believe the whole four!"

Some one has said we take 25,000-30,000 breaths in a day. That may be true or not; I cannot say. But of one thing I am certain; there is a time when we shall take our *last breath*, and happy is the man, who can say, as General Taylor, one of the heroes of Waterloo, said, as he passed away:—

"In peace let me resign my breath,
And Thy salvation see;
My sins deserve eternal death,
But Jesus died for me."

W. J. P.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

No. 7.—THE POWER OF PRAYER.

(Read Luke xviii. 1-14.)

IN these few verses we get two lovely parables; first, that of the judge and the importunate widow; second, that of the Pharisee and publican, who went into the temple to pray. Each of these parables has something to say about prayer.

The first applies to the people of God; the second, to the unsaved.

Let us examine the first parable briefly. We read that the Lord spake this parable to this end, "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (ver. 1). Now there is a great principle in that "Always to pray." 1 Thessalonians v. 17 says, similarly, "Pray

without ceasing." Dependence is that which marks a saint of God. As the poet says :—

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered, or unexpressed."

It is the right attitude of 'the soul Godward. How easily we faint. How easily we are turned aside.

I do not for a moment want to lead you to think that what this widow prayed for is the kind of petition we are to utter. Doubtless in a future day it will be the right thing for those forming the Jewish elect to pray during the great tribulation, "Avenge me of mine adversary" (ver. 3), and the God of Sabaoth will hear and answer. But, during this Christian era we have to pray for our enemies, and for those that despitefully use us. The great teaching for us in this parable is the need of *importunate*, persevering prayer.

In the case of this unjust judge, he would not listen at first to the widow's request, but afterwards said within himself, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me" (vers. 4 and 5). How remarkably the Lord puts it! And the Spirit of God adds, "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith" (ver. 6). There is immense weight in this exhortation. Ponder well the truth exhibited in this parable. The widow comes, and comes, and comes again. That is to say, she was persistent. The Lord give you and me to know more and more what this means. Let our intercession for the blessing of others be heard "day and night."

I remember an old brother saying to me once, "Do you ever get up and pray at night?"

"Sometimes," said I.

Then he added, "I like to get up, and get down by my bedside through the night, because I think the Lord has not got very many talking to Him then. I feel as though I had His ear, and had Him all to myself."

His remarks were truly quaint and simple, but very sweet.

Here the Lord says "day and night." God give us to know a little more of the day-and-night cry. It is a wonderful privilege. If there be a constant looking to God, and crying to Him, the blessing will come.

Let us now turn to the next parable, and briefly examine it. "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (ver. 9). It is, alas! a principle in the human heart to think well of oneself and despise others. These people, whom the Lord addressed, "trusted in themselves that they were righteous." What does Scripture say? "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. iii. 10). And yet there are many, who are trusting that they are, in themselves, righteous. What a terrible delusion!

Look at the Apostle Paul. He was a man, whose outward life was blameless. But when, as Saul of Tarsus, he got his eyes upon Christ in glory, and found out the truth as to Christ, he discovered that he was "the chief of sinners."

When that light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, struck him, he found he was not a righteous man after all, but "the chief of sinners." And what did Paul get the day he threw his self-righteousness overboard? He made the acquaintance of Christ, as His life and righteousness. He got everything in Christ. Happy exchange!

Now let us look at these two men in the parable—the Pharisee and the publican—very briefly. Mark their prayers! "Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself" (vers. 10, 11). And his prayer never got above the ceiling. What did he say? "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." He did not say, "God, Thou art loving and tender and good, and gavest Thy Son for a wicked sinner like me."

Listen to me, my friend. You are as other men, and I am as other men. And what are we, and all other men, but for the grace of God? Hell-bound sinners, and if Christ does not save you, that is where you will end. There is no difference. All have sinned. I do not deny there may be a difference outwardly between man and man. That is all very right in the sight of men.

But what say the Scriptures? "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22, 23). Therefore we are all reduced by God to one dead level—sinners in our sins. And nothing but mercy will do for us.

This man's prayer is all about himself. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (vers. 11, 12). Five times over he uses the word "I." It was all himself, what he was, what he had done. And where was he when it was all over? In his sins! Unrepentant! Unsaved! Self-satisfied! Devil-deluded! On the road to damnation!

And if you are upon the same ground, my reader, let me tell you in all affection, that is what you are. Self-righteousness is an awful thing. If drink slay its thousands, self-righteousness slays its tens of thousands.

This poor, self-righteous Pharisee does not really get into God's presence. He is full of himself, and we shall hear the Lord's judgment about him immediately. What about the publican?

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me [the] sinner'" (ver. 13). Why "*the* sinner"? It was not that other men were not sinners, but he is so conscious of his own guilt, that he uses, in the anguish of his heart, this striking prayer and confession. "Mercy for, me *the* sinner" was his cry. Did you ever get into God's presence like that?

Now see what the Lord says as that poor fellow turns to God in prayer. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (ver. 14). How did he go home that day? Justified.

The reason is simple. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (ver. 14). The Pharisee exalts himself only to be abased: the publican abases himself and is exalted. Such are God's ways.

Oh! get down before God, and own what you are; nothing but a guilty, hell-deserving sinner, and you will get what this dear troubled soul got. He went down to his house justified. That is a great word.

How can I be justified? Look at Romans iii. 20-28 for answer. "By the deeds of the law there shall be no flesh justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (ver. 20). That is to say, there is no standing for self-righteousness in any shape or form. Every self-righteous man is only going respectably to hell.

"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" (vers. 21-23). Righteousness is only to be had by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith in Him, who alone could meet the claims of righteousness, and did so at the cross of Calvary. He has done a work by which God has been glorified and sin put away.

And now righteousness, of which you have none for God, God has for man. You have no righteousness for God; but God has righteousness for you. It is "*unto ALL*." It is universal. That is the aspect of it. "And upon *all them that believe*."

That is the application. Are you a true believer? is the question.

Then this beautiful Scripture goes on to say, "Being justified freely by his *grace* through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (ver. 24). The spring or source of justification is the grace of God. Romans v. 9 says, "Justified by his *blood*." There we get the ground or basis of justification—the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans v. 1 says, "Justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There we get the means or method of justification, viz., by *faith* in Christ. Faith is the empty hand of expectancy, which accepts the blessing.

There are not three ways of being justified. But there are three parties to justification—God, Christ, and the sinner.

The source of justification—*God's* GRACE.

The ground of justification—*Christ's* BLOOD.

The principle of justification—*the sinner's* FAITH.

God says, I will justify the sinner.

Christ says, I will die and atone for his sins.

The believing sinner says, I will accept God's grace.

Have you done so, dear reader?

Now read on. God is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (ver. 26). Do what the publican did. Take your place as a poor, guilty sinner. God will either justify you, or judge you. Which shall it be? In eternity you will stand before God either a justified man, or a judged man. How blessed, if justified! How solemn, if judged! Which shall it be?

W. T. P. W.

"THAT NIGHT OF THE LORD."

IT was such a queer little hall, in a narrow, dingy street in one of our seaport towns, where sailors and dockers abounded. The hall had been made by knocking two rooms into one, and had been used for some time as a penny gaff, or place of doubtful amusement for the young people in the neighbourhood.

Afterwards the place had been taken by some good men, who wished to evangelise that part of the town; so not waiting for the folks to come to church or chapel, they went into the midst of them, and the "gaff" became a mission-room, where many found the Saviour.

This is nearly fifty years ago, but the room and all that happened that night is as fresh in the mind of the writer as if it happened yesterday. A young doctor from Edinburgh (who told us he had given up the lancet for the "sword of the Spirit") was holding a mission in the little hall, and this was the last night of the services.

The place was crowded, and uncomfortably warm and close. When the doctor appeared the first thing he did was to open the window, and then he asked a man to take off the fire, which was burning in the grate in the corner of the room. This he did with a large pair of tongs, and all the smoking coals spread within the fender had a most unpleasant effect, for we were sitting close by, and almost within reach of the platform.

I had most reluctantly come to the meeting at the entreaty of an elder sister, and this strange beginning did not make me like it any better. I thought I had never been in such a queer little place. Then when the doctor began to preach, he shouted so loud that I was at first considerably disturbed. It was a thing I disliked so much, and I compared his voice with my father's gentle, gracious tones to which I was accustomed to listen, and it annoyed me.

But after a little while I forgot everything and everybody, and was only conscious that God was speaking to me in a way I had never known before.

The doctor was preaching on the words: "WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU" (Ex. xii. 13). He described with graphic reality and intensity that awful night in Egypt, when there was not a house where there was not one dead, for the Lord passed through the land in judgment, and the firstborn of the wealthy man and the poor man, the high-born and the humble, lay cold and dead—struck down suddenly by the hand of a just and holy God—and only in the houses where the blood of a lamb had been sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels were they safe.

It was but a faint picture, he said, of the judgment soon to fall on this sinful world; and *every soul* in that hall, whatever their outward position, their age, their respectability or attainments, stood GUILTY before God, exposed to judgment, which was as surely coming as it came that night long ago in Egypt.

"God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31).

"There is no difference: for ALL HAVE SINNED, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23).

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 20).

"It is appointed unto men once to die, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT" (Heb. ix. 27).

Judgment was coming—it was sure, it was certain. We could no more prevent its coming than we could stop the express train, which rushed through our station as we stood on the platform. It is the inevitable consequence of man's sin and ruin. *All* of us were guilty; *all* of us were in peril. We had to meet a holy God—a just God, who could by no means clear the guilty. We were shut up to the just judgment of God.

How terrible was the danger in which I found myself. To stand before God—a holy God—all alone, a guilty sinner, for I knew and felt it now. What should I do?

In my anxiety I listened more eagerly and drank in every word. The heat of the room no longer oppressed me, and the loud voice of the speaker annoyed me no more. I was only anxious about one thing—Would he explain clearly, clearly enough, how I might be saved, and make it *quite plain* how I might be sprinkled by the blood of the Lamb?

And he explained it all so simply. "The blood of the Lamb means that a life has been laid down

for sinners, *for you*. The Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, suffered in the place of every believer. Jehovah laid on His beloved Son 'the iniquity of us all,' that is of all, who believe, and all are invited to believe, and He is satisfied with Him, and His offering for sin. He asks you to be satisfied with the Lord Jesus and His work on Calvary, done for you. He bids you come just as you are—in all your guiltiness and need—and accept Him and trust His word. He is close to you, waiting the response of your heart. Will you accept Him now as your own personal Saviour? 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor. v. 2). You can take Him just as you are, and just where you are, without moving an eyelash."

Never shall I forget those last words, and the extraordinary sense of God's presence and power that came over me. I saw I had to do *with God*, and that I must act at once, for the present moment of salvation was all that was offered to me: to-morrow might be too late. But though I was deeply conscious of my need and my danger it did not seem possible to come *at once* to Christ. It all seemed too simple. I must have misunderstood. There must be something to do, or to feel, or to wait for, before I could be forgiven and accepted.

