

# THE MESSENGER OF PEACE:

*A Monthly Gospel Magazine.*

EDITED BY  
W. T. P. WOLSTON.

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VOL. III.

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# THE MESSENGER OF PEACE

A GOSPEL MAGAZINE.

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## "WHO IS JESUS?"

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"BUT who is Jesus?"

"Oh, do you not know that, my dear? He is a great Spirit."

You will think, dear reader, that these words must have been spoken in another tongue, and in some far distant heathen land, where the Bible is an unknown book, and where men and women live and die without once hearing the blessed, and, to us, oft-told story, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and that when this Son of God was about to be born into this world, God said, by the mouth of His messenger, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus [Jehovah the Saviour], for he shall save his people from their sins." But no, the words were spoken in our own highly favoured England, in this age of boasted progress and enlightenment; and not by some poor little city Arab, whose only home had been the streets, or some den of vice and infamy, but by those whose entire ignorance on this, the greatest

and most important, as well as most blessed of all subjects, quite bewildered as well as appalled me.

The first speaker was a young, respectable-looking, married woman, about three-and-twenty, the wife of a bookbinder, with good wages. The second speaker, who seemed a little ashamed that the other should display such ignorance before me, was her mother-in-law, an active-looking, decently-dressed woman, about five-and-forty.

I could not then, and cannot now, account for this utter ignorance, for the younger woman had been in the hospital ward, in which I met her, a fortnight before this conversation took place, and it was the daily custom for a portion of the Scriptures to be read in the ward, and a prayer said; and even this, I should have thought, would have made her acquainted with the blessed name of Jesus. I had noticed her pleasant, cheerful face several times as I had gone in and out, but the ward was so very large, and I knew so many in it, that the time for leaving had always come without my being able to make her acquaintance.

On this day, however, as I passed her bed, to go to a dying woman in the corner very near to her, she smiled and said, "Will you not try to give me a visit to-day?"

I promised to come back to her after I had seen my friend in the corner, about whom I was very anxious, for I knew death was nearly approaching her, and to her he was still the "king of terrors," as she had been trusting to her own good deeds for

acceptance with God, and had just awoke to the discovery that they would avail her nothing as a ground of entrance to Heaven, of which she had all her life before felt secure.

When I came back to Mrs N—— (my new friend), it was quite with the hope of finding a Christian, for I thought it was surely for that reason she wished to speak with me; and after she had spoken calmly of her illness, which it was feared would prove an incurable one, and moreover was a very trying one, I said, "But you know what it is to have Jesus as your Saviour and Friend, do you not, making all your bed in your sickness?"

Then came the words which so utterly astonished me, that I can never forget them, "But who is Jesus?" and the answer of her mother-in-law, who had been allowed to come in to see her, though it was not the usual visiting-hour, "Oh, do you not know that, my dear? He is a great Spirit."

I had met those who hated, those who despised, the things of God, or those who were careless and indifferent about them, but never before had I met one, beyond the age of childhood, who knew no more of the story of the life and death of the Son of God, than the one who heweth down a tree, and "burneth part thereof in the fire, . . . and the residue thereof he maketh a god, . . . and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god" (Isa. xlv. 16, 17).

For a few moments I felt quite bewildered; then sitting down by her side, and in my heart asking

the Lord for suited words, I tried to put before her, as simply as to a child, the story of man's utter ruin, and of God's wondrous love,—the old, old story, yet ever fresh and new. She listened with eager attention. I read to her Luke xxiii., and she wept when I came to the part where the dying, suffering Son of Man, yet Son of God, prayed for his murderers, and promised the Paradise of God, in company with Himself that day, to the thief dying by His side, who had recognised the glory of His person, and owned Him Lord and the coming King, though hanging between heaven and earth on a cross of wood, nailed there by wicked hands.

It was all new to Mrs N——, and it thrilled and captivated her heart. “Did God then love me?” she said, “and did His Son die like this,—die such a cruel, cruel death for *me*? And yet I never knew it till to-day, and I have never thought about Him, never loved Him. Oh, I do love Him for it. I do love Him to-day. I must tell my husband; he cannot know, or he would have told me. Mother, did you know God loved us, and God gave up His Son to die instead of us? And Jesus is God too, and yet He died! Oh, He died such a cruel death for us,—for you and me, mother. Oh, is it not strange, He died for *me*, and yet I never heard about it until now?”

The love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, won her heart; she listened to God's word, telling of His Son's work, and she received it and believed it like a little child. She pondered over it all, and wondered at it, but she never thought of doubting it.

I offered to leave with her my little Testament, which had good print, but then I found she could not read, did not even know her letters. "You will come back soon and tell me more," she said. When I went in next, I took with me a large card with the alphabet and tiny words printed on it, and offered to begin to teach her to read. She was very grateful, and got on with surprising rapidity. The first name she wanted to learn to spell was the name of Jesus, and then she used to lie for hours trying to find out in the New Testament wherever that name, now become so precious to her, occurred.

She was full of her newly found joy, and could not hold her peace. She spoke of it to the patients in the beds each side of her; she spoke of it to the nurses, as well as to her husband, and to each one who came in to see her,—*"Jesus died for me! God gave Him, and I never knew it,—never loved Him. Oh, I love him for it now. I do not mind about getting well now; I shall see the One who loved me and died for me."*

Even when afterwards, in the light of God's presence, she learned more of the utter evil of her own heart, Satan could never shake her confidence. *"He loved me; He gave Himself for me,"* was always her rest and her joy. It was not her need that drove her to Him, it was *"His mighty love"* that attracted her, and took her heart captive,—*"a captive in the chains of love."*

Before she went out of the hospital, four months after, she could spell out verses quite nicely by her-

self, and often learned them by heart ; and would say to me all her new ones, and ask me to find out others for her, that she might go over them by herself when I had gone.

She left for her home in the month of April, not cured,—there was no hope of that,—but her condition ameliorated for the time, it was hoped ; but before the year had run its course she was back there again, and this time she came back to die. Yet not to die, but there to be put to sleep by Jesus, in the “sure and certain hope” of being raised again by Him ; and, meanwhile, of resting with Him, waiting *with Him*, for the day for which He waits, the day of the gladness of His heart ; when He will have every one of His blood-bought ones with Himself.

“My husband has promised to meet me there with Jesus,” she cried ; “I have nothing now to keep me here. I wanted to tell him all. He could not see it at first ; he thought his sins must keep him from the Saviour ; but now he sees the Saviour died on purpose for those sins, and he trusts Him. Mother, you will yet learn to trust Him entirely too,” she added, turning round to the one I had first seen with her, her husband’s mother.

With the older woman the case had been very different. The Lord began to work in her heart from the day her daughter-in-law received the truth so simply ; but she had gone through months of doubt, and trouble, and distress, and, as yet, the question of sin was unsettled between her and God ; for to her the Bible was no new book, as it had

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been to her daughter-in-law. As a young woman she had been a Bible reader, though not herself converted, but she married a godless man, and through his influence gave it up, and sank to the level of those about her. Her husband did not believe in the Bible, so there had been no Bible in her house. Her son had been brought up like his father. They had prospered, and God was utterly forgotten. Her first trouble came with the illness of her son's wife, to whom she was much attached.

Thus, with her, the first work of the Spirit of God had been to convince her of sin, and for months she had groaned under the burden of it. While her daughter's constant words were, "He loved me; He gave Himself for *me*," hers were, "Oh, my sins, my sins; they are too great." The entrance of the one into eternal rest was the means of giving rest of conscience to the other. By her dying daughter-in-law's bed, she saw that the blessed One, who had so entirely captivated her child's heart and attached her to Himself, had also met every claim of God about sin; that His great work had been to remove sin from God's sight, as well as to save the believing sinner; that God is satisfied with the blood of Christ, that it meets every claim of His holiness, every demand that righteous judgment could make; yea, that God can be *just*, and yet "the *justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus."

She saw that the blood, in the efficacy of which the *Sinbearer* ascended in righteousness to the very throne of God, must first have cleared sin

away. She saw that God looked on Jesus and is satisfied; she looked, and was satisfied too.

"Mother," said the dying one, "I had nothing to pay. He frankly forgave me. 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' He will frankly forgive you too."

"He has, dear; he has. I see it all now. I owed the great debt, and you the little one; but He forgave *both*. I owe Him most. It is *much forgiven* with me; may He get much love now."

We had read Luke vii. together many times, and it was to the latter part of this the two women referred. It had been a favourite portion with Mrs N——, as were all the portions that spoke of the Lord Himself,—His own acts, His own words, details of His love and grace.

Mrs N—— closed her eyes with a little contented smile, and her lips moved slightly as though in thanksgiving. I could see, when I left, the end was very near, and my thought proved correct. I never saw either again. The younger went home to the Lord, who had loved her, and whom she loved, that night. The old woman went back to her country home at once with her son, taking with them the body of their loved one, to commit it to the dust in the quiet little cemetery near to which they dwelt, and I soon after left the city. So we all separated, *I doubt not, to meet again* in the Father's house, the house prepared for us by Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Reader, can you say, like this dying woman, "I had nothing to pay; He frankly forgave me. He loved *me*, and gave Himself for me?"

x.



## CHRIST AT SYCHAR.

(Read John iv. 1-43.)



T was when Joseph had come out of prison, but before he was manifested in his position of honour and glory in the land of Egypt, a position only second to that of Pharaoh the king, that he got a very striking name given to him by Pharaoh,—"Zaphnath-paaneah." That name has a very beautiful meaning; in the Coptic language it means "A revealer of secrets;" and in another, I am told, it means "Saviour of the age."

Joseph is the type of the true Zaphnath-paaneah of this chapter, who is presented to us here in this double character of Revealer of secrets, and the Saviour of the world.

The Samaritan woman found out He was the Revealer of secrets; she found out that He could tell her everything she had done; that though she had never seen Him before, yet He knew every secret of her history, every thought of her heart. Then the moment she was conscious of what He could do, and who He was, she went and invited others to come to Him too.

Her words were the means of the conversion of some,—they believed her testimony; others came and heard from Himself His own words, and believed.

You must, my reader, get these two things together,—*i.e.*, I do not believe you will know Christ as your Saviour till you have known Him as the Revealer of the secrets of your heart; that is, till your conscience has been reached, and you feel in the presence of God that you are a sinner, deserving only judgment. Till you know you are lost, I do not believe you will ever know Him as a Saviour,—know what grace has done.

To this poor woman, who knew nothing, He lets out the secret that the Father seeks worshippers. Worship only flows from a heart that has tasted the grace of God; and when you have learned what God is in perfect grace to you, there will be no need of effort, worship will flow out as the simplest thing possible.

The 4th verse says, “He must needs go through Samaria.” The Lord went out of His way to meet this poor woman, and you will see what it is that meets her at first and wins her heart. It was not with her the writhings of a guilty conscience needing relief; but with an empty unsatisfied heart in this scene, she felt herself in the presence of One who could satisfy that heart, and give her that to which her heart was a stranger.

Jesus sat on the well that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Here was the true Joseph. Little did Joseph think when his father gave him that well, that He who was the true Joseph, of whom he was Himself the type, would sit by that well, and win a sin-burdened weary heart for God. A heart that

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was perfect in guilt, met there a heart that was *perfect in grace*.

"Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour." It was in the full heat of the mid-day sun. Ah! He knew well that there was only one hour when He would meet this poor woman, because it was the very hour when she thought no one would meet her. Other women came in the early morning, or in the cool of the evening, but she came alone at midday, and she found herself alone with the Saviour.

When her guilt put her in thorough isolation from all else, that same guilt put her by the side of the Saviour. It was her guilt that separated her from all others; it was her guilt that drew Him to meet her, that He might save her.

Was it for a drink of water that He came to that well that day? Ah no! He who sat on that well was the One who had caused the water to spring up, and His heart was satisfied that day by winning that poor woman's heart to Himself.

Christ seeks, my reader, to win your heart, by showing you what the grace of His heart is. It is not merely to deliver you from the lake of fire that the Gospel is preached. No. If you believe it, it will assuredly deliver you from that; but the object of the Gospel is to teach you the heart of God towards you, and to win your heart for Him.

The Creator, the Lord of all, the Lord of life and glory, came Himself in human form, and sat on that

well that day; and as there came out from Samaria a poor, sin-stained, weary woman, whose last remains of womanly modesty made her come out when she thought no others would be there to see her, that mid-day sun shone down on more than this weary sinner. There was a weary Saviour waiting for her; and it was not she who went to seek Him, it was He who went out of His way to seek her.

The Saviour's eye had been upon her; He met her. I believe her heart was *captivated* first, and then her conscience was *convicted*, and then she was *converted*, and then she was *consecrated* to Him.

She draws near, and sitting by the well she sees a stranger—a Jew; and there was no love between the Jews and the Samaritans. But He turns, and says to her, "Give me to drink;" and that "Give" was not asking a favour, but issuing a command. A favour He could not ask, though it was a favour even to take it from her, had she known who He was; but the demand that fell from His gracious lips, she was rude enough to deny Him.

But now, my reader, it is no longer a weary humbled man that speaks to you, and says, "Give me to drink." The Jesus who sat on the well that day, is on the Father's throne to-day; but His love is the same to-day as then, and He speaks to you. Will you give to Him? Methinks I hear your answered "No." For as in that day the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, so in this day man has no dealings with God. Man does not care to have to do with God.

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"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." He says, as it were, If you only knew what God can give you, and if you knew who I am, you would have asked and got from Me what I alone can give. He asked of her, and He only got in reply a question. My friend, do you know who it is to-day who speaks, and what is the gift of God? I believe the gift of God is the Holy Ghost, and the One who speaks is the Son of God.

"The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep." That let out the whole of her sin. How was the well so deep? The longer you go on in sin, the longer must be your rope before your bucket can reach the water of the pleasures of this world, which you hope will give you satisfaction. When you first started in life, you thought, If I could but reach this, it would give me satisfaction. But you reached it, and it did not satisfy you; and you tried again, going ever deeper and deeper. No, nothing this world can give will fully satisfy the cravings of the human heart.

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." That must be written over the portal of every scene of earthly joy. I draw near to this world's spring, and as the water flows, this note is heard in all the music of its rippling, "Shall thirst

again—shall thirst again!” I turn to Christ, to the water that He gives, and this is its unchanging note, “Shall never thirst—shall never thirst!”

Ah, my reader, you will carry your sins down to hell with you, but not your pleasures. You will thirst and thirst again in that dread place; there you will ever thirst. *In hell there is thirst, but no water.* With Christ there are “*living waters,*” but *no thirst*,—there is the difference.

On the one side of that fixed gulf, of which Jesus speaks in Luke xvi., there is thirst but no water; on the other side, living waters but no thirst. Which side will you be for eternity?

This was the most wonderful discourse this woman had ever listened to. “A well of water springing up into everlasting life.” A well is what always goes on. People say, “Must we not have a little joy?” No, I say, a little will not do for me. I must have something that goes on for ever; I must have an inexhaustible supply. The Christian treads his way with a joyful heart, in spite of all the troubles of the scene, because he has that which satisfies.

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.” She wants to get out of her troubled circumstances, but the Lord does not propose to us to take us out of our troubled circumstances, but to raise us above our circumstances,—to give us something, in the circumstances in which we are, that will make us different people altogether.

## CHRIST AT SYCHAR.

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The Lord says to her now, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." This is, as it were, putting His finger on her conscience. She says, "I have no husband." This was the truth, but not all the truth. He says, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." And she stood before Him a convicted sinner.

"Sir," she says, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." A prophet is one who knows all about one. Why does she not fly? Ah! she could not. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." All the *grace* had been coming out when He spoke of the gift of God, and the living water, the well springing up into everlasting life. And now the *truth* comes out, and she is a convicted sinner in His presence; the Holy One, and the unholy, have met face to face. Though *truth* has *convicted* her, *grace* has already *captivated* her, and she remains quietly by the Lord.

What does the Lord now say? As it were, I propose to myself to turn the worst sinner into the first worshipper in Samaria. She says, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." The devil is always trying to hinder a soul getting blessing; he will bring in even religious difficulties to get a soul away from Christ.

The Lord is not to be daunted. He says, "Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

. . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him." Wonderful news! God is seeking worshippers; and where does He get them from? He finds worshippers in the ranks of His enemies.

He meets them in their enmity, and breaks them down; turns His foes into His friends, and then out comes worship. If grace comes down from God to you, you will turn round and thank Him, praise Him, worship Him.

You cannot worship, till you know you are a child of God. Do you say, "How can I become a child of God?" "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The truth of God comes to you, you become a child of God by believing it. You are met, and blessed by God; and, as water finds its own level, you will turn round and thank and bless and worship God.

The devil has another hindrance now to throw in the woman's way,—ignorance. She says, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." As though she would say, "I do not understand about these things, but when the Messiah cometh, He will tell us all things."

"Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." That is, He reveals Himself to her as the true Zaphnath-paaneah,—not only the Revealer of Secrets, but the Saviour of the world.

She had stood before Him a convicted sinner when



## CHRIST AT SYCHAR.

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He said to her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." Now He had revealed Himself to her, and she was converted. She was lifted right out of her circumstances. She forgot her circumstances,—left her watering-pot, forgot who she was, and, now consecrated to His service, ran into the city, crying "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

And I say to you, my reader, "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did;" that revealed myself to me, that showed me my sins in their true light; but more than that, who told me that on the cross He died to put those very sins away, that there He suffered, the just One in the place of the unjust, to bring us to God.

"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." The very fact that He had revealed all the secrets of her life to her convicted them, and they believed before they came out even.

And when they came to Him then many more believed because of His own words, "And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." The Lord's own ministry, His speaking Himself to the heart, is sweeter far than anything any one can minister about Him even.

And now, my reader, may you know what it is to be captivated by His grace, your heart won—con-

victed by His truth ; your conscience reached—converted by the revelation of Himself to you ; lifted above your circumstances, and made a worshipper, may you be consecrated entirely to Him and His service,—your testimony to who He is, and what He can do, winning others to Him !

W. T. P. W.

## HEARTS REVEALED.



IN the early spring of last year we met with a very striking exemplification of the truth of Simeon's words, that by the introduction of Christ "the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed." We were on our way in the train to lecture at the suburban town of E——. Scarcely had we taken our seat when a lady offered us a leaflet, as also to the five or six others who were in the same compartment. The leaflet was very simple, containing the very words of Scripture, such as "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). While we were reading it, a gentleman, in the corner by the door, turning to the lady who had given it, said,—

"I hate such bigotry!" and, in language which it would not be for the profit of our readers to reproduce, commenced to denounce the giver of the leaflet. Seeing that it was now a question of Christ and His truth, and remembering His words, "He that is not with me is against me," we interposed and said,—

"It is not bigotry to distribute the word of God."

This remark called forth a torrent of abuse, revealing only too plainly, by the language employed, that the speaker was an avowed atheist. Seeing that it was useless to argue with one in such a state of mind, we contented ourselves with warning him of his danger, and of the awful position he was taking in refusing the word of God; adding, "When God speaks, it is for man to hear."

Thereupon the train drew up at our first stopping place, and the atheist leaped out of the carriage. As soon as he was gone, another gentleman spoke, and said,—

"I am glad you defended the Bible; I have no sympathy with such remarks as were made. Still," he added, "I have my difficulties."

"Indeed; and what are they?"

"Well, I cannot understand the justice of dooming any to everlasting destruction."

"Who has done this?"

"Why," he said, "it says somewhere that God has chosen some to salvation and doomed others to destruction."

"Where have you read this?"

"Somewhere in the Romans."

"No," we replied, "you have not read it there, nor indeed anywhere in the Scriptures; and this is only a sample of the way in which the Bible is often treated."

We then pointed out what was exactly said, and explained, that while the salvation of any was of pure and sovereign grace, God had in His mercy offered grace to all; and that the last message to sinners in the word of God was, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). All therefore would be without excuse, for the precious blood of Christ would avail for every one that believed in Him. And together with this, we pressed upon him a present and eternal salvation through faith in Christ.

Almost before we had ended, a third gentleman, a young man, spoke, and said,—

"I *am* a Christian, but I cannot go with all you have said."

"To what do you object?"

"Well," he replied, "I believe in Christ; but I think it is presumption to say that you know that you are saved. I hope I *shall be* saved, but I cannot know this now."

"But," we answered, "is not the word of God the ground of our faith and the warranty of our assurance? Now this is what we read, 'These things have I written unto you . . . that ye may know that ye have eternal life' (1 John v. 13). It is

plain, therefore, that God desires us to know that we are saved, and it cannot be presumption to rest with implicit confidence in His own word."

We then proceeded, once again, to point out the value of the precious blood of Christ in cleansing us from all sin (1 John i. 7), and in cleansing us for ever.

As soon as these words had escaped our lips, the lady who had given us the leaflets interposed, and said, to our great surprise,—

"I cannot agree with you in that; I feel that I need the cleansing of the blood every day of my life."

In answer to this, we expounded the truth of Heb. x., where we have a threefold testimony to the everlasting putting away of the sins of believers by the sacrifice of Christ. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." We also explained the gracious provision that God has made, through the washing of water by the word—in connection with the advocacy of Christ—for the sins of believers (1 John ii. 1); showing, at the same time, that when the Lord Jesus died upon the cross He bore all our sins,—past, present, and future,—and that therefore all His people could rejoice in the knowledge that they were gone for ever; and that the proof of this, was found in the place which the Lord Jesus now occupied at the right hand of God. For if He had our sins upon Him on the cross, it is clear that they must be for ever gone if He is now in the glory of God.

Thereon the last occupant of the carriage remarked,—

“I am so thankful you have spoken in this way;” and together with this, the train arrived at our destination.

So far as we know no effect followed our conversation; but the remarkable thing was, as pointed out at the outset, that every heart in that carriage was brought into the light by the simple action of the word of God. Surely this was no mean foreshadowing of that time when *all* must be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let us then ask our readers,—with all solemnity, and yet with all tenderness,—Are you prepared for this? Meet Him you must, sooner or later. *Now*, you may meet Him as your Saviour; for Him hath God set forth a propitiation, through faith in His blood. Coming, then, on the ground of the efficacy of His death and sacrifice, you will be saved eternally. Refusing, or *neglecting*, thus to come, there remains the great white throne before which you must appear,—but, alas! only for eternal judgment. With what force and power, then, are these words proclaimed to-day, “*Now* is the accepted time, and *now* is the day of salvation.”

E. D.

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FAITH requires no external evidence of the truth of Scripture, and unbelief will not be convinced by it. “It is written” is a sure foundation, human evidence mere shifting sand.

W. T. P. W.

## SETTLED PEACE.



WHEN a lady was respectfully asked by us if she had peace with God, she replied, "I believe very few persons attain to that." This was a serious mistake, for "peace with God" is nowhere set forth in scripture as dependent on our experience, or on our attainments in any sense, but wholly "through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is not founded on what we are, or have done, or may do, but on what He has done, who "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Others, when asked if they had peace with God, have replied, "Yes, for I *feel* so happy!" as if it were a question of *feeling*; so that, if afterward from any cause they *feel unhappy*, they would doubt their salvation, and have no sense of peace with God. Such, though perhaps unknown to themselves, are making *feelings* the ground of peace as to their eternal salvation, instead of the work of Christ and the word of God. It never says in the Scripture that we are justified by *feelings*, but by faith. But it does say that we have "joy and peace *in believing*;" so that happy and joyful feelings accompany believing. *Believing* God's testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work as set forth in His Word, we must have "peace with

God," unless the Spirit be grieved by unholy walk and indulged sin. There are others, who hold that the only ground they have for thinking they are God's children is because they sometimes feel so miserable, for they judge their misery must be *produced* by the Spirit's operation. Their mistake is, that they look at the work of the Spirit within for peace, instead of the work of the Son of God entirely outside themselves for peace, and Himself now on the Father's throne their subsisting righteousness. Such never can enjoy settled peace; for *we* are changeful and frail, while *He* abideth faithful,—

“Our souls through many changes go,  
His love no change can ever know.”

As has often been said, the work of the Spirit in us gives us no title to glory, most blessed as that work is; but it is the precious blood of Christ, through which we have been redeemed, and through which peace has been made; and there is no other way of approach to God, no other shelter from judgment, no other ground of forgiveness of sins and peace with God, than the blood of Christ. It is clearly then a mistake, to look at what we *experience* of the Spirit's operation *in* us as the ground of peace; though it may be true as a fact, that the conviction and distress, and it may be darkness, which the soul goes through is by the Spirit teaching us that in us—that is, in our flesh—dwells no good thing. This is often productive of much profit, by afterward turning the eye of the heart



wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ, for righteousness and acceptance before God. Scripture never says we have peace with God through anything whatever that we discover within us, but always turns us to the blood of Christ as the ground of our justification,—to Christ Himself as the object of faith, to believing God's testimony to the value of that blood, as the only way of having peace, and the unchanging Word of God as our infallible authority for it (Rom. v. 1-11).

It is appalling to think of how many we meet and converse with who have no idea of peace with God, but on the contrary are going on with a false peace—fast asleep in carnal security. Because conscience is quiet, they think all is right; but a quiet conscience is very different from a purged conscience—a conscience purged by the blood of Christ.

A religious life, and conscientiously fulfilling our duties, some say, must ensure a happy future. But it is not so; for while good works follow faith in the Son of God, yet to trust in works or duties, or religious ordinances, for eternal salvation, is a fatal delusion, a crafty snare of Satan's, and a soul-destroying trap. We are plainly told, "*By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*" And again, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law" (Eph. ii. 8, 9, Rom. iii. 28). Nothing can possibly be clearer, or more decided; yet what

a common thing it is, when a man has the eternal importance of his soul's salvation brought home to his conscience, to have the reply, "I'll try;" or, "I will hope to be better;" or, "I'll turn over a new leaf;" thus plainly showing he has entirely missed the salvation of God.

The true secret of settled peace with God, is founded on the precious fact that God, instead of justly banishing us from His presence for ever, loved us even "while we were yet sinners;" yea, so loved us, even when sinners, that Christ His Son died for us. Peace, then, springs from God,—“the God of Peace”—is founded entirely on the atoning work of Christ in His death and bloodshedding on the cross. There is no other foundation of peace; for Scripture plainly says, we are justified by His blood, and that He has “made peace through the blood of his cross.” But more than that, He not only bore our sins, suffered for our sins, died for our sins, and we died with Him on the cross, but in resurrection He triumphed over death and the grave, annulled the power of Satan, and was righteously exalted to the right hand of God as Man, because He fully glorified God about our sins on the cross. Thus, as Man, and for us, He is in the glory of God, glorified and seated on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, having gone in there by His own blood. And as what He suffered on the cross was for us, and He was thus righteously entitled to glory as the righteous One, He is for all whom He suffered now “the righteousness of God.” The grace of God

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not only came out to us in the cross, and met us in our sins, but Divine goodness has also "made" that exalted Man in the glory "unto us righteousness." So that He who knew no sin, was not only made sin for us, and was the sin-bearer for us, but we have become the righteousness of God in Him. Thus Christ in the glory is our *unchanging righteousness*; yes, blessed be God, He has made Him to be unto us righteousness,—even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and UPON ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE. Oh the unutterable goodness and mercy of God! The infinite efficacy of His work on the cross can never change; the eternal value of it is always before God, and the believer is always in the perfect acceptance of Christ, and an object of divine favour.

This peace becomes deepened in the soul, as the new relationships into which we are brought, and the new standing given us in Christ Jesus, are apprehended. The fact of being a child of God now, through faith in Christ Jesus,—an object of the Father's constant care and love as such,—is a relationship which is unchanging in its character, and going on to our perfect conformity to the image of the Son. When we know that we are loved by the Father as He loved Jesus, and have received the Spirit of adoption to make it known to us, it causes settled peace to occupy our hearts. We enjoy the goodness and love of God; and, it may be, are lost in wonder, love, and praise:—

“Hence through all the changing seasons,—  
 Trouble, sorrow, sickness, woe,—  
 Nothing changeth God's affection,  
 Abba's love shall bring us through.”

But if we become worldly, careless in our walk, and neglect prayer and reading of the Word of God, the Spirit dwelling in us will be grieved, and our spiritual senses will be blunted; so that our hearts, before we are aware of it, glide into that which the Lord has forbidden, and we shall not enjoy the presence of God, but become unhappy. This neglect may call too for the Father's discipline, and though the work in which our peace is founded never changes, such will not be abiding in the Saviour's love. Nothing changes His love to us, but our enjoyment of it is another thing. How can we be happy, if we are walking in a path of disobedience? Did He not say, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you?” but did He not add to this, “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (John xv. 9, 10).

Happy are those whose daily heartfelt utterance is—

“I *hear* the words of love;  
 I *gaze* upon the blood;  
 I see the mighty Sacrifice,  
 And ‘I have peace with God.’”

H. H. S.

## THE SOWER, THE SEED, AND THE SOIL.

“A SOWER went out to sow his seed ; and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side ; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock ; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be ? And he said, 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. Now the parable is this ; The seed is the word of God. Those by the way-side are they that hear : then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. 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. 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. 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.

“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. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest ; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. 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. Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the

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press. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it."—Luke viii. 5-18.



HERE are two things which strike one at first, in looking at this scripture, viz., that the reception in the soul of the word of God is the communicating to it something which it had not before, and which is the cause of its bearing fruit,—bearing fruit is a sign of a tree having life;—and, secondly, the reception of the word of God puts the receiver into relationship with Christ.

Do you suppose that the Lord Jesus had, in any sense, a life of ease and comfort? No! there was not a city, or village, or hamlet in all that broad country in which His lot was cast, that has not had to own that it heard the Saviour's voice. And what did He carry to them? Glad tidings. And what, my reader, does the evangelist bring to you now? Glad tidings; fuller, and richer now, than when the Saviour preached; for He had not died then, and redemption was not accomplished.

Look at the earnest activity of the heart of Christ! What a life of ceaseless toil! There was one day when He did not preach. That was the day before He died. That day He spent in quiet, the day before the terrible morrow when He died for you and me. Now, though we have not heard and seen the Lord Himself, yet we can hear the Word of

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God, and thus we have the opportunity of bearing fruit, and of being put into relationship with Christ.

There are three salient points in the parable which the Lord here speaks,—the *sower*, the *seed*, and the *soil*.

1. *Who is the Sower?* The Son of Man, who is also the Son of God; He sows the seed. If Christ then be the sower of seed, He is not going to ask something of you and me. What does the sower do? He puts something into the field, which was not there before. Now, my reader, if you get into your heart that the Lord is the *sower*, you will get rid of the thought that He begins by being a *reaper*, or that He is expecting something from you. I know the thought of your heart is, Must I not bring something to God? No, you can bring nothing to Him, but you may receive something from Him,—even the Word of Life. The Sower is the Son of Man, and He has come from God's side, and His hand is full of that which He bestows, and from which, if you receive it, there will be fruit unto life eternal, and you will get into relationship with the Lord Himself.

God is not now exacting. The day of law is gone by. Moses might come and tell me what I ought to be, Jesus has come to tell me what God is,—a giver, a sower. Moses could tell me how I ought to live, but Jesus has come and told me, that since my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, God has given up seeking to get anything

out of my heart, and wants to put something into it.

2. *What is the Seed?* "The seed is the word of God." Jesus, as the sower, has come with the seed basket in His hand, to cast in something which He has and we have not, till He makes it ours. "The seed is the word of God." It is not what you and I think, or what you and I do. No! "The seed is the word of God." Thus Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Peter i. 23). It is always by His word that God acts, and that word abides and lives for ever, therefore the importance of listening to the word. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" says the Psalmist, and replies, "By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalm cxix. 9). "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm cxix. 89). Again, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm cxix. 11). The word of the Lord can save your soul, and guide it also.

Your salvation, my beloved reader, rests entirely on this, your acceptance of the word of God. God's Son is the sower, God's word is the seed sown. God's word is the mighty lever to lift you out of the state you are in as a sinner. Education will not do it. Education may make you a better neighbour, but it will not bring you to God. "Hear, and your soul shall live." It is not "work," or "pray," but "hear;" and, if God speaks, He speaks with autho-



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rity. And, my friend, if you do not listen to His voice now, the days will come when you will be, yourself, the witness of the truth of God's word, and you will be constrained to justify every word of God. Yes, though you do not believe now, when you pass away from His presence into eternal damnation, you, yourself, will be the witness of the truth of that word, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16).

3. *We look now at the Soil.* This is the heart of man. The Lord brings before us four classes of soil on which the seed can be cast. First, The wayside. Look at it. The Sower sows, but it is a hard beaten track, many feet have trodden it down, it is as hard as the nether millstone. Is that your heart, my reader? You have heard the word often. Have you received it yet? Do you say, "I do not believe in people being converted so easily"? Read the twelfth verse, "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." Yes, no one so fully believes in the simplicity of the gospel as the devil. He knows, full well, it is only to "hear," "believe," and "be saved." What is he doing now with you? Trying to distract your thoughts as you read these lines, lest you should "*believe and be saved.*" Are you interested? The devil will suggest to you not to be in a hurry—to think over the matter a bit. Ah, my friend, there will come a day of bitter sorrow to your soul,—the day of the harvest,—for a harvest

there will be, and a full garner too, but you will not be there, for you have not believed the gospel. "The Lord will see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied," but will your voice join in the blessed songs of that harvest-home? No, no! Wayside hearer, you will know of the harvest, you will see what the magnificence of His grace is to others; but from your heart can only arise the bitter wail, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved" (Jer. viii. 20).

But are you hearing and believing the word of God, my reader? Then the same word says you are saved. How simple! Have you been till now a wayside hearer? Oh, be that no longer.

Look we, in the second place, at the rocky-ground hearers. This class is the emotional one. The *wayside* are the *indifferent hearers*, who hear the gospel, week after week, and care nothing for it; but the rocky hearers have a little bit of earth on the surface, their hearts are apparently softer, but no plough has ever ploughed up the ground. Feelings may have been touched, but the word of God has produced no effect on the conscience. There is no fruit, and by and by, when trouble comes for the word's sake, they give it up. They are an emotional class. The gospel will bring them to the feet of Jesus to-day, and a string-band will carry them to the ball-room to-morrow. They receive the word for the joy of it, and give it up for the trouble connected with it. They have no root. Sorrowful state to be in!

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The third class, the thorny-ground hearers, are the middle-aged, sober men and women we meet by thousands every day,—mothers of large families, full of cares; men full of business; others overwhelmed by riches. But cares should not keep you from Christ, for He says, “casting all your care on him, for he careth for you.” And riches should not keep you from Christ, for you can use them for Him. A very large proportion of the thorny-ground hearers are those who are governed by the “pleasures of this life.” They are not rich, they are not poor; they have enough to go along easily with, and “enjoy life,” as they call it. Their thoughts are all for this life, and so the word of God is choked by the thorns,—the pleasures of the flesh and of the mind, which the devil knows well how to pander to, in order to keep souls from Christ.

Now look at the last class,—the blessed class, I may call them,—those who have an “honest and good heart;” that is, a heart that owns the truth that there is nothing good about it. A person without guile, is a person who is transparent and does not want to be thought what he is not. A broken heart, is a person agonizing before God on account of his sin. The ploughshare of conviction has gone in, and the deeper the furrow the deeper the root for the seed. But oh, my friend, if you have never been anxious about your soul before, it is high time you were. It will be too late when the sickle of judgment is put in, and you are swept away.

The prodigal had an "honest and good heart" when he said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." A man who knows he is lost, and owns it, crying "God be merciful to me *the* sinner," has an "honest and good heart."

If you have not known these soul convictions all is wrong with you, the word has not gone down into your heart, and there is no fruit in your life. But a soul that has known this deep conviction of sin, knows that he is lost; and when God comes and says to that soul, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," he believes it. When he hears that "Christ died for the ungodly," he believes it. Yes, he rests on the word of God, and lives by it as a new-born babe. This is the "honest and good heart," the soul that hears the word of God, and does it.

Which of the four classes are you in? In one you must be. Oh, be not among the hardened and *indifferent*; nor among the *emotional*, who receive the word of God to-day and give it up to-morrow; nor yet among those who let their cares, riches, or pleasures keep them from Christ; but be among those who, having the word of God, keep it, and bring forth fruit unto God,—of whom the Lord declares "they are mine," and shall be "mine in the day when I make up my jewels." In the harvest where will you be? Not to be with Christ, will prove the unreality of any profession you have made now.

W. T. P. W.

## "SUCH IS LIFE."



AY I ask you, dear reader, to look at one short verse of Scripture which depicts, most graphically, a very common state of things around us.

It contains a deplorable account of the last moments, as she deemed them, of the widow of Zarephath. "And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die" (1 Kings xvii. 12).

Notice, first, the woman was a *widow*, and that she had but one child—an only son. This alone is sad; but, further, observe that she was under the pressure of three dire but common calamities, by which her soul was haunted, as by a spectre. The first was *destitution*,—"I have not a cake," said she; the second was *drudgery*,—"I am gathering two sticks;" and the third was *death*,—"that we may eat, and die."

Now, tell me honestly, does not this terse little statement describe the life of the majority of the vast community around us? It calls to mind the Book of Ecclesiastes, which, you may remember, presents to us "*life under the sun*;" a doleful book perhaps, but, as we know, very correct and true.

“All,” says the preacher, “is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

1. *Destitution*.—Poverty, need, want! Is this not the case with the greater part of our neighbours? Affluence is the exception,—pecuniary trial is the common rule. Few are born to ease and wealth; the most, by far, have to face the battle.

But whence this trial? It results from *sin*. I do not speak of the effects of any particular course of evil, but of the general and undeniable *fact*. Sin is the parent of destitution. Had there been no sin, there would, certainly, have been no want. Eden was a right wealthy place! Its furnishing was worthy of that generous Creator who had arranged it, as the palace of His intelligent creatures; but sin deranged everything—and Cain became a fugitive and a vagabond—and so we find abundant witness, in each day’s life, of the impoverishing effects of sin.

2. *Drudgery*.—Yes, downright slavery! Mammon is the hardest taskmaster, though willingly served. But from morning to night, from Monday to Saturday, the wheel must revolve. Toil, labour, drudgery, all the time; and that just to obtain the bread that perisheth.

Yes, thorns and thistles and weeds abundant; and thus man, once noble, now reduced indeed, has perforce to keep at his treadmill, little better than a mere beast of burden!

Distinguish, my reader, between slavery of this kind and the healthy bracing *work* for which we

were made. The opposite of drudgery is not idleness, nor sloth. God never meant inactivity, neither did He mean a state of slavery. This is the outcome of sin; nor can things be mended. All I say is, that, in this lamentably abnormal existence of ours, work has degenerated into drudgery, and man into a slave.

3. *Death*.—On this head it is really unnecessary to dwell. Yet, fact though it be, we are prone to view death more as a misfortune than as a judgment.

A clever medical man once said to me, "*Life is just a perpetual struggle against death.*" And so it is. That struggle may be maintained vigorously for long; yet the gradual encroachment of the enemy is evident,—the wrinkle, the furrow, the turning hair, all tell of the ultimate success of the foe. That "*we may eat it, and die,*" said the widow. She said not that "*we may eat and live!*" Nay, the food we eat is just the price we pay to keep death off. Yet the intruder will not thus be always bribed. Oh! melancholy picture, dreary tale! What a dark history is that of sin! Destitution, drudgery, and death, ring their weary change on the ear that pauses to listen to the solemn voices that break around us.

What a wonder it is, that such a cadence should not drive the poor weary heart away in quest of another region than the present. Thank God that region exists! The ear of faith may hearken to its call. How appropriate the sweet invitation of Him

who, while He was uttering it, felt in His soul all the sorrow of the present, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

*Rest! rest! rest!* for conscience, heart, and mind. His blood can purge the conscience, His love can satisfy the heart, and His word can occupy the mind. Whilst, if He call to serve, that service is one of liberty, and of present and eternal reward.

Weary one, come to Jesus!

J. W. S.



## GOD, THE SINNER'S JUSTIFIER.



*G*OD justifies the ungodly!

Read that again,—God justifies the ungodly!

My reader, have you ever before heard of this wonderful fact?

Now, an ungodly person is one who is without God; a poor, wretched, hell-deserving sinner, without merit, strength, or hope. When God justifies such an one, He clears him from every sin, and from every claim and charge in respect of his sin; takes him out of his original state and place of degradation, ruin, and misery; sets him before Himself as though he had never sinned, and brings him into direct and eternal association with the risen and exalted Christ. The glorified Son of God's



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acceptance is the measure of the justified sinner's acceptance.

The crucified thief, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, the Samaritan adulteress,—these are the kind of people whom God thus justifies on the principle of faith, without works.

Do you doubt it? Then read the divine record, “To him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that *justifieth the ungodly*, his *faith* is counted for *righteousness*” (Rom. iv. 5).