Yet all the long walk home after the service I seemed to hear God saying, "When I see *the blood* I will pass over you." When *I* see the blood, never mind what you *feel*; when *I* see you trusting only and entirely in the blood of Christ, the death

of Christ in your stead, I will pass over you. Judgment is passed, it has been borne on Calvary for those who rest on that sacrifice. "You can take Him just as you are, and just where you are, without moving an eyelash," as the speaker said.

Praise God, I took Him at His word, and one more poor sinner proved "that night of the Lord" (Ex. xii. 42) that God meant what He said when He spoke the wonderful words: "When I SEE the *blood* I WILL pass over you" (Ex. xii. 13).

For the encouragement of any, who are praying for the salvation of those dear to them—perhaps some, who have long waited for the precious fruit—I would relate one more fact of "that night of the Lord," known in heaven, but never before recorded on earth.

My dear father was at that time travelling in Egypt, and was very ill, so ill that he wrote a letter to my mother, which he feared might be his last. In it he said, "I am specially praying for the salvation of our children, who do not yet know the Lord." This letter did not arrive until some weeks later, but when my mother read it to us, I asked at once for the date on which it was written. It was the very date on which I heard the address on the blood of the Lamb, and accepted Christ as my Saviour.

"Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. lxxv. 24).

A MISTAKE RECTIFIED IN TIME.

A DEAR woman said to me only to-day, "I used to think for long that I was all right. I thought that if I prayed, and led a good life, that that would be enough. One evening I was looking up at the sky, and admiring the beauty of the stars, when suddenly a voice seemed to say to me, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts xvi. 31). A strange solemnity came over me. In a flash I saw that I had never been saved, and there and then I believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was saved."

What a mercy that a mistake of such magnitude, and fraught with such eternal consequences, was rectified in time. Alas! alas! in this twentieth century, in this land of churches, in this country of Bibles and tracts, there are untold thousands making this very mistake. Are you one such, dear reader? Awake, awake, in time. To-morrow may be too late. How insistent are the words of Scripture, "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; behold, NOW is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

Make no mistake on this important subject, for, once you find yourself out of time and in eternity, you will discover it is beyond the possibility of rectification. We live in a fearfully indifferent age. Millions are lulled to sleep by the deadly opiates of the devil.

Awake! awake, I beseech you, ere it be too late.

A. J. P.

MISLED!

A LADY was speaking to a friend in warm terms of the eloquence and great oratorical powers of the minister of the church which she attended.

Her friend, who knew from report that the gentleman in question, though a very fine speaker, was not converted and did not preach God's salvation, said, "But if he does not preach *the truth*, his eloquence is only so much the worse for his hearers!"

For instance, if I am not acquainted with the country, and a man misdirects me as to the place I want to reach, the greater his assumption of knowledge and authority when directing me, the greater the danger of my being misled by him!

This may cause me only some temporary inconvenience, but oh! the irretrievable loss for eternity, if through my not knowing God's Word, I am misled by "enticing words of man's wisdom," as to how I must be saved.

Misled perhaps into thinking that if *I do my very best* to lead a good religious life, I shall reach heaven at last!

How utterly opposed to God's salvation for me is such a thought.

He saves me solely on the ground of *what Christ has done for me*, not on the ground of what I try to do for Him.

He has declared that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "It is the blood

that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). So He sent His own Son to shed His blood to atone for sins, and in virtue of this, and *this alone*, He freely forgives and justifies the believing sinner from all things (see Acts xiii. 38).

My part in this wonderful salvation is simply to *come to Him* "just as I am," a poor lost sinner, and believe and *appropriate for myself*, what He by His atoning death has done for me.

"He took the guilty culprit's place,
And suffered in his stead."

"His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24), is the language of faith. And, also, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, *cleanseth us from all sin*" (1 John i. 7). F. A.

"AND HE DIED."

WE read in the Bible of eight men, who lived, married, and had families. They lived to a very great age, and then of each one it is recorded, "And he died" (Gen. v. 3-31).

Reader, in the natural course of things, one day these three words must be true of *you*. You may have a lingering illness, your friends may watch around your bed as your life ebbs out. Or death may come suddenly without any warning. In a moment your soul may be required of you, and *then?* "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this *the judgment*" (Heb. ix. 27).

Have *you* ever given this subject your serious

attention? You may perhaps have insured your life, and, before doing this, may have spent hours consulting various insurance companies, and the different advantages they each offer, and at last you decided where to insure that those you may leave behind should be provided for at your decease. But have you ever given five minutes' serious thought as to *where* you will be when that policy becomes payable?

Can it be possible that you have made arrangements for your wife and children, and none for *your own* future? We are living in a day when mockers and scoffers at God's Word abound, but all their mocking and scoffing does not affect it. *Heaven* and *hell* are still realities, and each day as it glides by brings you nearer to the one or the other.

A Christian was once asked by a sceptic, "Tell me *where* hell is, and I will believe in it." The answer came quickly, "*Hell* is at the end of every Christless life."

Reader, are *you* without Christ? Have you lived all these years with your soul in danger of *eternal ruin*? *Wake up now*. The three words at the head of this appeal may be true of you this very day, and what an awful thing it would be to wake up when *too late*. Then you would be lost for ever—evermore beyond the reach of grace in hell.

Listen to the sweet story of God's love. He saw a world of sinners, lost, ruined, and undone; sinners going their own downward path, blinded by Satan and unconscious of their danger, and "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). The Lord Jesus came, as sent by God, and on the cross "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix. 26). He took the sinner's place, suffered for sin, and bore the judgment that was due to sin. "Christ died for the *ungodly*" (Rom. v. 6). "While we were yet *sinner*s, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8). How this describes our condition !

Why not then believe the good news of God's love, and of God's salvation, as told out in the gospel ? The believer can say of the Saviour, He "was delivered for OUR offences, and was raised again for OUR justification. Therefore being *justified by faith*, WE HAVE PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. iv. 25 ; v. 1). He has made peace through the blood of His cross, and when we believe on Him, His precious blood cleanseth us from all sin (see 1 John i. 7).

Not only can the believer enter into peace with God, but, more than that, he can rejoice in hope of the glory, that is, he can look forward with joy to the time when he shall see the One, who has saved him, face to face in the glory (see Rom. v. 2). No wonder the rich farmer we read of in Luke xii. 16-21, who neglected these eternal truths, and lived only for time, is called by God, "Thou fool."

In closing I once again beseech you, for your own soul's sake, as well as for Christ's glory, *wake up*, and settle this matter before you are five minutes older. Again I repeat that perhaps, even to-day, it may be said of you, "*And he died.*"

A. B.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

No. 8.—RESPONSIBILITY AND REWARD.

(Read Luke xix. 1-27.)

THIS Scripture gives us first the incident of Zacchæus, how he was met and saved by the Lord; and second, the striking parable of the nobleman, his servants, and his citizens—a figure of Christ, His people, and the world in relation to His coming reign upon the earth. There is an intimate relation between the two, as verse 11 clearly points out. The first brings out the *salvation* of the sinner, and the second the *service* of the saint. The incident of Zacchæus brings out *grace*, the grace of God seeking and saving the lost. The parable of the nobleman brings out *glory*, the glory of the coming reign of Christ, and what conduct is suitable now, in view of it.

The Lord Jesus has come into this scene in grace. What to do? To save sinners. But He is not here now. Why? Because, as illustrated by the nobleman in the parable, refused on earth, He has gone "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (ver. 12). Christ has gone to heaven there to receive from His Father a kingdom, and what next? He is coming again to reign where He was rejected. I believe His return is near. Are you expecting it? If you are not expecting it, one of these days you will get a most extraordinary surprise. I beseech you to bow to Christ in the

day of His grace, or else you must bow in the day of His power, only to be judged by Him.

This is illustrated by what happened to the citizens, who hated the nobleman, and who said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (ver. 14). When the nobleman returned and took his kingdom, he said, "But those, mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me" (ver. 27). Do you refuse to have Christ to reign over you? Be warned! Remember you must be saved to serve. Zacchæus illustrates for us the way of salvation. Let us look at the incident briefly.

The narrative begins, "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho" (ver. 1). Jericho, the city of the curse, apt figure of this sin-cursed, death-blighted world, into which the Saviour came, and passed through on His lonely mission of seeking and saving the lost. "And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was chief among the publicans, and he was rich" (ver. 2). Evidently he had a good place in the world. But riches and position never filled a man's heart yet. There was in the soul of Zacchæus a need, a want. Is there a need in your soul? None but Christ can fill it.

How do we know there was a need in the heart of Zacchæus? We read, "And he sought to see Jesus who he was" (ver. 3). When a man seeks Christ it is a proof that the world has failed to satisfy. Are you a seeker after Christ? If you are, thank God, you will find Him. And I tell you

why. Because He is seeking you. And if you are seeking Him, and He is seeking you, you are bound to meet, even as the Saviour and Zacchæus met. May He find you by this printed page. Perhaps the putting into your hands of this copy of the *Gospel Messenger* may be the means of your finding the Saviour. God grant it.

Zacchæus "sought to see Jesus who he was ; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature" (ver. 3). Of course not. There never was a sinner yet, seeking the Lord, who did not find there was a hindrance. Business, pleasure, worldly relations, and friends, it is wonderful what the devil will bring in to hinder. He says to one, "They will laugh at you in the shop"; to another, "If you become a Christian, you will lose in business." Don't listen to such folly. Your gain in coming to Christ would infinitely exceed your losses. Don't be cheated of heaven by the devil's delusions.

It seemed hopeless for Zacchæus. The crowd pressed round the Lord. Zacchæus was "little of stature." But I tell you what he was. I wonder whether you are like him. He was in *downright earnest*. He says, as it were, "Hindrance or no hindrance, I mean to see Him." Faith always finds its way out of difficulties. And if you are in earnest you will see Him too. You will not give your soul rest till you have found Him.

Well, Zacchæus looks a little way off, and sees a sycamore tree, and determines to find a vantage spot in its branches. The devil, doubtless, suggested

all kinds of things. "What would people say? Was it dignified for a rich man to be climbing a tree like a schoolboy?" But Zacchæus does not care a bit. All he says is this, "I cannot see Him where I am," and up the sycamore tree he goes.

But the Lord says to him: "Zacchæus, *make haste*, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house" (ver. 5). With wonderful alacrity Zacchæus slides down that tree, and stands before the Lord. There is the Saviour in full view of the sinner. The desire of his heart is fulfilled. Aye, and he gets more, infinitely more.

Zacchæus gets the desire of his heart, but what does the Lord want? "To-day I must abide at thy house." How wonderful! If you are without the knowledge of His grace, He wants to do to you what He did to Zacchæus that day. He wants to go home with you to *your* house. Will you, like Zacchæus, receive Him joyfully? Do you know what the next thing will be? He is coming back, and He will take you to *His* house. That is the other side. Now it is the grace side. By and by it will be the glory side.

Tell me not, beloved friend, that you will think about it, and turn the matter over in your mind. No! no!! Christ says, "Make haste." And, sinner, when God says, "Make haste," do not listen to the devil's word, "Pause, delay." If you are wise, you will heed the Lord's word. I never heard of salvation for to-morrow in Scripture. *To-day* is the day of grace; *to-morrow* will be the day of judgment.

God says, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). "*To-day* I must abide at thy house," are the words of the Lord Jesus.

And now let me ask you; If the blessed Lord has been seeking to gain an entrance into your heart all these years, and you have never opened the door, will you not just now undo all the bolts and bars, believe His love, bow at His feet, and let Him in? Receive Him as your personal Saviour.

Next, we read, when they see the Lord going with Zacchæus, "And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner" (ver. 7). They grumbled at Christ for accompanying a sinner.

I always thank God for that statement. Do you know why? Because, if He had refused to be guest with a man that is a sinner, He could never have come home to my house. *Sinners* He came to save; "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*" (1 Tim. i. 15). It is all very beautiful.

Now observe what the Lord then says, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham" (ver. 9).

"This day"—salvation is present. It is perfect. It has come. "This house"—salvation is personal and individual. Have you received it? That is the point.

Oh! take your place as a lost sinner. Let Jesus, the Son of God, who died and rose again, have His **own way** with you, and you will go home to-day,

and be able to say, "This day is salvation come." How blessed if it were so!

Now see how the parable of the nobleman comes in. "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (ver. 11).

The Lord Jesus will come back in power and glory. And what happens in His absence is illustrated by the action of this nobleman. "He called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come" (ver. 13). To me this is a very instructive word. Each Christian has his own little niche. Your work is not mine, and my work is not yours. What a wonderful privilege to serve the Lord Jesus Christ!

The nobleman gave to each of his ten servants one pound. This illustrates that the Lord has committed something to each Christian, which they are to use for His glory. There is also the word, "Occupy," and the little phrase added, "Till I come." You will find the Lord's return is connected with almost everything in Scripture. Here it is, "Occupy *till I come*." If it be a question of the Lord's Supper, it is "*till he come*" (1 Cor. xi. 26). If it be a question of holding fast to the truth, what do I find? "But that which ye have already hold fast *till I come*" (Rev. ii. 25). His coming is always the goal. It is always brought in in Scripture as that which acts on the heart and conscience of the Christian. How sweet then, whatever your service, to go on

with it. Let no man hinder you. Listen. "Occupy till I come." Has He come? No, He has not. Well, until He comes what is our privilege? To occupy till the blessed Lord come. Let us see that we do it.

I would just point out that you have not only the servants in this striking parable, but likewise the citizens. We read, "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (ver. 14). There the whole attitude of the world to-day towards Christ is illustrated. The nobleman is illustrative of Christ. The world has refused Christ, and cast Him out. But He is now on high, crowned with glory and honour. Why did the citizens of this world hate Him? Once and again He says, "They hated me without a cause." "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John xv. 24). Tell me, what cause had men to hate Christ? You cannot give it me. Did not He bless them? If they were hungry, did He not feed them? Were they blind? Did He not give them sight? Were they deaf? Did He not open their ears? Nay more, dead in sins, and under the very judgment of God, did He not die for them? Why did they hate Him? "Without a cause," is the only answer.

"We will not have this man to reign over us." What is the meaning of this? Did you ever read the story of Stephen, the first Christian martyr?

He spoke of Christ; he reached the conscience of his hearers by the power of his testimony. And what did they do? Took him outside the city and stoned him with stones. They sent him to heaven with this message, "We will not have your Master to reign over us."

Beloved fellow-Christian, we find ourselves in a scene full of hostility to Christ. And if we are faithful to Christ we shall get our share of it. And as long as we are in this world, it is our happy privilege to serve Him. Our *responsibility* is to witness for Him, and to serve Him till He come.

And what happened when the nobleman returned? We read that he commanded those servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading, and reward them justly. Then came the first saying, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds" (vers. 15, 16). Immediately the nobleman rewards the servant. He says to him, "Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (ver. 17). My beloved fellow-Christian, will it not be a wonderful thing if the Lord can say this to you and me by and by? It might well stimulate our hearts to follow Him. That is what I long for myself, and for all my beloved brethren in Christ. You may not be able to do much. Remember a cup of cold water given in His name will get its reward.

Then the second servant came up, saying, "Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds." And he said

likewise to him, "Be thou also over five cities" (vers. 18, 19). It is not ten cities this time. It is five. The reward is according to the servant's diligence and devotedness. There will be perfect righteousness in the day when the Lord distributes His rewards among His saints. There will be no jealousy then. I would say to my own heart and yours, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. xv. 58).

Now one word about the servant, who buried his lord's pound in a napkin. He stands as the figure of the man, who professes to receive all the light and privileges of Christianity, but makes no use of them. This wicked servant, as he is called, comes up and says, "Lord, behold here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow" (vers. 20, 21). How he misrepresented his Lord! How he condemned himself!

Reader, are you a "napkin" Christian? What is that? A mere professor; one who has an immense amount of light and knowledge, but makes no use of it, buries it, in fact. You may profess Christianity. That is not enough. Are you converted? Have you trusted the Lord as your personal Saviour?

Remember, this wicked servant was detected at last. His Lord said to him, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou

knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, reaping that I did not sow: wherefore gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have received my own with usury?" (vers. 22, 23).

Oh! beloved friend, one trembles to think what it will be for a mere professor, an empty-handed servant, to stand before the Lord by and by, and the whole truth come out at last. The first word to fall upon the ear of such will be, "Thou wicked servant." Do you think a wicked servant ever enters glory? Never. May God arouse you if you are only a mere professor, in truth but a wicked servant.

Then the Lord said unto them that stood by, "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds" (ver. 24). There is increase for you. Then follows the principle, "For I say unto you, that unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him" (ver. 26).

And then there comes one word more. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me" (ver. 27). What a picture we get of the end of the mere professor, and of the open enemy. Are you either? Oh! turn ere it be too late. Seek salvation, and then happy service will be yours. God grant it, for His name's sake. W. T. P. W.

“TO THE GLORY OF GOD”; OR, THE STRANGE STORY OF A WILL.

“**T**HE glory of God, the glory of God! What can it mean?” These words formed a soliloquy, which came from the lips of a gentleman, distinguished in appearance, of most engaging manners, a barrister in the prime of life.

Two years before the gentleman had found himself the possessor of a large fortune, amounting to several thousands a year. This large sum was left him by one who was not related to him in any way. The wording of the will was most remarkable:—

“I bequeath to Lewis Way, Esq., barrister-at-law, the entire amount of my personal and landed property, to the glory of God.”

It came about in a very simple and unexpected manner. Some years before Mr Lewis Way was spending a holiday, and one Sunday, when attending church, was shown into a large family pew, whose only occupants were an old gentleman and his daughter. He had never seen them before, nor had they seen him before.

At the close of the service they entered into conversation. To their surprise they found that their names were similar. The old gentleman's name was Mr John Way. Attracted by Mr Lewis Way's personality, and the fact of his bearing a similar name to his own, he invited him to make his house his home during his holiday.

Such a strong friendship sprang up that at the end of the visit the old gentleman gently intimated

to the younger man that, if it suited his inclination, he would have no objection to his proposing marriage to his daughter.

Mr Lewis Way burst into tears. Recovering himself, Mr Lewis Way thanked his host warmly for the honour he wished to confer upon him, but at the same time respectfully declined. Mr John Way's kind act broke down Mr Lewis Way's reserve, and he confided to his host that he was already engaged.

"Why, then, have you not married?" demanded the old man.

"Want of means," responded the young man, whereupon the old gentleman, acting on the generous impulse of the moment, drew a cheque for £3,000, pressed it upon Mr Lewis Way's acceptance, begged him to settle it upon the lady, marry her as soon as possible, and return to spend at least part of their honeymoon with himself and his daughter.

Mr Lewis Way, nothing loth, did so, and then resumed his practice at the bar. Circumstances hindered much intercourse between the families. The daughter married and died childless. The father died some time after. When his will was opened it was to see that he had left all his property to Mr Lewis Way "to the glory of God."

These words stuck to Mr Way. What did they mean? How could his new wealth be so used? He began to see that to use his wealth to the glory of God, he himself must be right with God.

A devoted servant of Christ overheard Mr Way's soliloquy, "The glory of God, the glory of God!

What can it mean?" He got into touch with the speaker. He put the simple gospel before him, which led him to see himself as a poor, lost sinner, needing salvation, and led him to accept the Saviour of God's gracious providing as his Saviour.

It turned the whole current of his life. He gave up the practice of the law, and became an ardent preacher of the gospel, devoting his vast wealth, as himself, "to the glory of God!"

This extraordinary, but perfectly true story, is interesting, but it is written not to interest you in Mr Lewis Way's conversion, but in *your own*.

Until you experience this great change, you can do nothing for "the glory of God." Vast sums may be given to philanthropic objects. In the striking language of Scripture you may soliloquise, as Mr Way did, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [*i.e.*, divine love], it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3).

Believe me, the *first* step in this is "repentance toward God," and the *second* is "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21). Until those two steps are taken you cannot live "to the glory of God," without which every life is one colossal blunder, and its end eternity in the lake of fire.

"Get right with God—eternity's before thee,
How dark 'twill be if, banished from His face,
Thou goest forth into the night of sorrow,
A stranger ever to His saving grace."

A. J. P.

AN ACTUAL DREAM AND A TESTIMONY.

IN April 1914 I dreamed that as I was walking through lovely country parts, I came upon an ancient castle, and being convinced of the beautiful view to be seen from the top, I determined to ascend the old stone staircase. Up and up I went until I came on a great rent in the stone work, some of it having fallen away. At first it seemed impossible for me to go further, but being keen to reach the top, I resolved to leap across. Miscalculating the distance, my feet failed to reach the other side, but I just managed to cling on with my fingers, and there I was left hanging over this black, and apparently bottomless, hole beneath.

I was terrified, and wondered if perchance some lone tourist might mount this same old staircase, and, finding me, would save me from what was otherwise inevitable death.

But no footstep broke the silence; my body, suspended, seemed to grow heavier and heavier, and my fingers weaker and weaker; and I knew the moment to let go had come: so, throwing my head right back, I looked up heavenward, and in a loud voice said, "My blessed Lord and Saviour, I am coming to Thee just now," and down, down I went; but instead of fear, the most indescribable *peace* filled my whole being, and as I continued to fall, I waited almost impatiently for the *crash* to come—the stepping-stone to my blessed Lord and Saviour, but ere it came I awoke.