Oh, ponder over this marvellous statement, and grasp its wondrous meaning in its application to thyself, thou poor, needy, ruined one.

“*To him that worketh not.*” Maybe you are one of that vast multitude who, dreading the eternal torment of the damned, are frantically endeavouring to escape its woes by works of righteousness, carnal observances, useless ceremonies, prayers, and tears? Then I warn you that you are building a raft of false hopes, that will never carry you across the dark waters of eternal judgment,—a bridge of illusions, that will never span the measureless distance that separates your Christless soul from the God of heaven. Your raft will founder, my friend, and plunge you beneath those waves of endless wrath and unutterable despair; your bridge will vanish, and leave you nothing but the *great gulf* fixed for ever between God's glory and your lost soul.

Salvation can never be gained thus, it is for him that “*worketh not.*” You may labour and toil, and hope and sigh for it during a lifetime, but it will

elude your grasp at last, and you shall clutch but *a lost eternity*. You cannot merit salvation, you cannot secure it by your efforts. Hearest thou not, that it is the portion of him that "worketh not"? I yearn to be saved, you say. Then, cease from your works, and take the place of him that "worketh not."

*"But believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly."* What *must* I do, do you ask? Only believe! Believe what? Believe that you are a poor lost sinner, speeding down the road that leads to hell, powerless to either get rid of your sins, or to satisfy God about them, and powerless to do a whit better in the future than you have done in the past. Believe that Jesus the Son of God came from the glory and went to the cross, that by death *He* might make atonement for those sins, and render that satisfaction to God about them which you could never render; that He, the powerful One, came to the rescue of the helpless one; that He, the holy One, came to die for the sinful one; that the work has been so perfectly done *by Him*, that nothing is left for *you* to do. Believe this, and that same moment will God justify you, the ungodly one, through the blood of the sinless One. \*

Oh, is it not wonderful, my reader? Surely your heart is melting at the revelation of such unfathomable love on the part of the God you have so sinned against.

You *will* believe, will you not? Oh, this moment cease from your works, and believe what is said by Him who justifies the ungodly. Come into His

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presence at once, poor troubled soul. *Come, just as you are, wretched, naked, sin-stained. Jesus has died,* dear reader, the work is completed, and God waits; He waits, and longs, I say, to pardon thee.

*"His faith is counted for righteousness."* In a bygone day a man's righteousness consisted in keeping inviolate ten stern commandments. Now, the sinner's *faith* is counted to him for righteousness. Is it a mystery to you how the thrice-holy God, before whom the adoring angels veil their faces, can justify the sinner who has not an atom of righteousness, or a particle of power to gain one? Do you marvel, I ask, at the suggestion that God can save the sinner on such wondrously easy terms?

Then turn—with bated breath, and reverent heart—one moment, to that awful scene at Calvary, *where Jesus, the Son of God, was made sin for us,* and learn—in the nameless agonies, and the priceless value of the blood of the holy One—the ground on which a free pardon is offered by God to the guilty sinner, without works.

Oh, touch not that finished work, vain striver after a human righteousness; seek not to add to it by your efforts to earn acceptance with that God who justifies him that *"worketh not."*

Oh, touch not that peerless work, doubting one; seek not to dim its lustre, by your dishonouring fear to trust wholly to it for the salvation of your perishing soul.

Worker, Doubter, Pharisee, Romanist, Ritualist, Jew, Gentile, know you not *that through the blood*

*of Jesus, God has opened heaven to the sinner? Have you not heard His glorious proclamation, which has sounded through the universe for nigh two thousand years, that on the ground of that shed blood He justifies the ungodly (Rom. iv. 5), gives everlasting life to dead souls (John v. 24, 25), saves the lost (Luke xix. 10, Acts xvi. 31), and forgives the sinner (Luke vii. 36-50)?*

Oh, my reader, tell me, are *you* one of the “ungodly”? Then God, this very moment, offers to justify you from all things; for He Himself has said, “To him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness.”

Are *you* “dead in trespasses and sins”? Then, this very moment, God offers to you the gift of everlasting life. Listen to the wondrous message, “He that *believeth* on the Son *hath* everlasting life.”

Are *you* “lost”? Then is God, this moment, seeking to save you. Have you not heard the blessed news?—“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost”; “*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou *shalt* be saved.”

Are *you* a “sinner”? Then is God, this moment, yearning to forgive you; for it was He, who, in a day that is past, said to the despised sinner of the city, “Thy sins are forgiven, thy *faith* hath saved thee, go in peace.”

Now, pause a moment, and consider this: Suppose God had left perishing man to his own resources, could any or all of the good works or fleshly or-

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dinances in the world, ten million times repeated, have enabled an *ungodly* person to obtain righteousness, a *dead* soul to gain everlasting life, a *lost* soul to secure salvation, or a *sinner* to obtain forgiveness of his sins?

Oh, reader, man's dreadful condition of guilt, helplessness, and desperate need, serves as a background to throw up into higher relief the magnificent grace of God.

Now, gather up the wealth of blessing that is within your reach: sins blotted out; a free justification from all things; salvation from the coming wrath; and the gift of life eternal! And, marvellous fact, none of this is made to depend upon *your* exertions, *your* piety, *your* resolutions, *your* merit; but all the result of *Christ's* toil, *His* agony, *His* blood-shedding; and all to be had by *you*, a poor helpless sinner, the moment you believe on Him.

Will you let the blessing slip from you, perishing one? Oh, beware, the day of God's grace is fast waning, the shadows are rapidly lengthening out; each passing moment carries you farther from heaven, but nearer to hell. Dare you trifle longer with His mercy, and trample under foot the blood of His dear Son?

Think, His eye is on you, even as you read these lines, watching to see if you will accept His great love-gift. Oh, fold your hands, vain worker; cast away your fears, poor doubter; and meekly receive, at God's hands, the precious fruit of Jesus' death.

W. H. S.

## “MY SAVIOUR.”

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WHILE God may save a thousand souls at once, yet each one is saved individually, and has a history, experiences, and joys peculiarly its own.

It is important to see this. Each one stands before God in his own individuality, with individual sins and guilt, with the need of individual conviction, of repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conversion to God is intensely individual. Conversion is the sinner turning to God in the spirit of repentance, with the confession of sin upon his lips. “I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,” is the repentant cry of a converted sinner. What meets the converted one is this: “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;” and the confession of the son is answered by the father’s command to the servants: “Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 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” (Luke xv. 18-24).

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It was all intensely individual. He had sinned, and turned away from the father (a picture of man); he had dishonoured the father, and disgraced his name. He was convicted, converted, brought to repentance, and returned with a full, honest, guileless confession of his sin. He was received, pardoned, embraced, kissed, clothed, and brought into the house, and seated by the father. All was most thoroughly individual. And thus he sat by the father's side, feeding upon the fatted calf, participating in the joy of the blessed occasion, an individual monument of the father's love, a trophy of the father's grace.

With what power this speaks to us of God's goodness to a returning sinner. Let one return in his individual condition as a sinner, in his solitary misery, and this divinely-drawn picture assures him of the reception he will get, and how gladly God will receive him, pardon him, and with the robe of spotless righteousness fit him for His presence for ever. Thus received and clothed, he will be able to say, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah lxi. 10).

In Luke i. 46, 47, we have a very lovely instance of individual salvation. The Virgin Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

Mary was a sinner, like the rest of us, and needed

a Saviour, as her own words show. The announcement of the coming Saviour is made to her, and that she was to be the honoured vessel to bring forth the incarnate Word into this world, and she is the first to rejoice: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." "*My Saviour.*" What blessedness for her, as indeed for us all.

But notice the individual application of the truth,—"*My Saviour.*"

So also the aged Simeon. "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: **FOR MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION**, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke ii. 28–32). How blessed! "*Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*" There was divine teaching, individual faith, and the joy of God's salvation,—peace and joy in believing.

Beloved reader, do you know anything of all this? this individual application of the truth of God about your sins, and the glorious salvation found in a once crucified, but now risen and glorified Christ? Can you look at the cross, and say with Paul, "He loved me, and gave himself for me;" and up to where He now is on the throne of heaven, and say, "My Saviour,"—"My own precious and everlasting Saviour"? If so, what blessedness is yours; if not, alas, what darkness is yours!



## COMMUTED OR PARDONED?

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There are three more passages, and I close. "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;" "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me" (Cant. ii. 16; vi. 3; vii. 10). Thus we find in these three scriptures, the individual appropriation of Christ, the Beloved; the mutual possession, on the part of Christ and the sinner saved, of one another; and the desire of Christ ever towards those whom He saves,—“His desire is toward me.”

Dear reader, may you know this glorified Christ, the beloved of God and His people, as your own precious Saviour, and, with the Virgin Mary, be able to say, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.”

E. A.



## COMMUTED OR PARDONED?



HAD offered several times to visit a prisoner, who had been convicted in the U. S. court of murder, and who was sentenced to be executed in a few weeks. But from the fact that he had been unjustly dealt with by the judge, he almost savagely refused to see any one, and stolidly gave himself up to die, wishing only to be left alone. One morning,

however, a despatch was received that the President had pardoned him.

Filled with joy on his account, for there were many grave doubts of his guilt, I hastened to take the news to one who had been particularly active in procuring a petition for a commutation of his sentence to imprisonment for life, hoping that if he did well in prison, in a few years he would be released. Here was the announcement of something better than we had looked for. Yet it was only one little paragraph among the telegraphic despatches to the Associated Press, and not an official document, duly signed and sealed. Might it not be a mistake? We felt sure of one thing, that he had been distinguished by *some* act of mercy, and so hastened to see him. We told him all we had heard and felt, fearing the effect of disappointment, in case it should be found to be imprisonment for life.

As we spoke, it was interesting to notice the struggle going on within him, as betrayed by his countenance. One moment joy covered his face as a halo, and he seemed to be another man; then came the anxious look of doubt. Dare he be really happy? What a difference the two words, pardoned and commuted, would make to him! The one meant a new creature, a new life. It would be like a resurrection, for he was as good as dead, with only two weeks, and then the scaffold! In it, were joy and peace, and the fulness of hope. The other kept him under condemnation still. It was only an indefinite reprieve, a dreary, ignominious, aimless

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living, and in the end a death of shame ; or at best, the uncertain hope that some time, far away, at last, he might be saved. Receiving the one, he could boldly say, "Who is he that condemneth?" Under the other, he would be all his lifetime subject to bondage. The former was grace, the latter law. We left him hoping that he was saved, but not able to say, "I know."

And this, it seems to me, illustrates the condition of many in regard to their eternal salvation. They are not confident, they only trust they may be saved, and how ardently they do pray to be saved "at last." Thus many of those who confess the name of Christ are kept in fear and doubt, by an uncertainty in regard to the message delivered to them. How can such be happy, or have peace of mind, and what kind of testimony can they give to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? God has made clear and repeated declarations of the ground on which he confers pardon, that the iniquity of which we are guilty, and for which we are condemned, is laid on Jesus. "He hath made him sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "He was wounded for our transgressions, the chastisement of our peace was upon him." "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the scriptures." And this is declared to be the gospel. "He rose again for our justification," and "by him all who believe are justified from all things." "Unto you therefore is preached the forgiveness of sins."

This poor prisoner had no such warrant as this, for believing he was pardoned. We that spoke to him dare not give him such assurance. There were special grounds for doubt, for whatever was done, might have resulted from political reasons; or if he were pardoned, it would be upon the thought that the man might possibly be innocent; and how could we know that such had been the thought of the executive? But in the word of God, we learn that God has paid the sin laid on another; the punishment has been executed! He has raised Jesus from the dead, and there is the proof for ever, that He is just in pardoning, and the soul is warranted in entering into rest. It is not honouring God to doubt. It is discrediting His word; for he assures us He does not desire our death, He has all He wants in Jesus. Our fear is not humility, but presumption, for it is denying the virtue of Christ's work. Such a feeling is bondage. There is an anxiety yet, and a looking within one's self for something, some work of the Spirit it may be, that shall help, or make one feel more worthy of forgiveness.

Do not those who teach the word fail oftentimes to give the "sure" testimony? A lady, over ninety years of age, who had long felt her need of salvation, came to one who knew the grace of God, asking him what she should do, for she felt her time was short. "Why, madam," said he, "Christ has done all for God, and for you." "Ah," she replied, "they never told me that;" and, accepting the truth, she at once received peace. "These things are written

that ye may know ye have eternal life;" and as those who believe in the Son of God, it is our blessed privilege to say, "we have known and believed the love that God hath to us."

But some may say, This case of the prisoner was an individual one, and if a pardon came, he would be assured of it, for his name would be specially mentioned; how can I know the assurances of God are for me personally? Well, this same President, among the early acts of his administration, issued a proclamation of amnesty and pardon to certain rebels, excluding certain classes, and including all others. Now, how should any one of the included class know he was released? Would it not have been sheer folly and infidelity, not to have gone forth free as a citizen, fearless of judgment or arrest? And why? Because he belonged to that class, though himself not named. Even so our gracious Lord has named the classes to whom forgiveness is offered, on grounds for ever settled, and infinitely glorifying to himself. These classes are "sinners," "the ungodly," those "without strength," those that "labour, and are heavy laden," and "who-soever will." Are you included? Then, take the peace He has made, and rejoice that by His grace He has of a rebel made a son. God is satisfied with Christ; Christ is satisfied with His own work. Are you?

T. P.

## “WE SEEK THE TRUTH.”

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UCH was the motto written up on a notice-board at a Secular Hall, recently opened for the spread of infidel opinions. Could any sentence have been more fitly chosen to have expressed their own condemnation? They profess to teach, instruct the people; what about? What do they teach? Confessedly not the truth, for they declare they have it not. We do not seek for that which we possess; we may wish and strive to understand, and better enter into, that we have. If I have a book in my hand, I do not tell my child to hunt all over the house to find it. But infidelity professes to seek the truth, all the time rejecting it; and would fain take the truth away from those who possess it.

Infidelity can attempt to take away, but cannot give you the truth. A schoolmaster can teach no scholar that of which he is himself ignorant. But can it be said that any one has The Truth? Yes; emphatically yes! “Presumption, utter presumption!” the infidel answers. “Why, there is Professor A—, Professor B—, and a number of the ablest intellects of the day, all over the world, seeking after truth, and you say you have it!” Now listen, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came

by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17). "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John xiv. 6). Here, then, I get the fact that truth is come, has been manifested; not in a code of laws, but in a living person,—One who could say, "*I am The Truth.*"

Infidelity is nothing new. When He who was The Truth was here, and said to Pilate who gave Him up into the hands of His enemies, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," the sceptic cry was then as now, "What is truth?" But it is true now, as then, "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Have you heard the voice of Christ? Do you know Him? Do you with your heart believe in Him? If so, you have The Truth. Many things you may want to know about Him, the glories of His person, the wonders of His work; but if you know Him as The Christ, The Son of God, you have The Truth.

Man, by searching, is trying to find out God, and will never succeed. If God had not revealed Himself, we never could have found Him; but, blessed be His name, He sent His Son to declare Him, to unfold all His heart; and to bring back to Himself poor guilty man. In Christ I get The Truth; there I find myself detected in my guilt. And, oh blessed

truth, I find in Him the One who can meet the deepest need of my poor sinful heart. Grace and truth came by Him; grace is what I want, not grace at the expense of truth; but He came, the expression of the loving grace of a giving God,—came to unveil His Father's heart, and to suffer in death, that by that death he might make a righteous channel for the outflow of God's heart towards poor sinful man. Oh! do you really want to know what truth is? Are you a seeker after truth? Go not to the learned of this world; ask not science for an answer. The world by wisdom knew not God. Truth was here, in the person of Christ, but man turned Him out, and "The Truth" is now in heaven. "There are three that bear witness in earth [to the truth] the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. . . . This is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son" (1 John v.) Dost thou believe in the Son of God? May you, from your heart, say, "Lord, I believe." And then you shall have the truth, and "know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32).

J. H. H.

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BOLD faith delights the heart of Christ. He always answers faith by blessing; but He is more gratified by the faith that will break up a roof, and stop a discourse, than that which can only come behind Him and touch the hem of His garment. You cannot count too much on His goodness and love.

W. T. P. W.



GOD WITH US, GOD FOR US, GOD IN US. 57

## GOD WITH US, GOD FOR US, GOD IN US.

“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is GOD WITH US.”—Matt. i. 20-23.

“If GOD BE FOR US, who can be against us?”—Rom. viii. 31.

“No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, GOD DWELLETH IN US, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and HE IN US, because he hath given us of his Spirit. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, GOD DWELLETH IN HIM, and he in God.”—1 John iv. 12, 13, 15.



THE Gospel of Matthew speaks of God being *with us*; the Epistle to the Romans, of God being *for us*; the Epistle of John, of God being *in us*;—with us, in the person of His own Son down here in the world; for us, because of the finished work of that blessed Son; and now God in us,—that is, in every believer,—as the consequence of that wonderful work which the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished. If a person gets his eyes opened to know God in this threefold way, it can only result in peace with God, and enjoyment of Him for ever.

Matthew gives us His name. An old testament prophet had said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. vii. 14), that is, "God with us." Man was a sinner. Set up by God in innocence, Adam departed from God, disobeyed him, and became a sinner; and man, his offspring, is away from God, without God; and God, in His marvellous grace, is here seen coming to man. All the way along, it is the One who was sinned against who seeks the sinner. Adam puts the trees of the garden between himself and God, and it is God who comes and seeks him. And so it has been all the way through. Man gets so corrupt on the earth, that God sends the deluge; and the deluge is the great testimony that God will judge sin. He must judge sin; but even then He saved eight souls, saved them by His grace.

I know, my careless unsaved reader, that you may laugh at the thought of judgment coming; but the day will come, when there will be no laugh on your face, but the solemn sense of what judgment is will have fallen upon your soul, for you will have begun to taste it. Do not forget that the man who begins to taste it will taste it for ever,—it is "eternal judgment." While, therefore, I would present to you the grace of God, I cannot keep back the other side, the holiness and purity, the absolute righteousness of God, and that He must judge sin; and when He judges, it will not be God *with* you, but you *without* God; not God *for* you, but God

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*against* you ; not God *in* you, ministering joy and blessing, but His wrath burning its way into your soul for ever.

You and I, dear reader, have judged God hardly, and thought Him austere and stern ; but the fact is, we are sinners, and have no particle of affection in our hearts for Him. Though His heart is welling over with affection to us, we have no eyes to see it. But this is God,—He sends prophets, and they are refused. Then He says, “I will send my beloved Son ; it may be they will reverence him when they see him.” It was a wonderful thing when His Son came into the world ; but it was a yet more wonderful thing when His Son passed out of the world by death, a death availing to bring the vilest sinner to Himself.

Here, in Matthew, we have the birth of this blessed One. The wonderful moment in the history of the world was come, when—man having had it all his own way, and that way only sin and guilt, for 4000 years—God says, I am now going to have my way, I am coming into the world to save and bless. And He does not come in the manner you would expect, but in lowly guise ; and the pride of the Roman emperor, in desiring to know the number of his subjects, is the means used to ensure the fulfilment of Scripture in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. No stately equipage, with proud out-riders, accompanies the lowly couple from Nazareth, and therefore there is “no room” for them in the inn. Outside the haunts of man,

among the cattle, is born Jehovah, Jesus, the Saviour, and laid in a manger! Ah! He came in this lowly way, that He might affright none, that even the poorest and most wretched beggar might not feel he dared not approach Him. Reputed son of the carpenter was He, yet "God over all." What grace!

Angels praised at His birth, for a Saviour was born,—a Saviour for man. And would you not think that man would rejoice? But no; all we read is, that Herod the king "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matt. ii. 3). The effect of Jesus' birth was, that the world did not rejoice, but was troubled; and the king, and those with him, are only too anxious to carry out Satan's plan for His extermination. Do you say, "Those must have been very wicked people"? Then how do you feel, my friend, at the thought of God coming by your side, looking into your heart, reading your very thoughts? You do not like it. You shrink from it. Ah! the secret is, we carry within us a heart that distrusts God. When He is known in His holiness and righteousness we fear Him, and we do not believe in His love. We argue, that because we do not love Him, that therefore He does not love us. But His heart is toward us, and He shows it by coming to be among us—God manifest in the flesh.