As I looked back upon that living death as it were, the same peace still filled my soul. I am not afraid to die. I am not afraid to meet the great and holy God. I am not afraid to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. Why should I, since the one is my Father; and the other is my Saviour? He said, "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John x. 11); and the Father told me that He "sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John iv. 14).

As I did not want to be eternally lost, I laid hold on the wonderful salvation that was offered me *free*, but at such tremendous cost. I had faith to believe what He told me was really true. I took Him at His word, when He said, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7), and I believe that the death of Christ has satisfied God about my sins. So now I belong to the Lord Jesus, and He belongs to me, and His God and Father is *my* God and Father; and though, as surely as I know that there is a glorious, happy home in heaven waiting for me, I also know there is an awful bottomless pit (which my dream reminded me of), a lake of fire, a hell where all, who do not want the Saviour as their own Saviour, shall most certainly go to, yet, I have no fear, because the Lord has said—"I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John xiv. 3); so this is my greatest joy, to think I may see Him soon, very soon.

Reader, have you such a prospect? It is for you, as much as for me, if you will only believe. A. G. T.

A GENERAL OFFICER HEALED.

NAAMAN, the great commander-in-chief of the army of Syria, having been cured of his leprosy by the hand of the Man of God in Samaria, returns to Damascus *clean*.

Let us suppose that he then presents himself to the King of Syria, and that the following conversation ensues.

The King—"Did you hand my letter to the King of Israel, in which I asked him to heal you of your direful malady?"

"Yes, sire," Naaman replies, "but as he felt that this was absolutely beyond his power, he could only view your letter as a pretext for war. He rent his clothes in terror."

The King—"What happened?"

"Just at that moment," said Naaman, "I received a message to go to the Man of God. I went; for I assumed that such an one could surely relieve me of my plague; and I was prepared to pay any monetary price for my cure. I reached the door of his dwelling. He merely sent out a servant to tell me to go to the river Jordan, and wash seven times, and that I should be clean. All this was sorely humbling. I thought me of the waters of Syria—the Abana, the Pharpar, in which I might bathe more easily, and with more dignity, than in a river, whose name signifies death. Sire, my pride resented such a humiliation. I thought that he would come out to me, strike his hand over the place, and heal me; that he

would then present his fee, and that I should return a healed and happy, if a poorer, man. But he asked for none of my silver or gold or garments; he did not deign to regard me personally. Such treatment was painfully derogatory to so great a man as I! Intolerable, so I turned, and went away in a rage.

"But, sire, there was the leprosy, uncured and incurable; neither passion nor wounded pride could remove the lethal plague. What should I do? My servants remonstrated with me; they said that had the prophet bid me do some great thing I would have done it. They were right, I would have done anything—silver, gold, wealth to any extent would have been freely given for the healing of my awful disease; but, said they, if the healing virtue lay in the waters of Jordan, why should I not give them a fair trial?

"Well, sire, I deemed their advice good; I went down, yes, *down*, for it was certainly a most humbling journey, and in the sight of my retinue I entered those wonderful waters. I dipped myself six times, but was no better; I felt a little sceptical as to the result; but I should test the truth of the word of the Man of God by taking the seventh plunge. If that failed, then I, alas! should remain a leper, the Man of God be proved an impostor, and his word a lie; but if I rose clean, then the Man of God would be an honoured servant of the Most High, and his word deserving of my fullest confidence.

"So, sire, I went down the seventh time; I rose up, and lo! my flesh was like the flesh of a little

child, and I was clean. I proved there and then the efficacy of the waters of Jordan, and the verity of the word of God by His servant. There was given to the waters of Jordan, in a miraculous way, at that supreme moment of my history, the virtue and power of removing the otherwise incurable plague of leprosy. No other waters had such a charm. It must be the Jordan, or chronic leprosy and death.

"I left you, sire, a leper, and am returned healed. I attribute my cleansing to the mercy and power of the God of Israel. I now repudiate all other gods; for that which neither man nor idol could do, the God of Israel—the living and true God—has done for me. Henceforth, I shall worship the Lord alone."

No further explanation is needed by the King of Syria. The familiar story is given us in 2 Kings v. Happy Naaman, and happy the little Israelitish maid, who bore so true a testimony to the Man of God.

But what is the typical meaning of the story?

Leprosy (vile, loathsome, incurable) means '*sin*.'

Jordan means '*death*'—the substitutionary death of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

Naaman means *pleasant*, and illustrates the case of the once defiled and guilty sinner, now cleansed from his sins by faith in "the precious blood of Christ," according to the Word of God, and become a happy worshipper of God the Father, and God the Son, his leprous misery turned into the pleasure of divine forgiveness.

Reader, are your sins forgiven? Is the leprosy of your sin cured?

J. W. S.

THE PARABLES OF LUKE'S GOSPEL.

NO. IX.—THE LORD'S COMING.

(Read Luke **xx.** 9-18 ; **xxi.** 27-36.)

IN these scriptures we have the parable of the vineyard, and then that of the fig tree and all the trees; the first illustrating the way in which God came into this scene in the Person of His Son; the second showing what will be the character of things when the Lord returns the second time to earth, and the way to be ready for His glory and kingdom.

The first parable, then, is more the thought of what the Lord was in relation to Israel in the past. The second brings Him in in connection with Israel in the *future*, and through Israel with the rest of the nations. The fig tree stands as a figure of Israel: "all the trees" as a figure of the nations.

Let us examine briefly the first parable. We read, "A certain man planted a vineyard and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time" (ver. 9). "A certain man" prefigures God; "a vineyard," the land of Israel; the "husbandmen," God's earthly people, the Israelites. That is to say, God plants Israel in the land, and then He looks for fruit from a people put in such a place of privilege towards Himself. So we read, "And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard" (ver. 10). Clearly, if Israel was put in this place of blessing and privilege, there was a responsibility connected with this place of privilege.

And do not forget this, though that day has gone by, that you are in a place of responsibility to-day. You are not under the law, that is true; but you have a greater privilege, that of the presentation of God in Christ. All the light of the gospel shines to-day. What a privilege! You are greatly responsible because you have heard about the Son of God. And the very light and opportunities of blessing that come to you only carry with them an immense responsibility as to what will be the effect on your soul in either receiving or rejecting Him.

How did the husbandmen treat the servant who came seeking fruit? We read, "The husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty" (ver. 10). He got nothing but insult and violence. The testimony of all the prophets of the Old Testament is that they were sent away empty. So we read, "And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out" (vers. 11, 12). There we get a description of the patience with which God wooed man in the Old Testament, and the result.

I declare to you, the most marvellous thing that I know in all God's universe is His patience. But it has a limit. It will be exhausted one day.

You, who have heard the gospel over and over again, beware. The day of reckoning is surely coming. Oh! turn from your carelessness and indifference before it be too late.

Are the resources of the Lord of the vineyard

exhausted? "Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do?" What a picture of the heart of God, slow to anger and judgment. What would you do with a tenant if he persistently refused to pay rent? You know you would turn him out. We have seen what man has done. Refused, the servants sent them away empty, with insults and injuries. What will God do to sinners who refuse His messengers? This is one of the most amazing queries in all the Bible. Will God draw His sword from its scabbard, and deal summarily with those wicked sinners? Listen! "I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him" (ver. 13). Astounding mercy! What a picture of the grace of God!

Did this world reverence God's Son? Did Israel bow in homage at His worthy feet? No; they cast Him out; they rejected Him. Did not God know what they would do? He did. But the parable brings out the amazing fact that God, in wondrous grace, has given man the opportunity of rendering to Christ that which was His due.

Let me ask you, Have you revered the Son of God? These are serious questions, because your relation to Christ will determine your eternal future.

Next we read what the husbandmen did. "When the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours" (ver. 14). The Lord is simply, in prophecy, indicating what His own history would be. Did the Jews not crucify

the Lord of glory? They did. Yes, and you and I were represented in that terrible deed.

Yes, this world cast Him out. They judged Him worthy of a crown of thorns, and a felon's death. On the tree they nailed the Lord of life and glory, and what then? "What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them?" (ver. 15). When His own beloved Son has been murdered and cast out, what will God do with Israel, because of her awful sin in rejecting her Messiah?

We read in the parable, "He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others" (ver. 15). That is exactly what has been done. The Jews have been set aside. The Gentiles have got privilege in this day. Where Christ is not received judgment must be tasted.

"And when they heard it, they said, God forbid" (ver. 16). It is no use saying that. The soul that despises Christ, the soul that refuses the Son of God will surely come in for judgment. I admit long-suffering grace may keep back for a time the wheels of the car of God's judgment, but depend upon it, it will come. There is a serious day coming. Be warned, I beseech you.

And now we come to a most remarkable statement. When the people said in respect of coming judgment, "God forbid," we read that the Lord "beheld them and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but

on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (vers. 17, 18). The Lord quotes here from Psalm cxviii. 22, but makes an unspeakably solemn addition to the quotation.

Who was meant by the "stone"? The Lord Himself.

Who were "the builders," who rejected the stone? Clearly the Jewish leaders, who encompassed the death of Christ.

How does the rejected stone become the Head of the corner? Because the very act of rejection by Jewish leaders, that is, the death of Christ, *on God's side* has become the occasion of Christ becoming the Saviour, and upon the ground of His death all blessing to man is flowing. So that if sinners saved become living stones in the building of God's making, Christ is "the chief corner stone, elect, precious" (1 Pct. ii. 6), round whom every living stone is laid.

But what an immensely solemn addition the Lord made to the quotation, prophetic, too, in its character. "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken." The Jewish nation as led by their leaders fell upon that stone, that is to say, they stumbled over Christ when He came in lowliness, they grasped not the necessity of His death, they hated the light and love of God He brought into the world. And what has happened to the Jewish nation? They are broken to this hour. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, the nation is scattered and peeled, and Palestine is in the hands of the Gentiles. The history of Israel should convince you that the Word of God is true, if nothing else does.

And then the Lord adds, "But on whomsoever it [the stone] shall fall, it will grind him to powder." Here the Lord prophesies the time when He, the earth-rejected Christ, shall return in majesty, power, and glory as King of kings and Lord of lords, as Son of Man and King of Israel. The stone will then fall on His foes, and they shall be crushed. Indeed, it is the figure of the most crushing judgment upon those, who will not have Him.

How true it is that God only desires blessing for man. Judgment is God's "strange work." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John iii. 17). The apostle Peter clearly brings this out, identifying "the Stone" as Christ, when examined before the Jewish Sanhedrim as to the miracle of healing performed on the lame man at "the beautiful gate of the temple." (See Acts iv.)