When Jesus came out in public, after thirty years of retirement, during which He was known as the carpenter's son, He was baptized of John in

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Jordan, and saluted from heaven as the Son of God. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then He goes forth into the world, Satan tempting Him in the wilderness, only to be overthrown by Him, for God was in Him, yea, He was God. He comes across a deaf man, and He opens his ears; He meets a blind man, and He restores His sight; a poor leper bows before Him, and He puts forth His hand and touches the leper, and his leprosy disappears. Brought into contact with death, His presence banishes it. They bring Him into the chamber where Jairus' little daughter lies, but newly dead, and He says, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." The scorers laugh, and He puts the scorers out; and by-and-bye, when He comes forth in His glory, He will put the scorers out too, into outer darkness. Remember that, my unconverted reader.

He goes a little further, and at the entrance to the city called Nain, He meets a man carried forth from the city on a bier,—a dead man on his way to burial,—the only son of his mother, and she a widow. Most touching of sights, a widow's only son, and brought out of *Nain*, which means "beautiful." What a solemn mockery! But He stops the bearers of that bier, His own hand touching it, raises the dead man, and gives him back to his mother.

But watch this blessed One still further, and now it is not a man going out to be buried, but one who had been dead four days that He restores to life.

His word, "Lazarus, come forth," brings the dead man from the tomb; for He is the Resurrection and the Life. He meets death, only to overcome it; He meets sin, to pardon it; He meets broken hearts, to bind them up; meets misery and wretchedness of every kind, only to put it all away. And yet the end of the pathway of God with us is this,—sold by one who had been with Him for three and-a-half years for thirty pieces of silver, brought before a mock tribunal and crowned with thorns, He who had life in Himself is condemned to die. Hooted and derided, the Creator stands before the creature's judgment-seat; and when a robber and a murderer is brought out of his condemned cell and put side by side with Jesus,—this God with us,—and Pilate says "Which shall I release unto you?" they say, "Barabbas." They refuse Jesus; they prefer a robber and a murderer, rather than the One who was God with us, and they lead Him away to die. They murder the One who had gone about doing only good.

And now, would you not think God would come in condign judgment, for guilt so atrocious? come forth and avenge the death of His Son? But no, God waits still to be gracious.

Through that very poured-out blood of His Son He washes away the sin that slew Him!

But not only does Jesus bear the suffering that man in his wickedness heaps upon Him on the cross, but God Himself forsakes Him when He hangs there. For He has sin upon Him,—sin not

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His own, I need not say. When the world put Jesus upon the cross, it was the expression of man's hatred to God; but when God dealt with His Son upon the cross on account of man's sin, that is the expression of God's love to us. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" God was against His Son once, and once only, and that enables Him to be for me in righteousness.

There are three solemn witnesses of the judgment of God against sin: He "spared not the angels that sinned"; He "spared not the old world, . . . bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly"; and He "turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, . . . making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly." But this is far more solemn than all: He spared not His own Son. He judged a holy, spotless, innocent man, and that one His own Son, that he might be *for* you and me. He judged your sin in the person of His Son, that He might righteously spare you. He is able in righteousness to be for me now, because he was once against His Son on the cross.

I need not say that there never was a moment when that Son was more infinitely precious to the Father's heart, than the moment when the holy righteous judgment of God was against the Sin-bearer, that He might be for the poor sinner who believes in Him who died and rose again.

When the soul sees that, it sets it at liberty, it says, I see God is for me now, I want to be for God.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" He is for me in righteousness, for me in the holiness of His nature, as well as for me in the love of His heart. Then who would not trust Him? If God be for you, can you not trust Him, my reader?

Do you say, What about the judgment day? I ask you, Who is to wield the sword of judgment by-and-bye? The One into whose blessed side the sword was plunged eighteen hundred years ago, that you might be saved. Will He judge the one for whom He died? Though Satan may argue, "But he has been such a sinner." "True," says God, "but my Son bore His guilt on the cross, and it is He who is to condemn the guilty."

Now comes the blessed truth of God *in* us, the grand present truth of Christianity. He is no longer *with* us, in the sense of walking this earth,—that has gone bye; but He is still *for* us, and more, He dwells *in* every believer.

God is a giving God, He gave his Son; He is a forgiving God, He forgives our sins by the death of His Son; "and hereby we know that he abideth *in* us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." He does not dwell *with* us in the sense of Immanuel, because He has gone up to heaven; but now it is God *in* us, that is, the one who knows his sins are blotted out by the blood of Christ gets the Holy Ghost. "Who-soever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." He who



## GOD WITH US, GOD FOR US, GOD IN US. 65

gets hold of the wonderful truth of who Jesus is and what He has done, he has God dwelling in him. The Lord Himself says this, and all we have to do is to believe it.

The believer on the Lord Jesus Christ is brought into association with Christ, and can look up and use these nine beautiful monosyllables, "As He is, so are we, in this world."

Where is He? The other side of death and judgment. So am I. What is He? Accepted of God. So am I. Had man dared to pen this, he would have been thought a blasphemer; but God Himself has penned it. We are linked now with Christ, we have the pardon of our sins; and the place of the risen Son of Man who is the other side of death and judgment, is our place before God now, and His perfect love to us casts out all fear.

Oh, what a gracious God, and how the heart is led to simply rest on Him when we see what He is! If the day has gone bye when God is *with* us, thank God the day has not gone bye when He is *for* us; and it is still the day when He is (not in every one, that is not true, but) *in* every believer, giving him the enjoyment even now of the place in which He has put him.

The Lord give you to know what this is, my reader, if you have never known it before, from this day forward. It is only when we know that God is *for* us, that we can be in any little way *for* Him, and that, surely, is what every true heart would desire to be.

W. T. P. W.

## NEED, THE DOOR TO BLESSING.



ANNA Q—— had been lingering with consumption many days between life and death, and though having the gospel put before her many times, she still had no peace, no consciousness of her sins having been forgiven. She had the gospel put before her; but alas, not only the gospel, for she was taught to *add* to the atoning work of Jesus her *faith* and *prayers*,—as though Christ had done *His* part, and now she must do hers, such as praying earnestly and much, and exercising her faith,—and it was not surprising that she knew not peace. Weak in body, and anxious of soul, she lingered day after day, with occasionally a visitor telling her to pray, and that Jesus was ever ready and willing to bless her, *if* she would only exercise her faith and come to Him aright. Though there is a measure of truth in this, yet it was far from being the thing which she needed; and so, when she was asked if my visit would be agreeable to her, she said, “What is the use? Mr —— comes to see me almost daily, and he does not help me.” However, being persuaded by her mother and aunt to see me, I called on her.

Tremblingly I entered the chamber of death, feeling that God had a message for me to deliver to that never-dying soul. She was very weak, and

scarcely able to move her head. Looking to the Lord, as I went in, I quietly asked, "Are you resting by faith upon the *finished* work of Christ upon the cross?" She looked at me, half startled by the question, but slowly shook her head, saying, "I can't pray."

"God is not *asking* you to pray," I replied. "Listen,—'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God.' God, by the mouth of His servant the Apostle Paul, is *praying* to you, '*Be ye reconciled.*' Now, won't you *be* reconciled? He will say nothing to you about your trespasses, for 'God was in Christ *reconciling* the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.'"

"Oh, I haven't faith enough."

"God is not *asking* you for a certain amount of faith. Do you believe that God is *able* to save you?"

"Yes."

"Well then, I have proof in the Lord's **personal** ministry here upon this earth, that He is not seeking for any particular *amount of faith*. Look at that poor leper (Matt. viii.), an outcast from society, afflicted with a disease that was worse than death, slowly, but surely, dragging him down to the gates of hell. He *believed* that Jesus was *able* to cleanse him, but he *did not* believe He was *willing*. Said he, 'Lord, *if thou wilt*, thou *canst* make me clean.' Mark how dishonouring to the Lord was that un-

believing 'if.' But what was the *immediate* answer of the Lord Jesus? 'I *will*, be thou clean.' It was not his great *faith* that cured him, though there was faith too, but it was his *need* that brought him to Christ. Our gracious Lord saw his *need*, and that was enough to draw forth a stream of blessing to the poor unbelieving leper. Your prayers and your great faith He does not ask, only that you bring your *need* to Him; and as with the leper, so with you, the blessing is *immediate*."

With this her countenance lighted up, a look of infinite relief followed, and with a sigh she sank back upon her pillow as though so restful. I then sang with joy over this one soul brought out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

A mind at "perfect peace" with God—  
Oh, what a word is this!  
A sinner reconciled through blood—  
This, this indeed is peace.

So near, so *very* near to God,  
Nearer I cannot be,  
For in the person of His Son  
I am as near as He.

So dear, so *very* dear to God,  
Dearer I cannot be,  
The love wherewith He loves His Son,  
Such is His love to me.

She departed to be with the Lord very shortly afterwards, *resting* by faith upon the *finished work* of Christ upon the cross. Reader, cannot you thus rest in Him?

## PHARAOH'S DAYS AND OUR OWN.



“**W**HO is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go” (Exod. v. 2). Bold words these, proud Pharaoh! It may be quite true that you “know not the Lord,” and that you “will not obey his voice,” but you will find that neither of your boasts will hold good. You shall certainly know the Lord as a God of such judgment, as shall make your land a desolate wilderness, and your throne void of its heir-apparent; whilst, perforce, you shall obey His voice to the letter, and permit His people to quit your borders like a conquering host.

“The weaker must go to the wall,” and if words fail of their object, force must be employed. Better far to hear the words of mercy, than feel the rod of judgment. Now, we are prone to look upon this Pharaoh as a notorious sinner—obdurate of heart beyond all—on a moral par with such as Judas Iscariot or Saul of Tarsus; that he was raised up to be a witness of the severity of God’s judgment on a proud, impenitent, and hardened heart, a world-wide illustration of what God can do in the way of judgment on one who dares to say, “Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice.” And quite rightly. Pharaoh was

all this; indeed, the severer the strokes, in that awfully rapid succession of plagues, he became the harder and more self-willed. He would not learn. What a curse is a will opposed to that of God! He could behold his land impoverished, his river poisoned, his people scourged, and yet resist the Hand that smote! "I will not obey," said he! And so, judgment must proceed. Nine times had he refused—a tenth plague falls. Ah! see the beauty of Egypt laid low,—those forms, yesterday full of manly vigour and healthy bloom, cold and rigid in death to-day. Yes, this plague forced the tyrant of man, the opponent of God, to yield,—reluctantly, indeed, yet, fearing other evils, he wisely gave in to the loud, persistent call of God to let His people go. Was Pharaoh not often reprovèd? and did he not harden his neck? then, was he not suddenly cut off without remedy? He was. Ah! reader, heed these oft reprovings of God in your own case. You know them. Pharaoh had ten. How many have you had? He hardened his neck. Have you? He was cut off suddenly—a hard-hearted, rebellious sinner, who knew not the Lord nor obeyed His voice. Oh, what a history! How far-reaching the ill effects of this despot's wickedness!

Now, what was Pharaoh in the scientific language of our day? He was what is called an "Agnostic." Our scientists tell us, that as science cannot reveal God to them, therefore He is "unknowable." They repudiate the despised Book that does make Him

known, and then appeal to science, knowledge, but without result. And for this reason science does not profess to lead the thought beyond the range of "things seen," or that come within the senses. It stops there. How can the mind of man go beyond itself unless revelation carry it? But revelation is refused, and as it alone makes God known, it is no wonder that its rejectors say that God cannot be known.

No thanks to science for any light on this all-important matter. World-wisdom never knew God, nor can; but thanks, deep, eternal, to that gospel which does make Him known. "*Him declare I unto you,*" said its chief ambassador, as he stood amid scientific Athens, in view of an altar whose inscription witnessed the ignorance of its worshippers. They had many altars and many gods; but there was an unknown God—One whom their learning had not discovered—Him truly they ignorantly worshipped. They, too, knew not the Lord, but they heard the gospel from the lips of Paul. Did they all obey? Nay, a few did, but "some mocked;" others said, "We will hear thee again,"—treating God's imperative call to repentance with procrastination. The Athenian leaders of thought were nothing in advance of Pharaoh, though a period of some fifteen hundred years divided them.

But, since their day, another period of eighteen hundred years has run its course, and during that time the gospel has spread far and wide,—not *con-*

*verting the world*, indeed, but, as purposed of God, calling out of the nations a people for His Name, bearing testimony to His grace, and sweetly saying, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely;" saving individuals, of a truth, and making God fully known to such in all that He is, so that, having obeyed the gospel, they know Him in power; and that knowledge speaks in their martyr-lives, and martyr-deaths, be they never so ignorant of that science which professes not to teach God.

"The gospel not *convert* the world!" says some reader. No, friend. "Preach the gospel to every creature," said the Lord; but, evangelising the world, and converting it, are very different things.

"Then we are not to look for a converted world?" No, not yet. "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea," but not till after those who obey the gospel now shall have been caught up "to meet the Lord in the air," and ever be with Him (1 Thess. iv.), and then judgment shall fit the earth for the kingdom,—the reign of Christ.

"Then there must be people surrounded by gospel privileges who are totally ignorant of its spirit and object?" Yes. What is to become of them? Read 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."



## A WARNING VOICE.

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Judgment befell Pharaoh, who knew not the Lord, nor obeyed His voice; judgment will befall those in favoured Christendom, who know not God nor obey the gospel. Ah! proud disputers of this world, spurn not that gospel which can and does lead those who believe into the sure and blessed knowledge of God,—delivering them from the judgment of their sins in the lake of fire, because another bore that fearful judgment for them, washed them in His blood, brought them to God in righteousness, whose Spirit now dwells in them, as the earnest, in conscious realisation, of the glory to come. Disobey not this gospel, I pray you, for that long delayed vengeance is daily nearing. Take timely warning.

J. W. S.



## A WARNING VOICE.

“I don’t want to die just now, for if I do, I am afraid I shall have to go below.”



SOLEMN words these, uttered as they were on the very brink of eternity. They proceeded from the mouth of one who, whilst in health and strength, and with no immediate prospect of death before him, had affected to disbelieve in and ridiculed the thought of “Hell.” Not so now, however, for as he approached his end, the dread and

terrible reality of that very place loomed up before his anxious, apprehensive mind with irresistible force, and wrung from him the confession of his fear lest he should after all find himself in that awful place, the name of which he dared not mention. He was not, as might be supposed, an open, flagrant sinner, but an amiable, upright man, as far as his conduct towards his fellows went, pleasant and kind to all. Yet he was a stranger to Christ, without God and without hope in the world.

He had heard the gospel, and, now at the last moment, he realised that he had neglected to avail himself of the wondrous provision which God in His grace had made to meet the need of a poor self-condemned sinner. He had trifled with the message—made light of it—as though it were not a real thing, or as though it concerned others, not himself. Now all is changed, all is real, it is the chamber of death. A few more unconscious hours, and he has passed into the presence of that One whose loving appeals he had so often treated with indifference and levity, sinking, it is feared, into a hopeless, Christless grave. Oh, bitter beyond all conception must that moment be, when the soul awakens to find the last spark of mercy has really gone—extinguished for ever and ever! Oh, endless pang! Appalling doom! Reader, shall it be yours?

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“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?”

## THE TWO SHOUTS.



EARLY nineteen centuries ago, God put the question to men, "What think ye of Christ?" by the presence of His Son in their midst. A felon's death, a thorny crown, the pierced side, a grave, was the world's awful reply. But how different the thoughts of God to the thoughts of men! God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory at His own right hand. The Nazarene, the Crucified, now sits exalted on God's throne (Heb. i. 3).

And now, too, all Heaven awaits the wondrous moment, known alone to God, when that same Jesus, the Lord Himself, shall descend into the air, to accomplish the counsels of His everlasting grace. In patience there He sits, whilst moment by moment long-suffering mercy and grace linger over a world that has cast the law of God behind its back, refused His servants, murdered His Son, and resisted the Holy Ghost. Judgment slumbereth not, for He is ready to judge (1 Pet. iv. 5); but it is His strange work, and mercy rejoiceth against it.

Long, long ago, sinner, the world's cup of iniquity was full, but grace holds back the avenging arm of the great and terrible God. Still His rich grace flows out full and free to the guilty and lost. Still the

voice of mercy pleads with thee to return from thy wanderings in sin. Still the voice of warning tells of wrath revealed, about to fall, yet still withheld. And still the voice of wisdom, with loving entreaty, cries, to use the words of the hymn,—

“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore ;  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of pity, love, and power.”

Oh, sinner, come. Come now, whilst it is salvation's day, to Him who is mighty to save. Soon, very soon, grace will cease to flow. A moment more, and He who saith, “Surely I come quickly: Amen” (Rev. xxii. 20), may descend from on high, and the door of mercy be for ever closed upon the vast mass of Christless professors of His name (Matt. xxv. 1-13). Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold. Pleasure seekers, with the form of godliness, multiply; foundation truths are denied on all hands, the name of Christ is dishonoured, and despite done to the Spirit of grace. The power of Satan and the will of man pave the way for open apostasy and Antichrist (2 Thess. ii.).

But, ere the harvest of wickedness is fully ripe, and judgment falls, Jesus, the Lord Himself, shall descend from Heaven *with a shout*, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God (1 Thess. iv. 15-18). In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Christ of God will claim His blood-bought saints (1 Cor. xv. 52). In righteousness His friends shall enter glory. In righteousness

## THE TWO SHOUTS.

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His foes shall be shut out. The door of heaven, that opens wide for the entrance of the saved, shall close for ever upon all who scorned His love. Not one of His redeemed, but shall hear His well-known welcome voice at that wondrous moment.

Tens of thousands, of whom the world was not worthy, who loved and feared the Lord, and suffered for His sake, and who have passed from time into eternity, trusting in His name, shall hear the sudden and glorious summons. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice" (John v. 28). And tens of thousands, too, on earth, who have never known the unclothed state (2 Cor. v. 4), shall be caught up, together with them, by the mighty power of God, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17). The whole of the redeemed respond to His assembling shout. The sleepers shall be raised, the living changed. Betwixt the heaven and the earth Christ and His loved ones meet, and so shall they be for ever with their Lord.

Oh, sinner, knowing the certainty of these things, which must shortly come to pass, by the mercies of God, I plead with you now, "Be ye reconciled" to Him (2 Cor. v. 20). It is only those who *are* ready that shall enter in with Christ (Matt. xxv. 10). You may be outwardly all that men around you desire; you may be a model of propriety, morality, and religiousness in the world's eye; but God looketh upon the heart. You may have eased a bad conscience, and deceived your own heart, by years of observance of all the externals of one of Christendom's many

religions,—but, are your sins forgiven? *Are you saved?* Have you peace with God? Have you the Holy Ghost?

Such only will hear the voice of the coming Saviour. Those alone in whom the Spirit dwelleth shall have their bodies quickened at that wondrous moment. If the rapidly approaching hour of His return should be the one to which we have arrived as you read these lines, *Are you ready?* If not, deceive yourself no longer, and let not Satan deceive you. Take your place now before God, guilty and lost, and close this moment with the rich offers of His boundless grace. Believe now in the Son of God, *and salvation—full, free, and everlasting—is yours.*

But should you still His call refuse, pass on heedless of His gracious entreaties, and be found in your sins at that solemn moment, think, oh think, of what you must come into! Judgment upon judgment will fall upon the nations of this habitable earth. God shall send strong delusion, and you will believe a lie (2 Thess. ii. 11). Satan, being cast out to this earth, will fill the scene with apostasy, confusion, wickedness, and misery unparalleled and unexampled in the history of man (Matt. xxiv. 21; Rev. iii. 10). And finally, the age shall close by the public and glorious manifestation of the Son of Man, when He Himself shall tread the wine-press of the fierceness of Almighty God, avenging Himself upon His foes (Rev. xix. 11-16), and taking the kingdoms of this world as His own.

## THE TWO SHOUTS.

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It is then that "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall *give a shout*, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. . . . And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth," &c. (Jer. xxv. 30-33). And again we read—"My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger," &c. (Zeph. iii. 8).

Beloved reader, if you hear not the shout that shall gather His ransomed ones home, and are not found amongst the myriads of His redeemed at that glorious moment, you must be left behind. Again, therefore, I entreat you to consider, ere it be too late, what your awful position must be. The saved shall hear *His shout of victory*, but sinners will hear *His shout of judgment*. In a moment, the blessed hope of the children of God by faith shall be realised, and their joy consummated in the company and glory of Christ. In a moment, the awful doom of the ungodly will be sealed, judgment overtaking them in their sins, whose end shall be the blackness of darkness for eternity (Jude 13).

Nothing can deliver you from the latter, but the pardon of your sins through faith in Jesus' blood. Nothing can fit you for the former, but the possession of eternal life in Christ, and the Holy Ghost. Believe God now, and all this rich blessing is yours.