Hear what he says in his defence—"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 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. 10-12). How clear this all is!

And now there remains but one question. Shall Christ become the Rock of your salvation, or shall He be the Stone of judgment for you? Receive

Him, and He becomes your Saviour; reject Him, and you will be broken by falling upon Him, unsaved, unblest, unhappy in your death; reject Him, and you will be crushed by Him, when He falls upon you in judgment. How plain is the issue that lies before you. Can you hesitate for one moment in this matter?

In conclusion, I beseech you not to put away from you this solemn warning, but decide for Christ now. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). There is no salvation in any other but Christ. You are shut up to Him. You have to do with Him whether you like it or not. Let your dealings with Him be in this day of grace, and not in the day of judgment, I beseech you. One or the other it must be. Time is flying. Death is busy; opportunities are passing. Oh! be wise. Decide now. Christ's return is near.

W. T. P. W.

HOW I WAS CONVERTED.

I WAS brought up in a Christian household, where the Scriptures were read every morning, followed by prayer. I grew up in these surroundings very careless as to my eternal future, living just for this world and its pleasures, and thinking only of having a good time. I continued like this for a considerable time, fast asleep in my sins, never dreaming that at any moment I might have been launched into an endless eternity of woe and pain.

I imagined that God was against me, and was just

waiting to pounce upon me for my sins. Alas! how easily does the devil put these thoughts into our minds in order to hide God's way of salvation from us. I believed, of course, in the Lord Jesus, but only in the same way that I believed in Napoleon, that is, it was only a historical belief.

I always said my prayers morning and evening, and if I had any time to spare, I generally read a few verses of Scripture, but I only did these things as a duty, and not from any love in my heart for them. I thought that God would be pleased with my religious tasks, and in consequence He would not be too hard with me when I came to stand before Him in judgment.

Of course I know now that I did not really pray. I just repeated over a form of words, and thought that in consequence I would be kept from harm, but in this I was just like the majority of people, who think that they can save themselves by their own supposed good works, and that what they are deficient in will be made up by the Lord taking pity on them. Alas! in all this I was very ignorant, not knowing that the Scriptures tell us, "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" (Rom. iii. 11, 12).

I thought in my blindness and ignorance that if I tried to become good that then there was a chance for me. So I went on for a considerable time without much concern, until one Sunday night I went to hear

a preacher speak on the subject of "The Great White Throne." He spoke of the fate of those who die without trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, but who instead trust in their own works. He showed from Scripture that there was no hope for such; that they would be lost for ever; that there were only two places in the next world, Heaven and the Lake of Fire, and to one of these each soul was travelling.

This address made me very uneasy. I knew now that the Lake of Fire would be my fate unless I got the matter settled. I knew my name was not in the Lamb's Book of Life, and that I was not ready to meet a holy God against whom I had sinned. I was for a long time in great anxiety of soul. I saw from Scripture that my works were of no value in God's sight.

The next thing I thought of was that if I could only keep from sinning perhaps God would accept me, so I made resolutions not to sin any more, but alas! no sooner were they made than the same day they were broken. This made me very unhappy. I found out that the trouble was inside, and that I had no power to keep myself even for a single hour.

I endeavoured then to try and forget about eternal things altogether, and, falling in with bad companions, succeeded for a time, but God did not allow my conscience to sleep for long. Again the thought came to me, "You must meet God." I then dropped my companions, owing to the influence of one of them, who had got converted, but still I had no settled peace of soul. The devil kept telling

me that I was too great a sinner, that the day of mercy was over for me.

I spent a long time now in very great anxiety of soul. For weeks at a time I would have no other thought than, "How can my sins be forgiven, and how can I know that I am saved?" I thought that the reason God did not answer my prayers was that I had not repented enough for my sins, and that when I felt sorry enough then He would take pity on me. In other words I wanted salvation in exchange for my repentance, so that my repentance would be the ground of my salvation. Alas! that I should have been so ignorant of the Gospel of God. I did not want God's salvation in the way He was offering it, namely, as a free gift. I wanted to make God my debtor, to buy salvation with my repentance and tears. Thus I wished to add to the work of the Lord Jesus my own works and good deeds. I imagined that He had done so much work for me on the Cross, a certain quantity, and that what remained had to be done by me, namely, to add on my repentance and faith; but the trouble with me now was that I never could tell when I had repented enough. It is true that we cannot be saved without repentance, but repentance does not save. It is that frame of mind that makes the sinner anxious to be saved.

At last I said, "Why should I have to wait so long for salvation?" when the scripture says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). I saw that I

was depending on my repentance, and that as long as I depended even for the smallest fraction on myself, I never could have any peace.

At last the light broke in upon me. I saw that the work of the Lord Jesus was a complete work that I did not need to add anything to it. All I had to do was to reach out the empty hand of need, and in faith accept the Lord Jesus as the One, who had died for me, as my own precious Saviour. I saw that all the repentance I needed was just as much as would lead me to accept the Lord Jesus as my own personal Saviour. All I had to do was to come as I was, a lost, perishing sinner, to receive Him by faith as the One, who had died for me, who had taken my guilty place, who had borne the penalty to its fullest extent, which my sins deserved when He suffered upon that awful Cross at Calvary. I also learned that He had so glorified God in the putting away of sin, that God had, in consequence of His perfect atonement, raised Him from amongst the dead, and had seated Him at His own right hand. This is the proof to us of how fully God was satisfied with the work accomplished on the Cross. I saw also that God was not now against the sinner, that He had so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son to the death of the Cross (see John iii. 16).

Did not the Lord Himself say, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matt. ix. 13)? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"

(Matt. xi. 28)? "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John x. 9)? "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37)?

So at long last the love of the blessed Lord Jesus found the wandering sheep. I came to Him, accepted Him as my own personal Saviour; His love filled my heart with praise as I thought of what it must have cost Him to redeem such a rebel as I was. I had true rest of soul and conscience, for I saw that He had cleansed away all my many sins in His precious blood (see 1 John i. 7), and I knew on the authority of His own word, that I had everlasting life, and would not come into judgment, and that I had passed from death to life (see John v. 24).

It is many years ago now, but He has kept me ever since, and I have found Him to be indeed "The Good Shepherd," who gave His life for me (see John x. 11), who went into the wilderness, and searched for me until He found me, and He has carried me on His shoulders ever since (see Luke xv. 3-6). Thank God, He holds me; if it had been otherwise, I should have dropped away long ago.

"I could never keep my hold,
He will hold me fast,
For my love is oftentimes cold,
HE will hold me fast."

How awful must the fate be of those, who reject such love and mercy. May you also know something of His wonderful love. It can only be known by having to do with Himself alone (see John xiv. 6).

AN UNUSUAL EXPERIENCE, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

TO be asked by a lot of tipsy soldiers to use his violin as an accompaniment at a rowdy sing-song concert was, indeed, an unusual predicament for a thorough-going, earnest evangelist.

Yet this was the position Mr M—— found himself in one night on the steamer sailing from Dublin to Greenock. A draft of the Seaforth Highlanders was on board. Some of their comrades at Curragh Camp had accompanied them to Dublin, where they had spent their time drinking, so that when the draft embarked they were none too sober.

Once at sea they agreed to have a concert, and as the second saloon had no piano, they invited Mr M—— to provide the music with his violin.

The hour arrived when the concert was to begin. Mr M—— stood praying as the audience gathered. The chairman called for silence by vigorously rapping with his cane on the table. He made a short speech, reminding his hearers that they would part on the morrow—some for Fort George and some for India, and that they would never all meet again. He called upon all who could sing to contribute to the pleasure of the evening. He concluded by saying that a gentleman had kindly consented to supply the music with his violin.

He thereupon called upon several to sing, but all declined. A suggestion was made that he should make a start himself. He named a song that Mr

M—— had never heard, and therefore could not play, as he had not the music.

He then asked Mr M—— if he would sing. He consented, whilst fervently praying for help.

Complete silence being gained, Mr M—— raised his violin and sang:—

“In tenderness He sought me,
Weary and sick with sin,
And on His shoulders brought me
Back to His fold again,
While angels in His presence sang
Until the courts of Heaven rang.

Chorus—

“Oh ! the love that sought me !
Oh ! the blood that bought me !
Oh ! the grace that brought me to the fold !
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold !”

He says, “The hush produced by the Saviour’s name over that company was magical. As I sang the second verse, tears stood in many eyes, whilst some of the baser sort slipped out. When I sang the third verse:—

‘He pointed to His nail-prints,
For me His blood was shed ;
A mocking crown so thorny
Was placed upon His head ;
I wonder what He saw in me
To suffer such deep agony ’—

some sobbed aloud. When I had finished, it was quite two or three minutes before the chairman proposed another song, but none would volunteer. Eventually one of the company asked if I could play ‘Annie Laurie.’ He sang the first verse, but forgot

the remainder, and no one seemed able to remember it. Then, after five or ten minutes' ineffectual effort to get another song, and not wishing an abrupt termination to the concert, the chairman asked if I would not oblige with another. I then sang the one beginning:—

‘Since Christ my soul from sin set free
This world has been a Heaven to me.’”

No other singer could be got, so Mr M—— began to preach, and talked to the soldiers from 8.45 till midnight. God spoke. Many confessions were made by the men, and many vows and resolutions made as to their future life. Only eternity will reveal the effect of that evening's strange experience.

But one thing is certain, that confessions—right and proper in their time and place—nor resolutions, however true and real, are sufficient for salvation. I am sure that in the nearly four hours' Gospel talk Mr M—— was permitted to give, he pointed this out again and again, and presented to those soldiers, as I would present to you, that **ONLY FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST SAVES.**

How many there are who think that confession and resolutions are sufficient.

Suppose a man, charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct, is brought before the magistrate; will it suffice that he should confess his guilt and make strenuous resolutions of reform for the future? Confess, he should; resolve to be different, he should.

But every one knows that even with confession

and resolutions, a righteous magistrate must condemn the guilty man to so many days' imprisonment, or the payment of a fine. But suppose the magistrate, touched by the genuineness of his confession, pays the fine; what then? He would go free.

The payment of the fine is the only thing that would open the prison doors, and let the man go free.

So in the intensely serious and solemn matter of our soul's salvation, nothing but what will *righteously* meet our case will suffice.

Confession is right and proper. The wise man said, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy" (Prov. xxviii. 13). No sinner truly confesses to God, but finds mercy. But let it be clearly understood, that nothing but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour will suffice for the obtaining of salvation. *He* has paid the penalty at Calvary. *He* has wrought the mighty work of salvation on the cross. *He* has uttered those glorious words, "It is finished."

And now God in His holy Word sends plain and blessed words to needy sinners, such as:—

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

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

"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).

There is enough in these verses to bring the

knowledge of pardon and peace to every truly seeking soul.