Plead guilty at His bar, and He will put your sins away for ever for His own glory, and eternally enrich you with these His priceless gifts.

E. H. E.



## CHRIST OR THE WORLD?



HAVING heard that a well-known Christian woman, who for many years had resided in a distant town, had departed to be with Christ, we hastened at the first opportunity to pay a visit of condolence to her bereaved husband. He was a man who lived and walked among the humbler ranks of society, but was a Christian indeed, who had known and loved the Lord, and sought to walk in obedience to His word for many years.

On entering the house, we said to him, "You have had much sorrow, dear brother, since we last saw you."

"Yes, I have indeed; but the Lord wonderfully led on my dear wife *before* she departed. You know, I always felt that she, though a Christian, and a truly converted woman, had *never broken with the world*. She was, therefore, during a long time of the great bodily suffering which



she passed through, far from happy, and did not seem to have a desire to depart to be with Christ. I prayed much for her, and God in his own time and way came in. And," while weeping, he added, "I find her so wanting; it is my deep loss, though it is truly her gain. Poor dear! However, as I said, the Lord led her on, for one night she gathered, from what the doctor said, that her disease would certainly prove fatal; and she lay very quietly for a long time, evidently turning the matter over in her mind, and after that she had little more to say about the world. From that time she would often repeat the lines,—

‘Soon shall I mount, and soar away  
To the bright realms of endless day;  
And sing, with rapture and surprise,  
His loving-kindness in the skies.’”

Thus we gladly gathered that her end was not only peace, but triumph; and we could only say to our bereaved brother, that he had, with all the sorrow, abundant cause for praise and thanksgiving to God. We conversed together on the present blessedness of trusting in God under all circumstances, of the comfort also of walking in the strength of the Lord, knowing what it is to be “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” and the danger we are all in of forgetting our own perfect weakness, and walking in self-confidence and thus breaking down. We remarked also, that peace and thanksgiving will characterise us when we are living in communion with the Father and

with His Son Jesus Christ, according to the scripture, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee" (Ps. lxxxiv. 4).

On leaving the house, and walking in the country to our lodging for the night, very solemn and heart-searching thoughts occupied us. Here was a kind-hearted and esteemed believer whom we had known and loved in the Lord for many years, hindered in her last months on earth as to her enjoyment and testimony, by *not having broken with the world*. Our heart-searching personal inquiry therefore was, "Have *I* broken with the world? Am *I* seeking a place of honour and distinction in it? Am *I* craving for something *from* it, or am I a minister of blessing *to* it? Has it socially, politically, or commercially any charm for *me*? Do *I* cling to any part of it?" It is clear, that one may give up many or all of its outward social gratifications, as balls, theatre, concerts, and such like, and still be very worldly-minded in the accumulation of wealth, in self-indulgence, in improving our surroundings, and, in a quiet way, seeking to advance in earthly honour and distinction, and thus never to have really *broken with the world*.

We are not delivered from a part of the world, but from this present evil age, according to the will of God our Father. The Apostle Paul boasted in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, because, he said, by it "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. i. 4; vi. 14). The cross is then that mighty power which detaches our hearts from the

world, makes us willing to suffer in it for Christ's sake, and enables us to be content with food and raiment. For how can we love that great system which surrounds us, which not only goes on "without God," but when God sent His Son into it to save sinners, only despised Him, hated Him without a cause, and rejects Him still? The more we enter into God's thoughts, according to His word, concerning "the death of the cross," the more clearly we shall see that the world will not have us, if we are true to Christ; and that we dare not link ourselves with the haters and murderers of our best and dearest Friend and Saviour. The word of our Saviour was, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;" but it is astonishing in how many ways we may cling to it.

In the cross we learn also that we have died with Christ,—have been crucified with Him,—have died out of our old Adam and worldly standing, and are now alive unto God in Him who is risen and ascended. We are in Christ Jesus; God has put us there. What grace! We have therefore died out of our old associations and relationships; and, having a new life and standing in Christ Jesus, and the Holy Ghost given unto us, thus uniting us with Him who is in the glory, we can understand something of the meaning of our Saviour's words, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," but are delivered from it, and sent into it, as He said, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Is it any wonder then that the Holy Ghost now

addresses us as risen with Christ, and enjoins us to set our affection on things above, and not on things on the earth? If our hearts, then, are occupied with our glorified Saviour, believing God's truth that we always "are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power," and that when He comes out to reign we shall be manifested with Him in glory, how can we fail to have done with the world? It is *then* we can truly say,—

"Farewell to this world's fleeting joys,  
Our home is not below ;  
There was no home for Jesus here,  
And 'tis to Him we go."

H. H. S.

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JUSTIFICATION is distinct from peace. Justification is my true state before God, by virtue of the work of Christ, of His death, and of His resurrection. Faith, thus knowing God, is at peace with God; but this is a result, like the present enjoyment of the grace wherein we stand. Faith believes in the God who has done this, and who—exercising His power in love and in righteousness—has raised from the dead the One who bore my sins, having entirely abolished them, and having perfectly glorified God in so doing. On this ground too, "by Him" we have found access into the full favour of God in which we stand. And what is the result? It is glory; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

J. N. D.

## "THE WORST IN THE FAMILY."



IN a large city in one of the western states of America, God was working very blessedly, especially in the families of Christians, saving their sons and daughters, and thereby answering their prayers, and the prayers of their Sunday school teachers. It was blessed to see one by one brought under conviction, or to see previous conviction deepened; and, finally, to hear the confession of the Name of Jesus, and of salvation through His precious Name.

It was felt by all that God's Spirit was at work; opening blind eyes, turning souls from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ. It was a blessed season of divine visitation, of soul saving, and refreshing from the presence of the Lord, for the hearts of His people. Truly it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. One passage of scripture was especially on our hearts, the beautiful 59th of Isaiah, 1st verse:—"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear." Blessed be His name, no; it is as mighty to save now, as ever; and His ear as open as ever to hear the prayers of His

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saints, or the cry of the repentant sinner. Ah, yes; it is as true now as ever, that "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

In one family God wrought very blessedly. They had recently come from Holland; the parents could not understand the English language. The young people were learning it, and it was these who attended the gospel meetings.

The father was built up in his own righteousness, very much so; and when some of his children were saved by grace, he said it was too easy a way to get saved; forgetting that grace reaches us through the infinite sorrows and sufferings, and on the ground of the atoning death, of Christ on the Cross.

The mother, a dear soul, was not much troubled with her supposed goodness, for it was her badness that she felt; and when her daughter was saved, she wept all day long about her sins.

John, the eldest son, naturally a nice fellow, but fearfully built up in self-righteousness, and with all the zeal possible, was seeking to establish his title to heaven by his law keeping. His face would often be the picture of misery and despair as he would listen to the gospel and feel his foundation of sand give way, and all his props going from under him, and his, as he thought them, beautiful garments of self-righteousness turned into filthy rags, as the light of divine truth shone upon them. His high notions of self, of being better than others, and being able to be saved by the law, were

## "THE WORST IN THE FAMILY."

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discovered to be the production of a corrupt heart and perverted mind, rather than the fruit of God's Spirit. "Oh, father, I have been altogether wrong!" he exclaimed. "I once thought myself better than you," said he to his younger brother; "but now I see I am not. Oh, that I had known nothing of the law!" referring to his law-keeping for salvation. He had mistaken altogether the mission of the law; it was given of God to teach men that they could not be saved by their works; it gave the knowledge of sin, and cursed the sinner when he broke it; but this dear soul, with many more, had looked to it for justification in part, if not altogether.

At the close of the meetings, he had advanced in the right direction somewhat. He had cried, "Oh, wretched man that I am!"—but, still occupied with self in some way, had failed to add: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and consequently knew not the blessedness of the answer: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are IN Christ Jesus" (Romans vii. 24, 25; viii. 1).

The younger son, and the sister, the youngest of the family, were brought under deep conviction, which was apparent to all. For some time they wore faces of despair, and their hearts were the hearts of those who had felt the arrow of conviction, but as yet knew not the solace of divine grace. As yet they were strangers to the balm of Gilead, and the Physician there.

The Lord's coming was dwelt upon, and the thought of being left behind, as all unbelievers will, brought forth weeping and wailing from the distressed and unhappy sister.

But when God begins a work, He finishes it, blessed be His name. The time came for the deliverance of the youngest brother. In the quiet of the Sunday school class, while the earnest teacher—a Christian grown grey in the service of his Master—was pointing out the way of salvation through the death of the divine Substitute, Jesus was revealed to him *as his Saviour*; and he was free, and saved for ever. Afterwards he said, "Now I can say with Mary: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.'" There was the individual appropriation of the Lord Jesus; the eating of the flesh of the Son of Man, and the drinking of His blood; and the consequent possession of eternal life. (John vi.) Life through the death of another.

Jesus was known and confessed by this precious soul. Now as a sheep in the flock, he will be kept by the Great Shepherd, and led into the green pastures and by the still waters, his soul revived by His love, and his feet led into the paths of righteousness, *until He come*.

After finding Jesus as his Saviour, or rather being found of Him, he spent the rest of the day at a Christian's house, and did not reach home until after the evening preaching; and on reaching home found his parents in bed. He went in and



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told them that he was saved, and was now happy in Jesus.

They had been watching the work in their son, and on one occasion when they noticed his misery, thinking that it was misery of the body instead of the soul, advised him to see a doctor. But now he had met with the Great Physician of souls, and was healed and saved for ever. His sin-malady was cured, and his face, instead of depicting misery, was now the picture of joy. "It is only in believing on the Lord Jesus," he would often say; "He has finished the work, we can do nothing but believe."

The parents, though it was now late, got up, and began to weep; and after a while the father said: "*How is it that you, the worst in the family, have got it so soon, and so easily, and I have been seeking for it for sixty years and have not found it?*"

Dear reader, that mystery is easily solved. By the way of the law, or human righteousness, it can never be found; but by the way of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," it can be found and known at once, since by that way it is "*Look, and live;*" "*Believe, and thou shalt be saved.*"

How like Israel has been the history of this old gentleman. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. . . . As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whoso-

ever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. ix. 31-33).

Oh, why will not men trust the blessed Christ of God rather than their own miserable doings, and, flinging aside the rags of their own righteousness, be clothed with the righteousness of God in Him? (2 Cor. v. 21.)

The sister was not forgotten. On Christmas morning she was at the meeting, with her usual sorrow and weeping, and as she wept the passage came to the preacher's mind, "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" (Jer. viii. 22.) In the evening that passage was the preacher's text, and during the preaching she cried to God to save her in that meeting, and, faithful to His word, He received and saved her; and her face, picture of despair before, was now beaming with a new found joy; and her tears, expressions of distress before, were now tears of thankfulness and joy. You can well imagine the happiness of those who had watched her misery, and prayed for her salvation, when they heard the blessed confession of Christ, and salvation from her lips.

Thus God commenced at the youngest end of that family,—the end, too, where no self-righteousness could be claimed, but where God was slighted and the world courted,—and made them the monuments of His mercy, and trophies of His grace; thus, in one sense, fulfilling that scripture, which

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says: "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

Fruits of the new life were soon to be seen, in prayer for others, and the desire to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, as well as the relinquishing of the world. May the Lord keep them, and lead them on until He comes.

Beloved reader, how fares it with you in the light of eternity? How will you meet God? As a Friend, or an awful Judge? Look to it *now*, I entreat you, for "*the time is short.*" E. A.



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TIME rolls on and waits for no man. We cannot put a drag on that wheel. It turns in spite of us, shortening the history of writer and reader here on earth, and bringing us nearer to that moment when we must, willing or unwilling, ready or unready, leave the whirl and din and bustle of this exciting and changing scene, and pass away into eternity.

How humiliating! Man, with all his boasted attainments, with all his ingenuity and skill,

with the aid of all the sciences, has to succumb to that relentless and merciless foe, Death, in spite of all, and find a narrow bed under the sod; thus adding to the countless proofs of the truth of God's word, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 22).

"Man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" (Job xii. 10.) Ah, where? The last moment does come. Unsaved reader, it will come for you! What then? Others will take your place, and transact your business; the wheel of time will still turn, and the busy world will go on as though you had never lived. You will be buried, and forgotten; but, where will your soul be? In HEAVEN, or in HELL—WHICH?

We are sometimes shocked as we read the accounts of "Terrible Railway Accidents," "Fearful Colliery Explosions," and such like awful occurrences. And as we read the graphic accounts of the terrible crash of the meeting trains, or the ghastly scenes at the coal-pit as the charred and shapeless remains of the dead are brought to bank, we shudder with horror,—while expressions of deep sympathy and pity escape our lips, not only for the victims, but for the deep distress and unrestrained grief of the broken-hearted and bereaved mourners.

But let us look for a moment at another calamity, greater even than these; a calamity that may be daily witnessed, but of which comparatively little notice is taken. Not the crash of the meeting trains, and the cries and groans of the injured and

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dying; not the rush of the deadly fire-damp through the coal-pit, and the agonizing wail of those whose friends and loved ones were entombed in its depth. But multitudes of men and women, stricken through and through with every conceivable form of disease and misery, blighted and woe-begone, gradually withering away from God's earth under the fatal consequences of that direful pestilence—SIN. And thus they are passing on, as rapidly as time can carry them,—without God and without Christ, without having repented of their sins, and believed the gospel,—maddened or infatuated by those sins, onward to the gaping tomb and the bar of a holy and righteous God; onward to “the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings;” onward to “the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth”; onward to the deathless worm and the quenchless fire! What a dreadful and alarming fact!

O, what scene can equal this scene? Multitudes hurrying to eternal ruin! Not only the depraved masses sunk in the depths of shameless immorality, but the respectable and the educated likewise,—carried on by the incessant whirl of business or pleasure, at break-neck speed, without one solitary moment to think where the journey will end, and where their never dying souls will find an eternal home.

I repeat, what scene can equal this scene? And surely no more dreadful sound can fall on the opened ear this side of hell's fixed gulf, than the

giddy and hollow laugh of the careless sinners,—the dupes of Satan,—on their way to eternity, deliberately refusing to believe their danger, and “flee from the wrath to come.”

My reader, are you one of this crowd? If so, may God graciously let the light of eternity flash into your soul as you read these lines, and light up your sinful and wasted life, and lead you to repent and believe the gospel, ere it be too late, and you have to spell out the meaning of your terrible crime in the awful light of the lake of fire!

Remember, “God is not mocked.” Your sins are not forgotten, and soon the giddy and hollow laugh will be turned into the deep wail of everlasting sorrow. Soon the pleasures will be gone, and the pains begin; soon the earthly joys and human friendships will cease, and the despairing wail in the company of the lost commence. My own heart sickens at the very thought; and I can only say from its very depths, “O my God, save the unsaved readers of these lines before it is too late, and their guilty souls pass into eternity to reap the eternal consequences of their folly and sin.”

But let us look at it for one moment from another point of view. Not only are you in danger of coming judgment, if unsaved; but think of what you miss here on earth. You are a stranger to the love and sympathy of Jesus; you possess not eternal life; nor do you know the forgiveness of your sins. Peace and blessing are far from you, while you pass along life's rugged pathway, un-

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cheered by the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts, or the joy of God which fills our souls. And when sorrow throws its gloomy mantle around you, you know not "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother." And thus you pass on in the dark, without the light of heaven to shine on your path on earth, gilding everything with its brightness and lustre, and making your very sorrows and trials yield sweetness and joy; and you pass on with an empty heart, and an empty hand. O may God save and bless you, dear reader.

Blessed be God, He has thought of all your deep, deep need, and provided for it too. He has asked the question, "What shall I do?" and answered it Himself. Listen to His answer, "I will send my beloved Son" (Luke xxi. 23).

Think of what it cost God to make a way whereby He could righteously save you! Think of what it cost Jesus to meet the question of your guilt, in order that you might be saved. It cost God his Son; and it cost Jesus His life. Yes, "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, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. xv. 3).

Now if you say, "What must I do to be saved?" I reply, NOTHING! Nothing of any kind whatever. It is *all done* for you; done by Jesus. His last words on the cross were, "IT IS FINISHED" (John xix. 30). Now, does your heart trust the

One who has done all ? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). That moment you believe, that moment you **ARE SAVED. HE SAYS SO.** Thus you have divine security, and you know it on divine authority, apart from all your feelings and experiences, as it rests on Christ's work.

May the Lord enable you to put your confidence in Him; and give up all your after life a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable, which is your reasonable service. (Rom. xii. 1.)

W. E.

## "I'M ONLY GOING HOME."



**U** loved him with a love that was deep and true, and well he had won it, for he was our loving, gentle, sympathising, self-denying father.

We had heard of his illness, and for days our hearts had been divided between hope and fear; we hoped, we feared, we prayed, we doubted. At last the day long dreaded came, and a telegraphic message summoned us home to see him die. From far and near, as many as could come, we hastened to his bedside. How our hearts had sunk, and quailed at the thought of death for *him*! We little knew then how



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much we were soon to realise how truly the Lord Jesus has conquered death for His loved ones, and that our hearts would be made to rejoice even in *such* a sorrow.

He had suffered much pain before we saw him, but it was relieved now, though the pale, weary face bore sad traces of it.

His mind was sometimes clear, sometimes wandering, but there was one sound that always recalled it, and that was the name of the One he loved so well—the blessed name of JESUS!

One whispered as he stooped over his bed, "'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' You will soon be with Him." In an instant his face grew radiant: it seemed almost as if a ray from the bright glory had touched it, as he gazed upwards and said, "Oh, that lovely face! it will be joy, joy, joy, joy! It's His *own* beauty. *His own* intrinsic beauty!" The same relative was obliged to leave, and came to say farewell to him.

For a moment, his weakness seemed all gone, and grasping his hand strongly, he said, in a clear distinct voice: "Christ first—Christ last—Christ in Heaven—Christ everything. I want to see all my friends in Christ. Good-bye!"

Next day, he rallied a good deal, and our hearts grew bright with hope; but again during the night he sank, and we saw that he was really going.

A child, whom he dearly loved, who had just arrived from a distance, stood close to his bed, and thinking he did not know her, said, "Don't you

know me, Papa? I am your own E——.” “I know you, girl—I know you.” Then as she began to cry, he looked up at her, and raising his finger reprovably, said: “Don’t, don’t. Only going home—I don’t want to leave you all; but *we’ll meet again—I’m only going home—a little while*—we don’t know what a day may bring forth.” She knew he referred to the Lord’s soon coming, and said, “You will soon see that lovely face.” Again the bright look came, and he replied, “Yes, yes; His lovely face I long” . . . and again the longing eyes looked up, and the rest of the sentence was whispered in the ear of the One whom his soul loved and longed for. Whenever he spoke to the Lord Jesus, it was in a tone as if to one whom he realised as being *very* close to him—just beside his pillow.

The doctor, who like ourselves was deceived by the apparent return of strength, spoke hopefully of his recovery, and got in reply: “I am unworthy; a poor, wretched, vile, hell-deserving sinner—but I’m washed in the precious blood of Jesus. All my trust is in the precious blood shed on the Cross of Calvary. I’m not afraid to die, bless His name! The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

He loved to speak of the Lord Jesus as “the One who endured the penalty due to sin, in order that the poor sinner might go free.”

Once he said, when suffering great pain, “I am in great pain—but—‘no more pain.’ This poor,

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vile body. Ah! yes; He will change this vile body. Oh, Jesus Lord!"

Our mother came close to him, and he whispered, "I am sorry to leave *you alone*, but the *same* God will be with you; the *same* God who has taken care of us all our lives, though we did not deserve it. *He* will take care of you. . . . *My wish is* that I may meet *all* the children there." She said, "The Son of Man loved me, and gave Himself for me." "I know it," he said, "I know it. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;' as A—— said yesterday—'I'll meet you all *there*.'"

During the last night he sank rapidly, and we kept away from his bed; as when we were near he tried to speak to us, and we saw that it was a great effort to him.

Again and again he spoke of and to the One he loved. Once he said, "He'll take me to-night. Oh, *will He come to-night*. Will He take me Home to-night!" Towards morning he made an effort to get out of bed, and a son, who was sitting by him, asked, "What do you want to get up for?" Readily he answered, "I want to worship the *spotless* Son of God."

Immediately afterwards he sank, apparently into unconsciousness, but a daughter whispered in his ear the name of Jesus; he tried to open his eyes, but could not. A few moments more and he had left us,—left all whom he had loved here, for the longed-for presence of the One whom he loved best. Just as he drew the last long breath, a sweet satis-

fied smile spread over his face; he was "absent from the body, present with the Lord." The shadow of that smile never left his face, until the beloved earthen tabernacle was removed out of our sight, as if whispering to our hearts, "Weep not, for he is not dead but sleepeth."

Reader, do you know anything of the One whose presence brightened that deathbed? I have not told you the story of it to gain your sympathy,—that you might mingle your tears with ours for the loss of one so tenderly loved. No indeed, but that your heart may perchance be won for his Christ, that you may be attracted to Him because of His great love. Oh! if you but knew a little of the One who died "that he might destroy him that had the power of death," that He might take its sting from death, its victory from the grave, surely your heart would be attracted to follow Him. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). If you *realised* for one moment what it is to be loved by such a heart as that of the blessed Lord Jesus, you could not keep away from Him,—your heart would, in spite of itself, be drawn after Him.

"The Master's beauty is so rare,  
His smile so sweet to banished men,  
That when it once has crossed their path,  
They ne'er can rest on earth again."

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"For we . . . are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God respect any person; yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14.)

The death of His beloved Son was the means which God devised that we, poor sinners, should not be eternally banished from His holy presence, and now He beseeches you to come and be reconciled to Him. "For he (Jesus) was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. liii. 5, 6). There is but one thing that can

"Take its terror from the grave,  
And gild the bed of death with light,"

and that is the knowledge of the unchangeable, everlasting love of Jesus. I beseech you to come to Him as "a poor, vile, hell-deserving sinner," seeing that you have no claim on Him but just this, that *you are lost*; because the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was *lost*. (Luke xix. 10.) That is the only plea on which He can receive you.

If any one could have laid claim to salvation on the ground of an outwardly *blameless* life, the one of whom I have told you might; but far, far, from

this, he had a deep sense in his soul of his vileness as a lost sinner before God, and gloried in, while he loved to praise, the grace of the Blessed One who had stooped so low as to endure the death—the shameful death—of the Cross, to save such a vile one as he saw himself to be; and it was the joy of his heart to own to all with whom he came in contact, that in him the Lord Jesus had saved the chief of sinners.

Do come to this same Jesus; believe on Him, *trust in Him*; and then, if you are called to die, it will only be to be hushed to sleep in His arms, to awake again on that bright resurrection morning, so soon coming, when “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord” (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). Z.

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In Luke xiv. we get God’s “great supper.” It is the gospel proclaimed here on *earth* to all, and *all are invited*. In chap. xv. we get the guest who *accepted* the invitation—the prodigal son—and the *joy in heaven* which follows his loving reception by the Father. In chap. xvi. we get the future of the self-righteous elder son who “would not come in,” though “entreated” of his Father. He goes to *hell* for ever. How solemn! W. T. P. W.

## A BASKET OF GRAPES.



THE reason why many souls have not the assurance of salvation, is that they are looking within for something to rest on; instead of simply resting on Christ, and believing what God says about Him, and them, when they believe in Him. This state of matters was forcibly illustrated by a bedridden old lady, whom I saw some time since. God had converted her nephew, a worldly doctor, in a remarkable way; and no sooner was he in the enjoyment of the Lord's grace, than he sought to get all his relatives to share his newly-found joy. Recognising the state his old aunt was in, he asked me to pay her a visit, apprising her of my coming.

The old lady received me very pleasantly, and we had a long conversation. She knew she was a sinner,—a lost sinner,—and owned it. She desired most fervently to be saved. She knew that no works of her own could avail before God. She believed the Lord Jesus to be the only Saviour of sinners. She had often cried to Him to save her, but no answer had come to her cries as yet. After finding out that she was a truly seeking soul,—ripe for salvation, I might say,—I asked:

“Now what is the hindrance? Why do you not know that you are saved? You tell me that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is able

and willing to save you, and that you are most willing to let Him save you, and yet you are not sure of salvation. Do you think He has got anything more to do for your salvation?"

"Oh, no! I'm sure His work is all finished. He said so on the cross."

"Quite true; only I suppose you think there must be something wrought *in* you, before you can be sure you are saved?"

"Yes, that's just it," she replied.

"And what, pray, is lacking in you?"

Well, sir, I don't think I'm thankful enough for all He has done for me. I think if I felt more thankful, I should know I was saved."

"Oh, I see where you are," I replied. "Now tell me, supposing I were to send you a basket of grapes by my servant to-morrow morning, what is the first thing you would do?"

"Oh, of course I should thank you," replied the old lady, most energetically.

"Well, suppose on the other hand you sent me a basket of grapes, what do you think is the first thing I would do?" I replied.

"You would thank me, wouldn't you?"

"Not first."

"Why, what would you do?" she asked most eagerly.

"*I should take them.* Then, secondly, I should send you a hearty message of thanks."

"I see it! I see it!" exclaimed my old friend, as the joy-tears welled down over her wrinkled fea-



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tures. "I've just got to take salvation first, and then thank the Lord for what He has given me."

"Exactly so. 'The gift of God is eternal life.' What He gives we have only simply to accept, and then thank Him for time and eternity."

"Dear me, how simple it is!" she exclaimed, falling back on her pillows. "I always thought I must feel something within that I never could feel; but, thank God, I see it all clearly now. It is so simple, I wonder I didn't see it before." Thus she entered into sweet peace, and rest in the Lord.

Reader, can you say with her, "I see it"?

W. T. P. W.



## "THESE THREE MEN."



"**HERE** will be a meeting for the Gospel on ——— evening, at ———, and you will be welcome if you come," said a messenger of the Lord to Mr J. A., who had moved adroitly forward behind his counter, reckoning doubtless on a customer, as the former entered his shop; but at once his whole demeanour changed, as he replied, "We have no time *for such things* in these parts," and retired to his seat.

A Mr B was invited in a similar way, and his reply was, "I am purposed not to go."

A Mr C, living quite close to both the former, was also invited, and he replied, "I am quite prepared to leave all to my spiritual adviser." A Christian remonstrance as to *indifference* in the solemn matter of his soul's eternal interests, when certainty was possible and offered, only drew forth a reiteration of the above reply.

Now, all three were *Protestants*, moral to the last degree, and were not only generally honest, but strictly "righteous," so far as this noble quality is usually regarded in dealings between man and man. Indeed, the first is known locally as "Honest J. A." Nevertheless, there obviously was studied indifference to the invitation; and this solemn fact, as well as the character each bore, linked the three cases together.

One can admire the exceptionally honest expression of feeling manifested in the above replies; but such honesty, however, goes for little when it is the Gospel of God which is slighted. The three cases are, with little doubt, representative of three classes who refuse Christ, viz., the *prudent*, who have *no time* for anything but laying by for their houses; the *determined*, who, perfectly satisfied with what they have already, *will not* have Christ; and those who, lacking faith in God's word, accept guidance from *man*.

God presents us with three men who meet *His* mind, linked together by what He is pleased to call their righteousness; also "three men" singled out of the whole human family, who *might* be accept-

ably presented as a forlorn hope for a place marked off for distinction, — "Noah, Daniel, and Job." They are referred to five times in Ezekiel xiv., twice by name. In considering them, we shall see them distinguished from our three friends above referred to, not only by their zeal for God, which these sadly lacked, but by the character of their righteousness also,—each of group one contrasting with each of group two.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Heb. xi. 7). Mr J. A.'s idea exactly!—preparing for his house in view of the future, *with this immense difference*, that *his* ark might stand through *time*, but would fail when judgments descend,—when "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up;" and Noah's ark carried him safe through judgment to the new world. Such also was the ark the Philipian jailor was advised of, when he too was "*moved with fear*." Reader, have you found this ark? How are you situated in view of coming judgments? God is waiting, as He in long-suffering waited, until Noah had driven the last nail into the ark, before He allowed judgments to descend on a guilty world. (1 Pet. iii. 20.) His long-suffering leadeth *thee*, dear reader, to repentance. Have you "*no time for such things*"? O, little the unrepentant know of the patient, gracious, waiting God!

Then Daniel would not defile himself with the king's meat,—"*purposed in his heart not to do so*"

(Dan. i. 10). Mr *B.* likewise purposed not to eat of the king's meat. But how different *the kings!* the meat! the result! Reader, are you satisfied *without* Christ, — *with* your dainties? Once awakened to see your need of *Him*, the king's meat you have been feeding on would become husks which swine eat; and coming to Jesus, you would find in Him "the living bread," of which "if any man eat he shall *live for ever*," and "never hunger."

Referring to Job: Who ever learned at such a cost, and as did he? God shews us in him how He can deal with souls when He undertakes to do so. Throughout thirty-one chapters he proves his inability to find out God by his own energy and skill. During the next six, he patiently suffers rebuke from one come to him in God's stead. God speaks to him directly in chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix., and leads him to confess he is "*vile*;" and still further, in chap. xlii., he has learned to *abhor himself* in the presence of God. Here, indeed, is the "Spiritual Adviser;" one who can teach us what He is, and what we poor guilty worms are; until, through faith in Him, the guilt is cancelled, and we become, like Noah, and Daniel, and Job, and every child of God, inheritors of the "righteousness which is"—("not of works," as in the cases of our three friends, "lest any man should boast," but *the righteousness which is*)—"according to faith;" so suitable to poor, guilty, hell-deserving worms!

J. R.

## A CONTRAST.



**W**HILST preaching the Gospel a few Lord's days since in south of S——, the following illustration occurred to me as helpful to a soul to see the blessed position now of the believer in Jesus, as regards his or her sins, in contrast to that of an Old Testament saint. Suppose I were deeply in debt, to the extent say of £10,000, and had not a fraction towards paying it, neither were able to earn or get anything towards it. Imagine my distress, especially when I remembered that my creditor might cast me into prison till I paid. (Matt. v. 26.) Such, my reader, is a feeble picture of your condition and mine by nature before God. I am met by an acquaintance, looking the picture of misery and despair. A little after the same person again meets me, now apparently much relieved,—in a measure at rest and happy. "Why," says he, "what has taken place? Is that debt paid?" I answer, "No; but one of immense wealth, whose word I can and do rely on, has promised to pay it. I rest in his promise,—indeed, I have it in writing; I rest in this."

"But he may draw back," says my friend. "Oh, no," I answer, "he never will." After a while I

am again seen by the same acquaintance; but now peaceful, restful, happy, and bright. "Why, what a changed man," he remarks; "what *has* happened now?"

"He has paid the debt," I answer.

"Have you the receipt?" he inquires.

"Yes, I have."

Now, my reader, which of those three conditions describe your present state? If a stranger to Jesus as *your* Saviour, if unpardoned at this moment, the first undoubtedly does. If you are a believer, but regarding the gospel as a promise, doubtful of the pardon of your sins, you are practically where an Old Testament believer was. Alas! many dear souls are just in this state to-day. But God's desire for you is to "know" (Acts xiii. 38) that your sins *are* forgiven, not are going to be; that the debt has been paid by the atoning death of Jesus for each and every believer, and the risen Saviour is the receipt.

"God will not payment twice demand,—  
Once at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine."

Moreover, the Saviour, the risen Jesus, is in the glory, now at the right hand of God,—the pledge and assurance, that all who believe in Him shall be there presently with Him, and like Him, to praise Him for ever. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

My beloved reader, a plain personal question to

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you as I close, Is *your* debt paid? If not, Oh! come to Jesus; come *now*.

"Now is the accepted time."

WM. H.



"DO YOU BELIEVE THAT?"



RAVELLING in the train the other day in Ireland, I was led to offer my fellow travellers some tracts. Three refused them, while four accepted them. After a little one of them said, pointing to a paragraph in the tract I had given him, "Do you believe that?" "Yes, thank God," I replied. The paragraph was as follows, "Now if I fail, if I sin, my standing before God is not altered in the slightest. It is *in Christ*, and hence it never changes." Of course this was written about a child of God, a believer; and the tract went on to show, that if a believer sins, he has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John ii. 1), and through His advocacy the erring child is brought to confess and judge his sin, and communion is restored.

If this were not so, every time the believer sins, he would need to be washed over again in the blood, and that would necessitate Christ dying again, as "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). The truth is, the Lord Jesus bore *all* the believer's sins when He was on the cross, and

that one blood-shedding has put them away for ever from before God as *Judge*, and He has now become the believer's *Justifier*, the One who will not impute sin to him who believeth. (Compare Romans iii. 24-26, iv. 5-8, and viii. 33.)

But God is *Father*, as well as *Justifier*. And as Father, He notices and corrects all that His children do wrong. Hence, even an evil thought will interrupt communion with the *Father*; but nothing, blessed be God, can ever alter our standing before the *Justifier*. He has justified the believer, and that for ever.

Now, notice 1 John ii. 1, "These things write I unto you, that YE SIN NOT." Grace does *not* set us free from God's *judgment* to live in *sin*, as unconverted people think, but grace sets us free from *sin*, to live to *God*. "Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto *holiness*, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. vi. 22).

After a little I pointed to "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). He replied, "I thought he that committed sin was of the devil." "Yes," I said, "and the child of God does not commit sin, but he may be overtaken in a fault; the force of the word 'commit' in that verse, 1 John iii. 8, is 'practise,'—he that *practises* sin is of the devil." Reader, do you know the blessedness of the man whose sins are not only forgiven, but to whom God *will not* impute sin? (Rom. iv. 6-8.)

M.



## THE PLAGUE OF HAIL.



WHEN God was about to deliver His people Israel from Egypt, Pharaoh refused to let them go, and ten fearful plagues came upon the Egyptians. But judgment is God's strange work, so that, notwithstanding their wickedness, when *the seventh* plague, that of *hail*, is about to be poured out upon them, the voice of Mercy sends a warning beforehand. So now, God has threatened judgment upon this world, but continues to send warning after warning to sinners, that they may be delivered from the coming wrath.

In Exodus (ix. 13-19) Moses is sent by the Lord to Pharaoh to say, “. . . Behold, to-morrow about this time, *I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail*, such as has not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now. *Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field: for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.*”

Five things come out in this warning:—

(1) The *certainty* and the *severity* of the coming judgment. “*I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail.*” (2) The *hour* when it will come. “*To-morrow, about this time.*” (3) The *present moment*

E

the time to escape. "Send therefore *now*." (4) The way of escape *open to all*. "Gather *all, every man*." (5) The *place of shelter* is pointed out. They were to be *brought home*.

Reader, these words have a voice to all. God has long threatened judgment upon this guilty world. "Wrath of God is revealed from heaven" (Rom. i. 18). All are subject to it. Authority has long ago been given to the Son of Man to execute it (John v. 27). Grace and mercy alone stay off the evil day. But *come it surely will*, for God has said it. *Fearful indeed* will it be when it does fall. He is strong that executeth His Word.

One day's warning was given to the Egyptians. Now grace has waited already more than eighteen hundred years. No man knoweth the day nor the hour of the impending judgment (Mark xiii. 32). It is not revealed. But *the day is appointed*, though known alone to God. Christ is ready to judge the quick and the dead (1 Peter iv. 5). Every moment draws us nearer the awful hour of doom. Sinner, beware!

"*Send therefore now*," said the Lord, through His servant, to the Egyptians. There was no time to be lost. Twenty-four hours' delay, and it would be too late. And *now*, sinner, is the time for you to escape, for behold *now* is the day of salvation. There is not even one day left you to decide, for *this moment* the Lord may come, or death may overtake you in your sins, and judgment after. *Flee now* from the coming downpour of the un-

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mitigated wrath of Almighty God. Now, *now*, undecided one, is the time to escape.

*All who would* in Egypt might escape from the threatened plague. The warning was to all. *Every man* who neglected it, did so at his own peril. To remain in the field was certain death. To return home was perfect safety. So, now, *all are without excuse*. The voice of Mercy speaks to all. Salvation, full, free, and everlasting, is offered to all. To neglect it is to perish with the world, to receive the cup of judgment at the hand of the Lord.

There is *a place of safety* now as there was then. There is *a home* for sinners, as well as for the Egyptians. The field was the scene of the judgment, the home the place of security and blessing. Judgment now rests upon the world, and wrath will soon be poured out. But sinners are invited to come to the Saviour *now*, and turn their back upon the world. *In Him*, and in Him only, is salvation to be found. Jesus says to all, "Come unto me." Have you come? If not, will you? "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). There you will be at home. At home with God. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18). Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and His blood shall *cleanse you from all sin* (1 John i. 7). Believe on Him, and thou shalt be saved and thy house (Acts xvi. 31).

The next verses show us how the warning was treated. "He that feared the word of the Lord

among the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses. And *he that regarded not the word of the Lord* left his servants and his cattle in the field" (Exod. ix. 20, 21).

*He that feared the Word of the Lord obeyed it.* The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. *He that regarded it not, disobeyed it,* and reaped the terrible consequences. My reader, how have *you* treated the Word of the Lord? Have *you* feared it? Have *you* believed the message of warning and salvation, the glad tidings of God's grace. "Verily, verily," saith the Lord, "he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (or judgment); but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). "But the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey not* the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thes. i. 8). Amongst which class are you found? But few, out of the mass, fear the Word of the Lord. Tens of thousands disregard and disobey it. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many there be* which go in thereat. Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few there be* that find it" (Matt. vii. 13, 14). Oh! come home.

"And *the Lord sent* thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground: and *the Lord rained* hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was

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hail, and fire mingled with the hail, *very grievous*, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout *all the land* of Egypt *all that was in the field*, both *man* and *beast*; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field" (Exod. ix. 23, 24).

Judgment had been threatened, and judgment came. The Lord threatened it, and the Lord sent it. It came at the appointed hour, and as He had said, it was *very grievous*, such as had never been known before. All came to pass. The Word of the Lord is sure, for ever settled in heaven. Judgment is now coming,—coming quickly. Deluded by Satan, and lulled into carnal security, thousands are crying, "Peace and safety," as though God had never spoken, and the Word of the Lord had never been written. But *sudden destruction cometh*. At the appointed day God will execute His Word. Woe, woe, woe to those who are unsheltered at that awful moment. Woe, woe, woe to him that regards not the Word of the Lord. Woe, woe, woe to him that refuses to come home. Fearful as were the plagues of Egypt, and other judgments of God, there is yet fiercer wrath to come. Judgment after judgment is detailed in the Revelation, and amongst them a far more terrible downpour of hail even than the plagues of Egypt. In chapter xvi. 21, we read, "And there fell upon men *a great hail* out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of

the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was *exceeding great*." This is yet to come. Oh! unsheltered reader, come home.

Grace is flowing freely. God is warning sinners. Sinner, take heed. Behold the Judge standeth before the door (James v. 9). Eternal wrath hangs o'er thy guilty head. Oh, that men would consider their latter end! (Deut. xxxii. 29). Come to the Saviour now. In Christ, and in Christ alone, is salvation to be found. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we *must* be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Whether you have a good moral, or religious character before men, or whether you are openly wicked and infidel, if still unconverted in the world, you are exposed to the sure judgment of God. But whatever your moral or immoral state, Christ is the open door of salvation to *all*. "I am the door: by me, if *any man* enter in, he *shall be saved*," &c. (John x. 9). Oh! enter,—enter now!

E. H. C.



## A SERMON OF TWELVE WORDS.

"And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the

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hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering, said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace."—LUKE vii. 36-50.



HE Lord only spoke twelve words to this poor woman at His feet, but these twelve words embraced in themselves the settlement of every question that could possibly distress her soul for eternity. They embrace the whole horizon of her soul, whether she looked back upon *the past*, around on *the present*, or forward to *the future*. All was met by these words.

Why has the Holy Ghost recorded this? For our

profit and help, so that, if any be in a state of soul corresponding to this woman's—and be as simple as she was—the blessing she got will be theirs likewise. If she looked at the past, she was pardoned. If she looked at the future, she was safe. If she looked at the present, she had what the whole riches of the world could not buy—peace.

The Lord had gone into one of the Pharisees' houses, and sat down to meat. The Holy Ghost records these scenes in the life of Jesus that we may know Him. Our thoughts are all so foggy as to what kind of a heart God and His Son have toward us. We think of God as our enemy: God is our friend. Satan is our enemy; but God has shown out His heart to us in the person of His Son. Here is a Man on earth, and that Man the blessed Son of God; and there never was a poor weary sinner in this world, who wanted Jesus, that could not get to Him. Here He is in the house of a Pharisee, who cares but little for Him; but Jesus goes to his house, knowing it will give an opportunity for this poor woman, who was a sinner, to come to Him.