May they bring such knowledge to the reader for Christ's name's sake.

A. J. P.

HOW THE LOST SHEEP WAS FOUND.

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF THE
LATE J. N. DARBY.

MANY years ago he was asked to see a poor boy, who was dying in some wild district in Ireland.

He says: After upwards of an hour's toilsome walking (for the roads which in some places led over steep hills were in others scarcely passable on account of the heavy marshes), on entering the miserable hovel I looked round me, and at first found no sign of any inhabitant, except an old woman, who sat crouching over the embers of a peat fire. She rose as I entered and, with the natural courtesy of the Irish poor, offered me the low chair, or rather stool, on which she had been seated.

I thanked her, and passing on to the object of my visit discovered in one corner of the hut a heap of straw on which lay the poor sufferer. Some scanty covering, probably his own wearing apparel, had been thrown over him, but as to bed or bedclothes there was none discernible in this miserable dwelling.

I approached, and saw a young lad about seventeen or eighteen years of age, evidently in a state of extreme suffering and exhaustion, and it was to be

feared in the last stage of consumption. His eyes were closed, but he opened them on my approach, and stared at me with a kind of wild wonder, like a frightened animal.

I told him as quietly as possible who I was, and for what purpose I had come, and put a few of the simplest questions to him respecting his hope of salvation. He answered nothing; he appeared totally unconscious of my meaning.

On pressing him further, and speaking to him kindly and affectionately, he looked up, and I ascertained from the few words he uttered that he had heard something of a God and future judgment, but he had never been taught to read. The Holy Scriptures were a sealed book to him, and he was consequently altogether ignorant of the way of salvation as revealed to us in the gospel. His mind on this subject was truly an utter blank.

I was struck with dismay and almost with despair. Here was a fellow-creature whose immortal soul, apparently on the verge of eternity, must be saved or lost for ever; and he lay before me now, the hand of death close upon him; not a moment was to be lost, and what was I to do? What way was I to take to begin to teach him, as it were at the eleventh hour, the first rudiments of Christianity?

I had scarcely ever, before felt such a sinking within me. I could do nothing, that I knew full well, but on the other hand God could do all; I therefore raised up my heart and besought my heavenly Father for Christ's sake to direct me in this most

difficult and trying position, and to open to me by His Spirit of wisdom a way to set forth the glad tidings of salvation so as to be understood by this poor benighted wanderer..

I was silent for a few moments whilst engaged in inward prayer and gazing with deep anxiety on the melancholy object before me. It struck me that I ought to try to discover how far his intelligence in other things extended, and whether there might not be reasonable hope of his understanding me when I should commence to open to him (as I was bound to do) the gospel message of salvation. I looked down upon him with an eye of pity, which I most sincerely felt, and I thought he observed that compassionate look, for he softened towards me as I said: "My poor boy, you are very ill. I fear you suffer a great deal!"

"Yes, I have a bad cold; the cough takes away my breath and hurts me greatly."

"Have you had this cough long?" I asked.

"Oh! yes, a long time, near a year now."

"And how did you catch it? A Kerry boy, I should have thought, would have been reared hardily, and accustomed to this sharp air!"

"Ah!" he answered, "and so I was until that terrible night—it was about this time last year, when one of the sheep went astray. My father keeps a few sheep upon the mountains, and this is the way we live. When he reckoned them that night there was one wanting, and he sent me to look for it."

"No doubt," I replied, "you felt the change from

the warmth of the peat fire in this close little hut, to the cold mountain blast."

"Oh! that I did; there was snow upon the ground, and the wind pierced me through; but I did not mind it much, as I was so anxious to find father's sheep."

"And did you find it?" I asked, with increased interest.

"Oh! yes, I had a long weary way to go, but I never stopped until I found it."

"And how did you get it home? You had trouble enough with that too, I daresay. Was it willing to follow you back?"

"Well, I did not like to trust it, and besides, it was dead beat and tired, so I laid it on my shoulders, and carried it home that way."

"And were they not all at home rejoiced to see you when you returned with the sheep?"

"Sure enough, and that they were," he replied. "Father and mother, and the people round, that heard of our loss, all came in the next morning to ask about the sheep, for the neighbours in these matters are mighty kind to each other. Sorry they were, too, to hear that I was kept out the whole dark night; it was morning before I got home, and the end of it was I caught this cold. Mother says I will never be better now, God knows best; anyways, I did my best to save the sheep."

Wonderful! I thought, here is the whole gospel history. The sheep is lost, the father sends his son to seek for and recover it. The son goes willingly, and suffers all without complaining, and in the end

sacrifices his life to find the sheep, and when recovered he carries it home on his shoulders to the flock, and rejoices with his friends and neighbours over the sheep which was lost, but is found again. My prayer was answered, my way was made plain, and by the grace of God I availed myself of this happy opening.

I explained to this poor dying boy the plan of salvation, making use of his own simple and affecting story. I read to him the few verses in Luke xv., where the care of the shepherd for the strayed sheep is so beautifully expressed, and he at once perceived the likeness, and followed me with deep interest while I explained to him the full meaning of the parable.

The Lord mercifully opened not only his understanding, but his heart also, to receive the things spoken. He himself was the lost sheep, Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd, who was sent by the Father to seek for him, and who left all the joys of that Father's heavenly glory to come down to earth and search for him, and other lost ones like himself; and as the poor boy had borne without murmuring the freezing snowstorm and the piercing wind, so had the blessed Saviour endured the fierce contradictions of sinners against Himself, and the bitter scorn and insults heaped upon Him, without opening His mouth to utter one word of complaint, and at last laid down His precious life, that we might be rescued from destruction, and brought safe to our everlasting home. Neither will He trust His beloved ones, when rescued, to tread the perilous

path alone, but bears them on His shoulders, rejoicing, to the heavenly fold.

My poor sick lad seemed to drink it all in. He received it all; he understood it all. I never saw a clearer proof of the power of the divine Spirit to apply the Word of God.

He survived our first meeting but a few days. I had no time to read or expound to him any other portion of the Scripture. At times we could hear nothing but stifling, rending cough; at times he slumbered heavily for a little, but whenever he was able to think and listen, these verses in Luke xv. satisfied and cheered him. He accepted Christ as his Saviour, he earnestly prayed to be carried home like the lost sheep in the heavenly Shepherd's arms.

He died humbly, peacefully, almost exulting, with the name of Jesus, my Saviour and my Shepherd, the last upon his lips.

J. N. D.

"LIFE IN A LOOK."

IF a criminal condemned to die in Madagascar could but obtain a sight of the sovereign, he was at once pardoned. His crimes may have been very aggravated, but a *look* at the Queen was sufficient: he was saved!

And why was this? There was grace in her Majesty's heart, and an appeal to that grace, by the silent confiding *look* of the culprit, who seemed so near to death, was not in vain!

This beautiful and singular custom seems to say to us: "A greater than the Malagasy Queen is here!"

There are millions upon millions of criminals scattered over the world, who are under condemnation. They have broken the perfect laws of the King of Kings. They are sinners indeed in God's holy sight. "There is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22, 23). They are in danger of being eternally lost. They tremble at the thought of death. Would that their hearts might cry, "Oh! for a way of escape!"

But hark! The Sovereign of the Universe speaks! To the trembling, sin-stricken millions His own sweet invitation is: "*Look* unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else!" (Isa. xlv. 22).

Having thus spoken, the gracious-hearted One did not keep out of the way, that He might not be seen; but as "God *manifest* in the flesh" came to earth that men might *look* at Him, not by the mere look of the natural eye, but by the look of *faith*, which alone is the conductor of blessing. Thank God, *the look of faith* is available still, though He cannot now be seen on earth.

But when down here the Lord Jesus was seen as the Sin-bearer. We, who are believers, can say, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 6). As our Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ bore the burden of our imputed guilt upon the accursed cross. On Calvary He became "a curse for us." He bore our punishment in His

own body there—left us none to bear—and so, by the shedding of His precious blood, made a complete atonement for sin, that God might righteously pardon it. So we read God is “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 26).

And now, “there is life in a *look* at the crucified One!” for He is no longer a dying or a dead Redeemer. He so fully satisfied the claims of justice on behalf of sinful man, that it was not possible that He could be detained in the prison of the tomb. God, the Judge of all, raised Him from the dead, and having secured by His atoning death gifts of pardon and full salvation for rebellious sinners, He ascended on high, where He ever lives to plead for His people.

And whom will God bless? The proud, the indifferent, the careless? No! God says, “To this man *will I LOOK*, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word” (Isa. lxvi. 2).

Through the atonement God can righteously *look* pardon, and *look* salvation, when He *looks* at man! And He does thus *look* at us, and would have us *look* in confidence and in faith to Him.

When on earth did not the Lord Jesus Christ put Himself in the way of sinful men? Did He not look them straight in the face, and say, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest*”? (Matt. xi. 28).

He has been taken at His word. Multitudes, of various kindreds, peoples, and tongues, have believed His message, and have *looked* believingly and con-

fidingly to Him. Nor have they looked in vain. His assurance is, "*Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*" (John vi. 37).

Reader, will you not *look*? Will you not *trust*? Will you not *believe*? This is the *only* way of blessing. There is none other. J. R. P.

GOD'S FAITHFUL PROMISE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIANS.

(Read Hebrews xiii. 5-9.)

I WILL never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (ver. 5). What a blessed promise! In the assurance it gives, the believer can boldly respond, "The Lord is my helper," and ring out the challenge, "What shall man do unto me?" If I have the Lord for my Helper it does not matter what the attitude of man is, nor the circumstances through which I have to pass.

This striking quotation occurs in the midst of some very simple directions to think about others—"them that are in bonds," and "them which suffer adversity," because our turn may come next. We may be the people that shall have difficulties next, and we would be thankful to be thought about by others. But we must never demand attention from others, for our privilege is to care for others. Scripture always exhorts us to give, not to expect or demand.

The Spirit of God prefaces this beautiful promise with the exhortation, "Let your conversation [that is,

manner of life] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have" (ver. 5). If a saint is always wanting to get and gather, he will not get on spiritually. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke xii. 15). Contentment is a very great thing. The question is, *Am I satisfied?*

The Spirit of God gives a good reason for contentment, and that is because of what the Lord is to the believer. He has got the competency, which the enjoyed presence and company of the Lord give, no matter what the circumstances may be, for He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He adds immediately, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (ver. 7.) What was the end of their conversation? That which glorified the Lord, and it is very important for us in this day to heed a word like that, for there are men of God, who have taught and helped us, and we are to remember them. A guide is one, who can, in a day of difficulty, show us the way as delineated in the Word of God.

And then comes that charming word, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (ver. 8). There is no change in the Lord. We are in a changing scene, and if we have not found it out to-day, we shall to-morrow. Everything changes down here, but there is One, who never changes—"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and

for ever." This is coupled in the Spirit's mind, with the statement of the quotation made here: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." This statement, of such deep value and comfort to our souls, is found three times in the Old Testament.