The only difference between the Jesus of that day and of this, is that He has accomplished redemption and risen from the grave, and that it is not in the Pharisee's house that you will find Him, but in the Father's. But you will not find in the Father's house what she found in the Pharisee's. There she found a frown on the Pharisee's brow, but you will find no frown in the Father's house;



there is nothing there to repel the worst who comes, but everything to attract.

Here, then, we see the blessed Son of God, the perfect expression of love and holiness, meeting one who was the perfect expression of sin and wretchedness. She was a sinner—and, my reader, what are you? Are you not a sinner too? Perhaps you have not thought much about being a sinner? She had thought a great deal about it. And God thinks a great deal of your being a sinner. Have you, my friend, learned the truth before God, that you are a sinner? When the soul has learned what sin is in the sight of a God of perfect holiness, it becomes wretched. This woman was miserable in her sin and guilt, but she hears that Jesus is somewhere where she may get at Him. And if you are miserable in your sin, He is somewhere where you may get at Him.

Was this woman invited? We do not hear that she was. You are better off, for you are invited—invited to the Father's house, where Jesus is. When she heard where Jesus was, she came, and she soon found out the One she wanted.

Never was there one in this world who had the countenance which the blessed Lord had, the grace, the moral power, the majesty. Though He was truly man, yet He was God, and as that poor woman came in that day, her eye would light at once upon Christ, and she saw none else. She wanted Jesus, and she drew nearer and nearer, till she got behind Him, and as she got nearer to God's blessed Son she

wept. She saw His grace, His beauty, the face in which deepest love and sympathy were expressed—divine majesty too—God, infinite in His holiness, and equally infinite in His love.

She looked at His feet, dusty and travel-stained—she looked, and her heart overflowed—she wept. Has any tear, my friend, fallen from your eyes at the Lord's feet? Perhaps, unsaved one, you say, "I do not believe in tears." Ah! there is a day coming when multitudes shall see you weep in the place where there is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," when you have trifled, dear soul, with grace too long, and your little span of life is passed, and when you have put off being saved till too late, and have found your abode for ever in that place of agony, where, though you weep, no hand can dry your eyes, and no sweet voice say, "Peace," to you. You were ashamed to shed one tear at the feet of Christ on earth, but you will shed millions of tears in the terrible regions of the lost, with your ungodly companions to see them fall, and to mingle theirs with yours. O soul, soul! think of it.

When one thinks of the blessed Lord giving His life, His blood for us—dying on the cross for us—submitting to shame and torture from the hand of man—loving us, and giving Himself for us—tears may well fall. Not that your tears can wash your sins away. The tears of the blessed Jesus Himself could not do that. It takes His heart's blood to put away your sins and mine. This poor woman

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might wash the dust off the Saviour's feet with her tears, but it needed His life-blood to wash her sins away. Still, it is at His feet she weeps, and then she takes her hair—her crown of glory—and wipes His feet, glad to use as a napkin for His blessed feet what was her chief ornament. She lays all she has at His feet; and now that she is so near Him, with the boldness of faith, she kisses His feet.

Her faith in Jesus brought her to Him, and her confidence in His grace and love lead her now to produce her box of ointment, and anoint His feet.

Till now no word has been spoken. Simon might murmur in his heart, and those that sat at meat might look on reprovingly. Heaven too looked on and saw this wondrous sight—a guilty sinner and the holy Saviour so close together! Simon says in his heart, "This man, *if* he were a prophet"—*i.e.*, He is not a prophet. But was He not a prophet? Ay, and much more than a prophet. A prophet to reveal to Simon what was in his heart, but to the poor woman a *Saviour*.

The Lord reads the heart, and now He answers the Pharisee's thoughts, and says, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." Complacently he replies, "Master, say on." But Christ is full of grace, and the first thing He will bring out is the absoluteness of the grace of God. Under the figure of the creditor's treatment of the two debtors, we have the most perfect unfolding of the grace of God that is found in all Scripture. He gives us here the

very kernel of one side of the Gospel, as meeting the need of man to be forgiven. God was the creditor, the woman and Simon were the debtors, "and when they had nothing to pay, He frankly forgave them both."

Have you, my friend, woke up to discern that God is your creditor, and you His debtor? Do you think that you have rendered to God, as His creature, what is His due as your Creator and Preserver? You know you have not. We have to own we have "sinned, and come short of the glory of God." In plain language, we are in His debt. Can you pay? Can I? I freely say, No. Nor can you, my friend. "When they had nothing to pay," says Jesus, "he frankly forgave them both."

When God forgives, He does it in a style worthy of Himself. When you and I, poor guilty sinners, are unable to present anything in liquidation of our debt, He forgives. But mind, it was "when they had *nothing*." People often think they have some little bit of something they can bring. They must have so much prayer, or repentance, or amendment of life to merit pardon. But, no, it is God's goodness leads to repentance. "When they had nothing to pay." Mark it well, my reader, "*nothing*." God forgives not because you have wept, or prayed, but because of the perfect goodness that fills His heart, and He can do it in righteousness, because the whole question of sin has been settled at the cross, where the guiltless, holy Saviour suffered for the sins of the guilty, unholy sinner. Now "grace

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reigns"—not at the expense of, but—"through righteousness." God can forgive me, and pass over my sins now, because He did not forgive or pass them over when Christ, my substitute, bore them on the cross. It is due to Christ that, if He has borne the judgment which I deserved, I should go free. It is righteousness—God being righteous to Christ. Christ has died my death; I get His life. Christ bore my sins; I get forgiveness and justification.

In the case before us, the Lord says one debtor owed five hundred pence, the other fifty. Which is like your sins? If a person has not a true sense of what his sin is, he does not get a correct sense of what the love of God is either, for "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."

Simon rightly judged that he to whom most was forgiven would love most, but the Lord tells him he is not that man, saying, "I entered into thine house, *thou* gavest me *no* water—*no* kiss—my head with oil *thou* didst *not* anoint." Oh! you say, Simon was evidently a bad man. I ask you—Have you treated Christ any better? If yet unconverted, you have never drawn near to Him; you have not been at His feet; you have been full of the world, and the things of the world, and Christ has had no place in your heart. He could say to you, "Thou gavest me no kiss—no confidence—no affection." Oh! what a solemn thing if the Lord has yet to say this to you!

Now Jesus turns to the woman. He had not

spoken to her before, and she had been silent too. Now He says to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." Do you think she believed it? Indeed she did. She had taken her right place in His presence in her misery and her need, not daring to ask for a forgiveness she knew she did not deserve. Her need and her misery were the greatest appeal to His heart, and when the fitting moment came, He says to her, "Thy sins be forgiven." That takes up all her past history and includes every sin. Others might murmur, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" He heeds them not. He has more to say to the anxious penitent at His feet. "Thy faith has saved thee," now falls on her ears. Not thy tears, not thy feet-washing, or thy kissing, not thine anointing; no, "thy faith"—"thy faith hath saved thee."

I look at the future, dark and gloomy as it used to be, and what meets me? "Thy faith hath saved thee." Christ has endured the stroke, the judgment due to me was borne by Him. That little word "saved" takes you right into eternity. "SAVED." It is impossible I can be condemned, for Christ has borne the thing that alone could bring me into judgment—my sin. Christ has put it away, and I am clean.

The past is *forgiven*, the future is secure—she is *saved*—and now for the present He says to her, "Go in peace." "Thy sins are forgiven;" that's yesterday. "Thy faith hath saved thee;" that illumines to-morrow. "Go in peace;" that is for to-day.

The Lord fill you, my reader, with these twelve words, and you will be a bright living witness to Christ all your days down here. The Lord grant you may be.

W. T. P. W.

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## GRACE.

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HERE is nothing sweeter than grace,—the rich, unbounded grace of God! What child of His but recalls with delight his first discovery of it!

When, an unconverted youth, full of worldly hopes and none beyond, I first heard, with a faint glimmering of intelligence, the accents of this grace, my soul was filled with a kind of surprise! The effect was to present God in a totally different light from that in which I had naturally viewed Him. Hitherto I had understood that He made large demands which none could possibly render,—that He required satisfaction for sins utterly beyond the power of the sinner to give,—whose case became, therefore, doubly desperate. That God should be holy, and that He should judge sin in conformity with that holiness, I could only admit to be right; yet my difficulty lay in the conscious impossibility of appeasing Him. Could this be effected by any reasonable surrender, on my part, of the loss of wealth or limb, or the performance of any amount of what may be called penance, it

would gladly have been done; but, under the feeling that nothing of the kind could suffice, my soul yielded to the growing conviction that, as I could do nothing, it were better to resign myself to fate, and take my chance with others. I daresay that a similar state is commonly to be found in the young. And what is the root of it? It is *ignorance of God*, which arises from the darkness of the natural mind. The true knowledge of God has been lost, and despair is proportionate to the thirst of soul after Him.

Well, the first faint glimmer of light that ever dawned upon my heart, and that surprised me by a sense of grace, came from the words of a well-known hymn:—

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.”

Ah! there is grace in this verse. Notice, Jesus sought, and interposed His blood on behalf of a stranger,—who was wandering to certain danger,—with the object of effecting the rescue of such. I could see nothing like demand, nor requirement,—nothing “austere,” no reaping nor gathering where nothing had been sown or strawed,—no cold inflexible law, hurling its dreadful curse on him who offended but in one point; nothing of that sort, but just the opposite—love; a love that sought, that rescued, that died; a love that *could not possibly do more to prove its reality* to one who de-



served nothing. This is grace! How charming! Oh! how the soul is filled with thanksgiving when its living tidings are known in power! Like the breeze of the morning that lifts and scatters the night clouds, so does the sense of God's saving grace chase away the darkness of the soul. What is grace? It is divine love acting for the good of the guilty,—its favours are, indeed, unmerited. It is the very opposite of law, although equally holy in nature and effects; but it gives to those who have nothing, it clothes the naked, it fills the hungry, it carries salvation to the lost, it makes God known to the soul.

Does there never lurk in your heart, dear reader, the secret wish that you might be right with God? You dread the moment when you must meet Him, yet you cannot tell what should be done to fit you. You have "done your best,"—turned over new leaves and soiled them, made good resolutions and broken them, sought counsel of many but without satisfaction,—until your soul is one vast sea of difficulty, on which the clouds of black darkness are settling. Your cry is, "Oh that I might find Him!" Be it so! Better to be tossed on every billow, than to incur Ephraim's verdict, "Let him alone."

My friend, "*God is Love.*" That note of exquisite gospel music may well thrill your soul. Do you hear it? and believe it? Ah! you say, "But God is Light, and must punish sin,—and punish me because I have sinned." True. Yet this, instead

of being "the day of judgment," is the "day of salvation." And, oh! what a difference! To-day there is not a poor guilty sinner who, repenting of his sins, trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ, but gets a welcome to His bosom and a home in His presence. Yes, friend, let Him who seeks find you, and rescue you by His blood. Let grace win your confidence. Cast aside every doubt and fear. "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;" and know, for certain, that you are saved through His death for you, and His resurrection; so that,—

Rescued thus from sin and danger  
By your Saviour's precious blood,  
You may walk on earth a stranger,  
As a son and heir of God.

J. W. S.



## THE GRANDEST OF ALL COUNSELS.



THE grandest of all subjects, the most magnificent of all themes, is the Cross of Christ. *Eternity* has its counsels, vast and grand; *time* has its histories and facts of exceeding interest. But is there a counsel of eternity nigh so morally grand as this,—“A Lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before

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the foundation of the world; but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. i. 19)? Oh! in that divine silence of eternity, before ever men began to weep; before ever the sad records of our race were chronicled by a divine or human pen; before ever the trail of the serpent disfigured the walks of Paradise, or his hiss disturbed the harmony of Eden; before ever the sun poured down his golden beams of light and warmth, or the stars illuminated the heavens, or the pale and silvery moon beckoned a weary world to repose,—the Cross of Christ was God's grandest counsel.

Redemption was no after-thought on the part of God; and while it is true that our sin necessitated the remedy, if sinners were to be in love, and holily and righteously saved, yet it is profoundly important for the peace and strength of our souls, to see that the remedy is not to be measured by the sin, as *it* was planned where and when there was no sin. Thus our blessing is not to be measured by our need, nor is the character and greatness of the remedy to be measured by the sin which called it forth. God's glory was the prime object in the Cross of Christ; *that* met, secures salvation to the sinner believing on Jesus.

The Cross is the basis of God's glory. Had the creation remained unfallen, were the crown yet resting on the brow of its Lord, would it have been

proclaimed that *God is love*? It was man's need and wretchedness that drew so largely upon the heart of God. Had there been no sin, God in lowly grace would not have entered this world, nor would the angels have gazed in rapture over the wonders of redemption. God loved this wretched world; as man He lived in it thirty-three and a half years. The Son of God has come in love. He has passed into glory as man in righteousness. Has not God, therefore, reaped for Himself a rich and eternal harvest of glory in the fields of redemption?

Among the numerous and interesting facts of time,—facts which stud the chart of history, and creation too, which all around teems with wonders,—there is no fact so holy, none so righteous, none so vital in its eternal consequences to every child of Adam, as the Cross of Christ. In that Cross, and there only, do we learn what man *is*. It is the moral end of “all flesh.” Creature badness and utter vileness are here expressed. Is there any good in man? Is there as much as you could cover with the point of a needle? Do we believe in “perfection in the flesh”? We do most fully believe in perfection in man, but is it in man in the flesh, or in the Man now in glory? Is it to be found here *below*, where the first man is and acts; or there *above*, where the second Man is in life, righteousness, and glory? In Christ there is perfect good, perfect love. In us there is perfect evil, perfect badness. There is only badness in man, there is only goodness in Christ.

The Cross of Christ is the measure of what man is. God in love and holiness entered this world. He came to inquire after the health of the sons of men. In lowliness and grace He passed through the scene of His own creation,—through that highly-favoured part of it, Judea,—and He did so in silent, enduring love. But men hated God,—they hate Him still. They drew near to Jesus,—the Holy One of God. Infinite *holiness* was stamped upon His brow; infinite *grace* marked His every word and act; infinite *love* to the wretched was reflected in every touch of His hand, in every movement of His heart. Men, Israel, weighed His worth,—thirty pieces of silver,—the mere value of an ox in the marts of Judea, or of a slave in those of the Gentiles. Israel morally began her history by selling Joseph for twenty pieces of silver, and closed her history *meantime* by selling Christ—the true Joseph—for thirty pieces of silver. Nay, they even bartered away His life for that of Barabbas (significantly meaning “Son of the Father”). The Prince of Life, the King of Glory, was fairly exchanged for a law-breaker and murderer!! Such was, such is, the world’s estimate of Christ. God must be got rid of at all costs. Is the heart of the nineteenth century better than the heart of the first century? Nay, the heart of man is ever the same; neither time, polish, education, improvement, or religion can change the heart. Man in his very nature hates God, while God in His very nature loves man. Were Christ in lowly grace once more

to pass through our streets,—the streets of our cathedral towns,—the cry would again startle the heavens, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” and they would haste to accomplish it on the nearest tree,—the religious leaders, as before, goading on to the deed.

But the true measure of what man is as a sinner, is measured by what God did to Christ. Man’s only part was to push with guilty hands that Blessed One, and press Him on to His agony; that *evidences* human guilt, but does not *measure* it. God’s judgment of sin on the Cross, is the due of the sinner at the hands of infinite justice. The darkness gathers around the Cross, for God is judging sin; the tempest awoke, the storm rose, the throne of God becomes the source of those judgments; and necessarily so, for “God is *light*.” The soul of Jesus was riven with agony unutterable and unparalleled,—an agony known only to God. O the terrific anguish of those hours of darkness! He was forsaken of God. He bore during that “night season,” what for the impenitent will be spread over endless ages in the lake of fire. There we witness the “Righteousness of God” against sin displayed in all its majesty, as even now that *same* “Righteousness” can freely justify the sinner believing on Jesus, and can even place the believer in Christ in glory before God.

The martyrs of old had their faces lit up with glory, Israel’s fathers were heard and sustained—but Jesus cried, and was not heard. God’s face was

## THE GRANDEST OF ALL COUNSELS. 135

one frown to Him, that it might be light to thee, O sinner. Never was such agony expressed as by Him. Saint and sinner, the utterance of intensest distress of mental agony that ever dropped from human lips, was heard from the "horns of the unicorns,"—the agonies of death,—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” In light of all this, dare you say, “I hope to get to heaven some way”? The “some way,” the “only way,” the exclusive way, is by the Cross.

But now that the wrath of God has been borne, the judgment of sin endured, Jesus cried,—“*It is finished!*” Hear it, thou throne of God, thy just claims are all settled! “It is finished!” hear it, ye opposing principalities and powers, your might is broken, and Jesus is the victor. “It is finished!” hear it, ye sacrificing priests and proud ritualists of past and present times. And now, eternal farewell to Judaism, and every religious system which binds man to the home and sphere where Christ is *not*. God had His blessed hand on the veil of the Temple, waiting for that supreme moment when He in love and righteousness could rend it,—from top to bottom,—from God to man. “It is finished!” and the veil is rent. Yes, God hears the cry of the victor Christ, and the tombs of the saints are cleft asunder, for Satan is eternally silenced. “It is finished!” and the sins of all who believe on Jesus are gone in that work,—for ever and ever gone.

And Thou hast been raised from among the dead, Thou conquering One, and Thy brow is encircled

with the Crown of Redemption; and we, poor sinners of the Gentiles, believing on Thine adorable name and resting on Thy finished work, are presented in *Thee* to Thy God, faultless and in glory!

W. S.



### CHRIST MY REFUGE.



LITTLE over twenty years laden with unforgiven sins, I tried hard to close eternity outside, keep it ever in the far distant future, living as one who had nothing to do with it.

For the last seven years of this period, I drank in deeper the pleasures of sin, seeking to satisfy the cravings of my immortal spirit,—not without many a sting of conscience, as thoughts of death and judgment would, again and again, steal across my soul.

How often I tried to calm the troubled sea within, to hush the voice which sometimes loudly spake, by promising to God, if He would forgive me the black past, and spare me yet a few more years, I would turn over a new leaf, give up sinning, and try to love Him; but my refuge failed me. It was false; the more I sought to hide in this vessel (in which thousands are sailing), the more fully did I sink in sin, powerless to escape. Without



strength, "without Christ," "without hope," and "without God in the world," described my true condition. What then? Was I sinking? Nay, truly I was sunk! ripe enough for hell, and just bad enough for Christ,—the reverse of my dark thoughts about Him,—for He came not "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

And when I heard that God's love was world-wide, encircling every sinner, and the measure of that love for such the gift of His only begotten Son,—I saw that for Jesus, God's salvation, I had nothing to pay, the gift was free,—so I stopped reasoning, and took God at His word, thanking Him for His unspeakable gift. And my faith became stronger as I searched His Word,—assurance becoming unclouded, because God had written:—

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1).

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 13).

Dear reader, whither are you bound? Dare you not stop to look eternity in the face? Are you counting the cost, as you sail under false colours,

not knowing such a refuge will fail you? In contrast with the false, God's refuge "from wrath to come" stands open for you now; by faith enter in, as you hear the voice of the blessed Son of God through His precious Word,—

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John xiv. 6).  
P. D. O.

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### ROCK OF AGES.

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Rock of Ages! hid in Thee,  
I am now from judgment free;  
Thou hast borne the cross and shame;  
Thine the judgment, mine the blame:  
Rock of Ages! hid in Thee,  
Judgment hath no fears for me.

Chosen in the Well-beloved,  
Whose perfections God hath proved,  
What although the tempests roar,  
Sounding billows lash the shore;  
All God's billows, all His waves,  
Surged against the Rock that saves!

Lo! the earthquake's fearful shock  
Heaves the ground and rends the rock;  
Rock-built towers and cities fall,  
Death and ruin threaten all!  
Though man's hopes prove sinking sands  
Firm the Rock of Ages stands!

## FAITH COMETH BY HEARING.

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Persecution's fires blaze high,  
 Saints must faithless be or die ;  
 Men and Satan, in their wrath,  
 Seek to sweep them from their path :  
 But, when conies seek the rock,  
 Vain the wicked rage or mock.

Blest are they who, lost, undone,  
 Rest by faith on God's dear Son ;  
 Blest who take, through precious blood,  
 Refuge in the Eternal God ;  
 They, by truth, are thus made free,  
 Rock of Ages ! hid in Thee.

H. M.

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 FAITH COMETH BY HEARING.
 