The first time it is found in Genesis xxviii. 5. Here we find that God made the promise to Jacob, "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (ver. 15.) It was a wonderful promise to the wayfarer. His history was very remarkable, because if ever there was a crooked stick it was Jacob. All through the Psalms we find the title, "The God of Jacob." I have often thanked God that He was the God of Jacob, because I am very like Jacob, and so are you. He was a man always looking after number one. He was not content with what he had, he was always planning. He got the birthright by intrigue. He started his history by deceiving his father and robbing his brother; and he was deceived and robbed himself all along the line. As he sowed, so he reaped.

God knew all about Jacob, and He knew all about you and me before he picked us up. Many a time I have met a backslider, who said he could not have believed, when he was converted, that he could have fallen into the sins he had.

We have to learn what the flesh is, and there are two ways in which we may learn it, either in communion with God, and be protected and delivered,

or in the company of the devil, in downright practical failure.

Did not God know what kind of a man Jacob would be? Did He not see his intrigues? Did he not know his deceits? He did; and yet He pledged to Jacob the sweet sense of His company. It is not that He condoned his sins. A holy God could not do that. On the contrary, God's discipline followed Jacob all through life. But God pledged His word that He would be with him, and bring him back.

Did not the Lord know what Jacob would be? Yes, but He was true to His word. And will not the Lord take true believers to heavenly glory? Indeed He will, but we may have to learn bitter lessons on the road, if we do not cleave to the Lord. But in the history of others we may learn to avoid many pitfalls and snares, into which saints of God have fallen.

Perhaps my reader is one, who has known the Lord, and tasted better days, but has lost his joy and happiness. Backsliding is an easy thing, and perhaps you are writing bitter things against yourself. The Lord does not think one of those bitter things of you. The Lord has missed you from His side, the Shepherd has missed you, He has been counting His flock, and has missed His straying sheep, and He wants to get you back.

How does He recover the wanderer? By bringing before his heart what *His own love* is. For instance, He said to Israel by Jeremiah, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness,

in a land that was not sown" (Jer. ii. 2). Seven hundred years had rolled by, and they had got into distance and darkness and idolatry, and had dishonoured the Lord's name. He says, as it were, "I remember the day when you loved Me, and when I was everything to you, and you walked in holiness and separation." How touching and how calculated to bring repentance to the heart of the backsliding nation. It is by the sense of His grace that the Lord restores souls. It is not by chiding us, and whipping us for our sins, though, if we are obstinate, He may, in His divine wisdom, have to use the rod and the scourge. But love is in it all.

You may say, It is *I* that have left the Lord. That is another side of it. He will not leave *you*. If I have left the Lord to indulge the flesh, and please myself, and have got into misery, that is my side of it. He says, "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. xxviii. 15).

Read Jacob's history. See how God brought him into the land, and set him down there. And then there came a famine that led to his going into Egypt. Then we read of his death in Egypt. The Spirit of God, commenting on this, says, "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" (Heb. xi. 21). The only remark the Spirit of God makes on Jacob's history in that remarkable summary of faith, is not about his life, but concerning his death.

You may say, He died very bright. Often the

question is asked, How did he die? I do not so much care about people dying bright—the great point is to *live* bright. If you live bright, if you live for the Lord, really and truly, you will be all right at the end. Many a saint that has lived badly, has been restored in soul and died brightly; but a quiet, steady, testimony to the Lord is far better than such a deathbed flare-up.

Now let us go to the next occasion on which God promised not to leave or forsake. Jacob's day had long gone by, and now Moses is passing away, and he says to Israel, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deut. xxxi. 6). This is said to the people generally. "And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it" (ver. 7). They were to get to the promised land. This, doubtless, is a type of heaven. Every Christian will be there. "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed" (ver. 8). What wonderful cheer is thus ministered. And the Lord would minister similar cheer to each one of us, though we be not Joshuas.

For our third instance turn to 1 Chronicles xxviii. It is no longer a question of patriarch or leader, but what is to encourage a coming king. "And David

said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord" (ver. 20). The Lord never expects His people to be weak; we are to be strong in the Lord.

Now if you turn to 1 Kings viii. you will see how Solomon starts with this. Alas! he did not continue. "And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant" (vers. 55, 56). Solomon's testimony is to the faithfulness of the Lord. "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us" (ver. 57). That was a very nice prayer. I do not know what was working in his heart, but the Lord had said He would not leave him, and, in spite of Solomon's failure in after life, He never did.

We learn that when he finished the house of the Lord, he thought he would build his own house. And perhaps *you* are building your own house—you want something a little bigger than you have got. Solomon soon got worldly. He sent for horses from Egypt, which God had forbidden (see Deut. xvii. 16), and he took a wife from Egypt. He liked his own way, and he got it, and had to learn the folly of it. But God never forsook him. That is the point.

These three Old Testament scriptures are exceedingly interesting, and we may profit by them. You can study them at your leisure, and get much more out of them. You may say, I am not a patriarch, like Jacob; nor a leader, like Joshua; nor a king, like Solomon.

Yes, it is true we are but simple saints on our road to glory, but that which was the comfort of patriarch, leader, and king in their day, is what the Spirit of God gives to be the comfort of our hearts in this day. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5). Now it is our turn to exclaim, "So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (ver. 6).

He who knows our pathway and difficulties, our trials and temptations, He, who knows us through and through, says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." That is lovely. What are you going to say?

It is a great point to get in your heart the sense, Nobody may know what I am going through but the Lord, but He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Very well, what are you going to say? "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." There is a clarion ring about that. This one is going, and the other, and there are difficulties before me. What am I to do?

Our great comfort is, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." That is enough. In the strength of that we can press on, till He comes.

W. T. P. W.

HOW THE BRICKS SPOKE TO DICK.

SOME time ago two young men—a mason and a joiner—were building a Dutch barn at a farm in Cumberland. At noon they sat down together to have their mid-day meal, with their backs to the wall of the gable end of the building, which Dick, the mason, had been erecting.

James, the joiner, had some little time before been truly converted, and was greatly rejoicing in the Lord Jesus, whom he now knew as his own personal Saviour. Almost as soon as they were seated Dick began to speak of the performances of a running dog, famous at that time in the district, but such talk did not interest James. The Lord Jesus had graciously and wonderfully saved him, and he desired to talk about Him.

"Ah!" said Dick, "thou art always talking about Him, and if thou canna' talk about anything else, I won't sit with thee."

"Well Dick," replied James, striking the wall behind him, "if I did not talk to thee about Him, these very bricks would speak."

"Then I won't talk with thee," and so saying, Dick moved away to the other side of the building. As he did so the Scripture came into James's mind, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. v. 11). So the meal was finished in separation between them, or as James said when relating the incident, referring

to the text, "We were out of 'fellowship.'" Meal-time over, work was resumed.

When they had commenced in the early morning a strong wind was blowing, and this had steadily increased in violence, so that on resumption of work after dinner a stiff gale was blowing, and it was with difficulty they could hear each other speak when they had occasion to do so.

Shortly after James happened to look in Dick's direction, and he noticed that the wall the latter was building was decidedly out of plumb, and leaning towards Dick. With difficulty owing to the noise of the wind he made Dick understand the wall was out of plumb, and that he was in danger of its falling on him. This Dick resented, who at once took up his plumb line to show James that he was wrong, but before he could apply it he saw the wall coming bodily towards him, and he rushed to the ladder to escape the danger he was in, but before he could get clear the whole wall from the ground level was brought down by the wind, burying Dick beneath it.

Fortunately for Dick the wall fell on the side on which he had fixed a temporary scaffolding, and this, and one or two loads of bricks also on that side, saved him from the full force of the falling wall. James hastened to his aid, and quickly made a hole through the wall just where Dick's head was. Immediately the latter saw him he cried out, "Oh! James, do pray for me."

"What shall I pray for, Dick?"

"Oh! do ask the Lord to forgive me my sins."

However, James thought the right thing to do at the moment was to get him out of his dangerous position, and with the help of a man from the farmhouse, who, with the mistress, had heard the noise of the falling wall, and had come to see what had happened, he speedily made the hole in the wall large enough to get Dick through, and on examining him they were pleased to find that apparently he was not much worse for his alarming experience, but it was deemed advisable that he should see a doctor, and a vehicle was at once procured, and Dick placed in it.

When seated in it, James, looking at him, said, "Dick, did'st hear the bricks speak?"

"Ah! James, but I never thought they would speak like that."

Reader, have you never heard God's voice speaking to you? Listen, I beseech you. To-morrow may be too late. Be in earnest. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

E. J. R.

SAVED IN THE TRENCHES.

A WOUNDED soldier lay in his cot in hospital when the door of the ward opened, and in walked a Christian worker. The soldier immediately saluted him with the remark, "You don't know me, but I know you. You were the means of my conversion."

The gentleman was at once intensely interested and wished to know how it had taken place.

In words something like these the soldier replied—
“Fourteen years ago I was in Hyde Park, when I came across a crowd gathered round some open-air preachers. I was not a bit interested, but as I passed by I saw you. You were speaking. I was not concerned at all, but as I strolled by I heard you cry out, ‘Hallelujah! What a Saviour!’

“I strolled on thinking no more about it. Thirteen years rolled by, a pretty big slice out of a man’s life, and the incident had apparently passed out of my mind, at any rate consciously.

“The war broke out. I volunteered, was drilled, and in due time found myself at the front.

“Appalled by the terrors of war, afraid that any hour might be my last, I began to think seriously about my soul, and where I should spend eternity.

“All at once I seemed to be in Hyde Park again. I could see, as it were, the whole scene re-enacted—the crowd; the open-air preachers. I distinctly recalled your face; I could hear again, as it were, your voice, crying, ‘Hallelujah! What a Saviour!’ There and then in the trenches I trusted that Saviour, and found the joy and peace that my soul longed for.

“I never expected to see you again, but God has given me this joy, praise His name.”

Again that verse of Holy Scripture was gloriously realised, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. x. 13). Of course, no mere flippant, superficial cry to God is of any avail; but when a man, as this soldier did, truly realises his lost and unsaved condition, and turns to the

Lord salvation is his. He may turn to Him, as this soldier did in the trenches amid the frightful horror of war, or in the solitude of prison walls, in the crowded street, or, under the preaching of a faithful minister of the gospel, or in the privacy of his own chamber. *Where* does not matter, but *how* does. Simply, earnestly, truly as a soul trusts the Lord, so truly will that soul find the truth of that glorious verse, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. x. 13).

"They, that trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true."

"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37), says the Lord. Have you ever called on the Lord's name thus? "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. vii. 7). How comforting is the assurance, "For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 8). There is no danger of a refusal.

God give you to be in earnest about your soul's salvation, for however earnest others may be, until you are in earnest yourself all will be of no avail.

Indifference is the crying evil of the hour. It seems as if the world were drugged to sleep by the devil. Business, pleasure, the war absorb and monopolize the attention of most, and all thoughts of eternity are thrust out. Let it not be so with you. Be in earnest.

"There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is mercy's day."

A. J. P.

SAVED IN A RAILWAY TRAIN.

I AM beginning to feel that it is only the man, who has got Christ, who can rightly face anything."

So wrote a young soldier a short time ago. What a wonderful discovery he made!

But a short time before he had relinquished his comfortable situation, and had joined an Irish regiment. Leaving his friends and home comforts behind, he entered a training camp, all his surroundings and mode of living being quite different from what he had been previously accustomed to.

Perhaps this paper may fall into the hands of one in similar circumstances. You are severed from your friends, and you sometimes feel as if you lacked courage to stand firm. Let me tell you that the Lord Jesus Christ is a Friend indeed to all those who trust Him. In your new life, no doubt, you will encounter many difficulties—many dangers will beset your path. But however great the difficulties or the dangers, you will find the Lord Jesus Christ sufficient for all things. He gives grace and strength to all who trust Him.

At a later date our friend wrote, "You will be pleased to know that I decided for Christ last night in the train. I read the Testament until I came to John v. 24, and then the light broke into my soul."

The present war has made men think, and we are assured that many of the brave soldiers along the battle-front, in training camps, and in hospitals, have turned to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

Our soldier friend read his pocket Testament, and, as he pondered over the wonderful words of John v. 24, the Holy Spirit opened up to him the blessed, simple way of salvation. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the speaker in that verse, and He says: "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." These words were sufficient. Our friend, then and there in the train, by simple faith, made his decision for Christ.

The gospel is so simple on our part that it is to be feared many stumble at its very simplicity. No language of ours can do justice to the freeness with which blessings flow to the believing sinner through Christ. The death of Christ is the basis of salvation. In virtue of His precious blood, heaven's gate has been flung open wide, and God, who is no respecter of persons, invites *all* to come.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). For assurance He adds, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). And, as if to remove every doubt from the hearts of those who do come, He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and *they shall never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 27, 28).

Trust the Saviour just now

C. S. R.

B.

LOST OR SAVED!

IN a little hamlet in the West Riding of Yorkshire lived a lady, who spent her time in visiting the people of the district. Among such was a bell-ringer of the parish church; a man, who, however, never attended the services. This lady spoke to him about his soul's salvation, urged him to accept Christ as his Saviour, but he would have none of it, and exclaimed that he was as good as any who went inside the church. She endeavoured to show him that the Lord Jesus died for sinners, not righteous people, and that "there is none righteous, *no*, NOT ONE" (Rom. iii. 10), but he would not listen. He refused God's offer of a full and free salvation.

Some time afterwards she was asked to call and see him. He was ill in bed, and had expressed a desire that she should be called. She went, and on reaching the bedside proceeded to kneel in prayer to ask God to guide her in what she should say to him. On a table by his side was a glass of milk. Before she could express any words of prayer, he flung out his arms, knocked over the glass of milk, and shrieked out in agony "LOST!! LOST!! LOST!!" and so died. How terrible an end!

Let this be a solemn warning to you, careless reader. Why will men procrastinate in face of eternal realities? "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the **WHOLE WORLD**, and **LOSE HIS OWN SOUL**? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26).

Friend, "because there is wrath, **BEWARE**, lest he

take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee" (Job xxxvi. 18). The Lord Jesus has provided a ransom for you. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a RANSOM for all" (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6). You can never say that you have not had the opportunity of obtaining salvation, for God offers it to you as a GIFT. "The WAGES of sin is DEATH, but—the GIFT of God is ETERNAL LIFE, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). What are you doing with God's gift? You may do one of two things. You may accept it, and thank Him for it, or you may refuse it.

LOST! What a terrible position to be in! LOST! In the desert. Far from help. Fainting under the beating rays of the tropical sun. No hope! LOST! Men have been days upon the ocean in an open boat, and the utter helplessness of their position has forced itself upon them. How great the remorse of those men and women who refused the lifeboat, thinking the "Titanic" could not sink. To think that they had the opportunity to escape, but neglected it. There came a time when they cried out earnestly for the lifeboat they had so lately despised. Do you think they were not in earnest then?

How is it with *you*? Have you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour, or are you putting off the question? There will surely come a time when you will see the folly of such proceeding. God grant that you may not see it when it is too late.

Trust in Christ, and listen to God's precious word. "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).

J. W. B.

DIVINE LOVE:

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORD.

(Read John iii. 16 ; xxi. 20.)

JOHAN iii. 16 gives us the first, and John xxi. 20 the last mention of love in the gospel of John.

There is a great deal about love in various aspects between those two verses, and with the Lord's help I would like to say a little about them.

Broadly speaking, the gospel of John divides itself into three sections—the life section, the light section, and the love section.

Chapters i.-vii. are very much occupied with life, and how to get it.

Chapters viii. and ix. are full of instruction about light, and its effect.

Chapters x. and on present the manifestation of love on God's side and on ours.

Love does not merely talk, love acts ; so in chapter x. you get the Lord bringing out the way in which His love is displayed, and the reason why His Father loves Him. He furnished a new motive for His Father to love Him. It must not, however, be said that in the first two sections of the gospel the thought of love is not introduced, but it is not the main theme.

Here in chapter iii. you get the first mention of love. It is love described by God's only begotten Son. It is love that manifests itself in the gift of Him, who is the dearest object of His affection, His only begotten Son.

So we read, "God so loved." Have you measured the depths of that "so"? What creature can? No plummet of man's mind can fathom those depths.

And what did God love? "The world," composed of men and women, evil and sinful, "hateful and hating one another." "God so loved the world."

And with what object? "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How blessed!

There is something very delightful in the contemplation of this wonderful thought of God loving the world. For if He loved, when He gave His Son, He loves still, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He has not changed.

But do not forget that God has got special delights. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (ver. 35). You will find that the love He has for the Son is the love which He has for His own.

In chapter v. 20, you get the statement repeated. "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth." In chapter iii. we read that God loves the Son, and puts all things into His hand. Everything is in the hand of Christ. What a wonderful thing for a Christian to bear this in mind. Here we learn that the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things.

Let us leave this section of the Gospel, and look at chapter viii. There we find men claiming to be related to God. But "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me" (ver. 42). How beautifully Christ thus presents Himself as the touchstone of the Father's love. Now, what is the mark of your being a child of God? Perhaps you are in exercise as to whether you are a child of God. Do you love the Lord Jesus? Yes! Then you are a child of God.

Let us go a little further, and look at chapter x. God in His nature is love. He loved the world. But He has got one special object of affection, that is His Son. Now, why does the Father love the Son in this peculiar way? Chapter x. will tell you. He says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." (ver. 17).

Jesus laying down His life for the sheep becomes a new reason why the Father should love Him. He was, indeed, the object of the Father's deepest love in all eternity. But He presents a new reason why the Father should love Him, in the fact that He gave His life for the sheep. Blessed Saviour!

But now there is another thing. Fellow believer, have you got in your soul the sense of the Lord's love to you? Are you conscious in your inmost soul, as you pass along in 'this world, that you are loved by the Lord Jesus?

Now let us look at chapter xii. It is striking how the Lord tests our hearts as to where our love is.

He says, "The hour is coming that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (vers. 23 and 24). He intimates the wonderful fact of His death. And then He says, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (ver. 25). In the face of this solemn statement we may well ask, What are *you* loving? In this very chapter the Lord points out a very great danger, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (ver. 43). We pass through a scene where the danger is of loving our life, our ease, our comforts, and the snare of loving the praise of men is ever present.

In chapter xi. He, so to speak, says, "I love you." In chapter xii. He says, "What do you love? Your own life, or the praise of men?" A salutary, searching question surely!

Now we come to chapter xiii. Here the scene is entirely changed. "Now, before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (ver. 1). There is something wonderful in that. He had got those in this world whom He loved. And He "loved them unto the end." Get hold of this. It was true that day: it is true this day. Are you numbered among His own? If you are among His own you are an

object of His deep and tender and *unchangeable* love. It is not that you *say* that you love the Lord, but because love *acts* towards you.

There is no question about His loving you, but now He says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (chap. xiv., ver. 15). And then the test comes, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him" (ver. 21). He presents a reason why the Father should love you. It is conditional here. But more. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (ver. 23). That is the way in which we can tell we love Him. We get a manifest sense of the presence of the Father and the Son, when we answer to the conditions laid down.

Then when you come to chapter xv. He says, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love" (ver. 9). Who can measure that love? Can you tell the depths of the Father's love to the Son? You cannot. Can you measure the Father's love to me, the believer? Just as impossible, for the love is the same. What then? "Continue ye in my love." Dwell there. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (ver. 10).

And now we come to chapter xvii., where we are permitted to hear the Lord's Prayer to His Father, respecting His own. How fervent are His desires for

His own. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word" (ver. 20). Do not think it is only the saints of that moment He prayed for. You are one for whom He prayed. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 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" (vers. 22 and 23). What a wonderful thing, by and by the very world will know that believers on the Lord Jesus Christ have been loved by the Father, even as He loved His own well-beloved Son.

And then He adds, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." He longs to have us with Him. "For," He adds, "thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (ver. 24). He goes back on that eternal love of God into which believers are by grace brought. "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (ver. 26). How beautiful! That is the lovely atmosphere of love. Dwell there.

And now you find nothing about love in chapters xviii. and xix. They present an atmosphere of deadly darkness and hate against Him. Doubtless there is plenty of love really in chapter xx., although the word is not mentioned in that chapter.

When you come to chapter xxi. it springs up in a remarkable way. "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord" (ver. 7) You will find it is the loving heart that is intelligent. Presently the Lord will say to Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" And again, "Have you any affection for me?" He asks him three times. Christ does not care for intelligence, or labour, or toil, if love is not behind them.

The last mention of love in the Gospel is when "Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following" (ver. 20). The Lord had said to Peter, "Follow thou me." Instead of following, he turns round and sees John following. Why does he follow? He was enjoying the love of Christ. We read that he "leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?" (ver. 20). Why does that come in at this point again? It shows that to be intimate in all the reverence of intimacy love is necessary. Here is the disciple that is most intimate, he is the one who appropriates the Lord most.

"For Him shall praise unceasing, and daily vows ascend ;
His kingdom still increasing—a kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never His covenant remove ;
His name shall stand for ever, *His great, best name of*
LOVE."

May we be led on in love to the Lord, and to enjoy all the holy intimacy of that love, for His name's sake. Amen.

W. T. P. W.