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YOUNG Christian frequently visited the wards of a lunatic asylum, being deeply interested in those mentally afflicted. On one occasion she was trying to comfort a poor woman, who declared that there was *no hope* whatever for her, she knew she was utterly *lost* and forgotten of God. The lady replied immediately, "You are then the very one that Christ Jesus came to save ; for has He not Himself affirmed, 'The Son of man came to *seek* and to save that which was lost' ?" But

alas, the precious words seemed to make no impression on the poor despairing mind.

Several months after this incident, the lady was astonished at receiving a letter from a person who stated that she had been an inmate of the same asylum mentioned above, and was only just discharged therefrom; but as she felt she had much cause to thank God for having been present at the time of the incident recorded, she thought it only right to tell the lady what the Lord had done for her soul, by means of the words spoken to the poor woman in her hearing, though not meant for her; and that her mind was in such a rebellious frame at that time, that she would most probably have struck any one who had dared to speak to her about her soul, but that ever since her heart seemed melted to think of the love of Jesus in thus coming to seek out and save her lost soul.

The above facts are recorded as testimony to the truth of God's own gracious promise, given in His Word, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 10, 11).

May many Christians be encouraged thereby to be always ready to speak a word in season, and to leave results to God.

H. E. S.

## THE HEART MADE CAPTIVE.



BRITISH merchant who had taken his passage in a Turkish vessel on the Levant, had his attention directed during the voyage to an interesting man, a slave, a Mussulman, with whom he soon fell into conversation. He found him intelligent, quick, and of strong lively affections. He drew from him some particulars of his history, and found that, having been free-born, he had been made captive in war. His misfortunes pressed heavily on his spirits; he was keenly sensitive to the degradation of his condition; and he felt the full weight of the miserable fate he was doomed to bear. The merchant was touched with sympathy for this helpless captive; the more he knew of him, the deeper was the interest he felt in his welfare; and he actually began to entertain the thought of effecting his release.

Cautiously inquiring as to the sum requisite for this purpose, he found that it was considerably greater than the mercantile profits of his entire voyage. Still, he could not abandon the thought. He spoke to the captain, to whom this interesting Mussulman belonged, and offered him a price for his ransom. His offer was accepted; but the slave, hiding, overheard part of the conversation between

the captain and the merchant, and mistaking the design of the latter,—supposing, in fact, that he was purchasing him to retain him in slavery for his own use,—he sprang forward, his eyes gleaming with indignation, and cried out, “And do you call yourself a free-born Briton, and an enemy to slavery wherever it exists, and yet purchase me? Have I not as much right to freedom as you have yourself?”

He was proceeding in this strain of burning indignant invective, when the merchant turned his eyes affectionately upon him, and said, “I have bought you to set you free.” Instantly the storm of passion was hushed; the Mussulman slave burst into tears; and, falling at the feet of his deliverer, he exclaimed, “You have taken my heart captive! I am your slave for ever!”

Reader, this narrative is placed before you as an illustration of what most closely and deeply concerns yourself. You may perhaps congratulate yourself on being a free-born Briton, and be ready to say with the Jews of old, “We never were in bondage to any man.” But this, however true as regards your social state, is, in respect to spiritual condition, a complete mistake. Unlike this Mussulman, you and I were not ever free-born. Man, indeed, was created free, but our first parents became the slaves of Satan, who deceived them, and all their offspring have been born in slavery. The Mussulman felt the yoke, and pined and groaned beneath it. We, alas, naturally love the yoke of

## THE HEART MADE CAPTIVE.

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Satan, and never dream that we are his slaves. We suppose that we are pleasing ourselves doing our own will, gratifying the lusts of our own hearts, while in reality all this is the service exacted of us by our relentless oppressor. So completely are we in bondage, that our minds are enslaved, and we hug the chains by which we are enthralled. The Turkish captain detained the Mussulman slave for profit to himself; and what, think you, is Satan's object in enslaving us? *It is to destroy us for ever!* He is "a murderer," and his design in deceiving and enslaving us is to effect our eternal destruction. The laws of Turkey—cruel and unjust as they may be—gave to the conqueror of this Mussulman, and the captain to whom he had been sold, a title to detain him in bondage,—even, I suppose, in certain cases, to take his life. The law of God, dear reader, infinitely holy and just—and because it is so—pronounces sentence of eternal death upon the sinner.

Satan knew this, and led us into sin, that the holiness and justice of God might be arrayed against us, and that we might become obnoxious to the inexorable claims of His holy law upon the transgressor. Duped by Satan, we have sinned willingly, and with all our hearts; and the more you assert your freedom, the more clearly do you own your own responsibility for all the sins which are brought upon you, and fostered upon you the sentence of eternal death. The merchant com-

passionated the condition of the poor slave; and has not God, has not Christ, had compassion upon us? Desirous as the merchant was to emancipate the slave, the only way he could effect it was by paying the ransom price. The law, iniquitous as it was, rendered this indispensable.

And think you, dear reader, that the infinitely righteous holy law of God can more easily be set aside than the puny laws of unjust arbitrary men? For God has said, "The wages of sin is death;" and we having performed the work, the wages must be received, if not by us, by a substitute, a victim, provided in our stead. But where is there one, competent on the one hand, and willing on the other, to ransom us from the bondage which oppresses and the destruction which awaits us? Ah, there is One! Do you ask His name? That very name expresses the work He undertook. "His name shall be called Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins." We think it a noble, munificent act of the English merchant to ransom this poor slave at the cost of more than all the profits of his voyage. And so it was. It was a large sum, and he thought it large; but his pity for the slave outweighed his value for the treasure, and he freely expended it on his ransom. But what is all this to the love of Jesus, or to the cost at which He "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time"? Oh, that this love might win the confidence of your heart!



## ZACCHEUS.

(Read Luke xix. 1-10.)



There was a man in whom there was much that was commendable; much that was admirable, if not lovable. Doubtless he was the envy of many, even though he had incurred the animosity of some; and if one, bearing his characteristics, were to be found to-day, it would be said of him, "Surely if any man deserves heaven, and is going there, this is the man!"

Let us see what points did characterise Zaccheus.

1st. He was respectable.

2nd. Wealthy (v. 2).

3rd. Charitable to a degree.

4th. Strictly conscientious (v. 8).

5th. Besides all this, he enjoyed all the religious privileges of a son of Abraham. (See Rom. iii. 1, 2; ix. 4, 5.)

But—ah, that little word "but"!—he was *lost*! —LOST!! Yes, my reader, respectable, but lost wealthy, but lost! charitable, but lost! conscientious, but lost! religious, but lost! Until that day in which, in this scripture, he is introduced to our notice, Zaccheus was travelling, with his respectability, and his riches, and his charity, and his conscientiousness, and his religiousness, like so many millstones around his neck, along the road

to hell! Why was this? you may ask. Why was such a man *lost*? Because, my reader, there is *no difference*, *all* have sinned, all are lost sinners, until they come into *personal contact* with Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of Man, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and until the day of Luke xix., Zaccheus never so met Christ.

Reader, have *you* so met Him? have *you* so come by faith into personal contact with the Son of God? If not, you too are lost,—you are going straight down to hell. God says, “There is no difference, for *all* have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God.” It matters not in the least *how* short you have come, you must either meet all the claims of that glory yourself—and this you know you have not done, and cannot do—or else come owning your failure, and therefore ruin, and believe in the One who in tenderest love took the guilty sinner’s place, and on the cross met, and answered, and fully discharged all the claims of that glory on your behalf! Believing, you are *saved*; otherwise, still lost, *lost*!

But you say, “I am not as bad as others, I lead a respectable moral life, I neither drink, steal, nor swear; attend my place of worship, read my Bible, say my prayers, pay my way; am *I* lost, as much as the drunkard or the profligate?” Ah, reader, you forget we have been looking at Zaccheus’ character, and seen that, spite of it all, *he* was lost; and God the Holy Ghost has written of him, that such a one as you may learn this solemn truth, that you may be all that he was and yet be lost!

Here is a man running for the train; out of breath he approaches the station, one minute more and he would be in time, but the whistle sounds, the train starts, he is left behind, he has lost his train by *one minute*. Slowly he retraces his steps, and presently meets another man, also running for the same train. "Stop," he cries, "you are altogether late, the train is gone this *half-hour*." Though one of those men was only late by a minute, the other by a full half-hour, *both* lost the train, there was *no difference* in their position.

Two men came up to a recruiting sergeant to enlist in Her Majesty's army. One is so much taller than the other, he quite looks down on him. The minimum height required for recruits is, say 5 ft. 6 in. The sergeant measures them, the taller man comes short by a quarter of an inch, the other by several inches,—yet there is *no difference*, both are equally rejected.

Finally, "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty; and when they had *nothing to pay*,"—what was the difference, think you?—both were *alike bankrupt*, neither could offer their creditor a composition of one farthing in the pound.

*All the world* guilty before God! That was the truth, individualised, that Zaccheus had to learn, likewise the writer and reader of these lines. Happy they who make the discovery, and take this place, in a day when mercy's door still stands open

wide, and at the right hand of God is seen the One who died the just for the unjust, the guiltless for the guilty, whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin, and in whose name a full salvation is proclaimed to all the guilty, lost, and helpless ones who will simply believe in Him. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

To return, however, to Zaccheus. He was anxious, at any rate, to meet Jesus. The account of the means he adopted to do so is familiar to all. I would, however, call attention to the words addressed to him by the blessed Lord, as He came up and saw him in the tree. "Zaccheus!"—how marvellous the grace that had sought him out, thus personally addressing him,—*"Zaccheus, make haste."* Ah! my reader, forget Zaccheus and hearken to the Saviour thus addressing *thee*. *"Make haste."* Why does He speak thus to *thee*? Because, precious soul, life is uncertain, and the Lord is at hand. At any moment one of two things may happen—death may come and remove thee beyond the reach of salvation, or Christ may come and remove salvation beyond the reach of thee. Hast thou a relative—father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, daughter, or son—who knows and loves the Lord? This very night Jesus may come and take away thy loved one to eternal glory, and leave thee behind in eternal despair; or, on the other hand,

"To-morrow's sun may never rise  
To bless *thy* long-deluded sight."

Then, make haste, MAKE HASTE! Come to Jesus

now, delay not, linger not; He waits to be gracious to thee, as He did to Zaccheus that day. He calls *thee*—He knocks at the door of *thy* heart—oh, refuse Him not admittance, lest, at last, He turn for ever away. It was Zaccheus's *last* opportunity, for *Jesus never passed that way again*; and this may be *your* last, dear reader. “Come down,”—down from your exalted self-opinion, down from your self-righteousness, down from your human-religiousness. Look away from yourself, and

“Cast your deadly doings down—  
Down at Jesus' feet.”

Take the place of a poor guilty sinner, in the dust and ashes of real repentance, and receive, as to yourself, those blessed words, “To-day I must abide at *thy* house.” “To-day,”—blessed Gospel word! “*This day* is born unto you a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” “*This day* is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” “*This day* shalt thou be with me in paradise.” “*To-day* I must abide,”—“*This day* is salvation come to this house.”

Zaccheus was very wise. “He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” Oh, reader, let this be the turning-point in your life; let it be “this day” with you. Ere you lay aside this paper, make haste, come down, and receive Him joyfully; open your heart to Him; do not rest, until you know Him as *your* Saviour who *has* washed you in His blood,—until you have, like Simeon of old, appropriated Him to yourself, and

can say to God, "Mine eyes have seen THY SALVATION." Pharisees might murmur as they would about His going to be "guest with a man that is a sinner," but this was *His* glory, and Zaccheus's title to Him. Yea, more than a mere "sinner"—a "*lost* sinner" was his strongest, fullest claim to the salvation brought by Jesus. Zaccheus may plead his charitable and conscientious acts, but the Lord, as it were, says, "Not so, Zaccheus; not because of these things, not even because, in addition to them, you are a son of Abraham; but because you are *lost*, salvation is come to your house to-day. This day is salvation come to this house. . . . For"—why? "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*." On this ground only was Zaccheus saved; and on *this ground only* can the reader be saved. Take then, dear soul, the place of being *lost*, and behold thy Saviour, who bled and died, who bore the judgment of God upon the cross for thee, and having finished that wondrous work, arose from the dead, and who now, from the glory, assures thee of His readiness to save thee fully, freely, instantly, eternally!

"Yes, dear soul, a voice from heaven  
Speaks a pardon full and free;  
Come, and thou shalt be forgiven,  
*Boundless Mercy* flows for thee—  
*Even thee,*  
Boundless mercy flows for thee."

H. P. A. G.

## NOW OR NEVER.



OW! What tremendous issues depend upon this short and familiar word! How many thousands, even in this life, meet with all kinds of difficulties, losses, trials, &c., through failing to apprehend the immense importance of *the present moment*! How many regrets are daily expressed by men, when they find they have missed some golden opportunity of self-advancement, monetary gain, &c., through indecision. "I wish I had decided at once, but it is too late *now*," says one, as he finds he has lost a first-rate situation by his delay. "I cannot understand how it was I was so blind and foolish not to have seen it at the time," says another, as he finds he has lost his opportunity to have turned over a large sum of money.

But what will be your cry, poor sinner, should you wake up in hell when it is too late, and find you have let your present golden opportunity of being saved pass away for ever? How many undecided procrastinators are *there* already! Again, and again, and again, it may have been, God's *now* was sounded in their ears, and yet they put the great question off; and now, and *now*, it is too late! Too late to be *saved*. There is no salvation in hell, nor in the grave, nor at the great white throne. After death comes judgment, not salvation (Heb. ix. 27). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold,

*now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). God's time is now, an ever present *now*. Not next year, next month, next week, to-morrow, nor even an hour hence, but *now*; or, it may be, *never*. One moment's delay may be one moment too many. A full and free salvation is yours the moment you believe; and everything a sinner needs, and love can give, is found therein.

Amongst these blessings, there are five that come out in the epistle to the Romans that I desire to call the reader's attention to, as the portion *now* of every one that believeth,—justification, reconciliation, freedom, deliverance, and no condemnation.

Firstly, let us see how a sinner is justified.

### *Now justified by His blood.*

Every sinner needs to be justified (or cleared) before God, because he is a sinner. God cannot have to do with sin, except to judge it. Sin surely cannot come into His presence. Therefore you and your sins must part company, if God has to do with you, and you would enjoy His presence. What an awful condition man is in,—a sinner in his sins, without God, or Christ, or hope! (Eph. ii. 12.) Every deed, and word, and thought is defiled, and he is utterly powerless to do one single thing to clear himself. But God has given His Son to die for sinners; and His precious blood, shed upon the cross, cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7).

"There is a stream of precious blood,  
Which flowed from Jesus' veins,  
And sinners washed in that blest flood  
Lose all their guilty stains."



Own, then, your guilt before God, sinner, and trust in Him who died,—the guiltless for the guilty,—and your sins are gone (1 Peter iii. 18), and you are justified in His sight (1 Cor. vi. 11). It is utterly vain to seek to put your own sins away, or to justify yourself. It is God that justifieth (Rom. viii. 33). He is just, and the justifier of him which *believeth in Jesus* (Rom iii. 26). The self-justified stand self-condemned; the self-judged are justified by God. Art thou self-judged before God, my reader? Hast thou owned the justice of God's verdict—*guilty*? What is the answer? Yes? Then believe on the Son of God, Jesus, and you are justified. Not by your works, but *by His blood*. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being *now justified by his blood*, we *shall* be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. v. 8, 9). And not only pardoned and justified, but reconciled.

Now we have received the reconciliation.

The very next verse tells us this. "For if, when we were enemies, we were *reconciled* to God by the death of his Son, much more, being *reconciled*, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (or *reconciliation*) (Rom. v. 10). In our natural state we are not only sinners, but enemies. Sinners need to be justified; enemies to be reconciled. We are

enemies to God, but God is not our enemy. He has shown Himself our friend, in the gift of His Son. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). As enemies, we need to be reconciled to God; not God to us. This makes a vast difference. Thousands pray and work to reconcile God to them; whereas God has wrought one great work for us, and beseeches His enemies to trust in it, and be reconciled to Him. All good works follow after. We must be reconciled first. How can an enemy have peace with God until he is reconciled? He says of all believers, He "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. v. 18).

"A mind at perfect peace with God,  
Oh, what a word is this!  
A sinner reconciled through blood,—  
This, this indeed is peace."

When the prodigal in Luke xv. arose and came to his father, the father ran to meet him, to reconcile him to himself. The prodigal, in self-judgment, said, I have sinned, &c. The father, without a word of reproach, covered him with kisses, and gave him all that love could give. He received the reconciliation. And this is the character of welcome, and reconciliation, all receive, who come back now to God. Have you come? But perhaps you say, "Well, I do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Word of God says that I am justified and reconciled, and therefore I must be. But how is it I still

have sin in me? I thought I should get rid of sin altogether when I was saved." This is a mistake. There is no getting rid of sin altogether, but you *can* get from under its dominion; as we read—

*Now being made free from sin.*

That is, set free from sin as my master. Thousands go on in doubt, and fear, and uncertainty, through not understanding this. I will endeavour to explain it simply and briefly.

When we are saved, we receive a new nature from God; it is not an improvement of the old. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 6). An unconverted man has one nature,—fallen and sinful. The believer has two,—the old evil one, and a new one which is sinless. The new is Christ—*Christ in us.*

Now the old nature received its condemnation at the cross, when Christ died (Rom. viii. 3). And therefore the Scripture says, "Knowing this, that our old man is (has been) crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed (or discharged) from sin" (Rom. vi. 6, 7).

"For me, Lord Jesus, Thou hast *died*,  
And I have died with Thee;  
Thou'rt risen! my bands are all untied,  
And now Thou liv'st in me."

But the mistake that so many make is, that when they find the evil showing itself in them, they

try to overcome it and put it down, whereas God says we are to *know* that our old man has been crucified. And then comes the practical word in verse 11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Faith reckons with God. It is not a question of realising, feeling, experiencing, overcoming, conquering, or anything of the kind, but simply *the reckoning of faith*. God sees the old man crucified with Christ (Rom. vi. 6). Faith accepts what God says, and reckons it true; sees self set aside in the cross, and therefore does not recognise it. Then follows the practical exhortation, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 12).

If you fight against your old nature, you are reckoning yourself alive; if you reckon yourself dead, you have nothing to fight. What is the result? In verse 22 the apostle continues, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Not, now sin being taken out of you; but, being made free from it,—that is, as your master. We change masters. We give up the old one, sin, and serve God and righteousness (Rom. vi. 19–22). Sin will remain in us as long as we are here; but if we reckon ourselves dead, it shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the *law*, but under grace. And this brings us to one more difficulty, and that is the law. But we further read—

*Now we are delivered from the law.*

Have you laid hold of that? Present deliverance from the law. It is astonishing the amount of legality that clings to souls. It is one of the chief hindrances to getting peace. But Scripture is plain. As long as you are a sinner in your sins, the law condemns you. You may try to meet its claims, but only to discover how short you come, and to be exposed to its curse (Gal. iii. 10). For he who offends in one point is guilty of all (Jas. ii. 10); and "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). The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good; but, unfortunately, the sinner is unholy, unjust, and bad (1 Tim. i. 9-11). The law is God's perfect standard for man in the flesh, but no flesh can reach up to it.

By way of illustration, suppose a sergeant went to a village to recruit men of six feet for a certain regiment, but not a single person in the village is so tall. What would be the result? Why, the six-foot measure would show how short every man is who desires to enlist, but it could not add an inch to the height of one of them. One man who stands five feet eleven inches says to the sergeant, "Can't you pass me? I'm at least half an inch taller than the rest." "No," he replies, "it's no good; no one short of six feet will do." As long as the standard is maintained at six feet, a man five feet eleven is as far off enlistment as one that is only four feet

six. The standard will not come down to the men neither will it help the men to come up to it.

So is it with the law of God. Everybody comes short that attempts to measure themselves with it. It makes no allowance for shortcoming, neither does it help a sinner to come up to its requirements. Your conduct may be better than others, according to man's standard; but all your morality, and religiousness in the flesh, are nothing worth before God. You may compare favourably with thousands, but yet you come short of God's standard. Therefore, my reader, as long as you are on that ground, there is no salvation for you. But the same blessed God that pardons our sins (as we have seen), reconciles us to Himself, and sets us free from sin, delivers us from the law also. Christ magnified the law and made it honourable, far exceeding its every requirement. Then He went to the cross, the Holy, Just, and Good One, and bore its curse for us. He died under it, was buried, and being raised from the dead, sat down triumphant at God's right hand, His work done (Heb. i. 3). The moment you confess Him Lord, and believe with the heart, all the benefits of His finished work are put to your account (Rom. x. 9, 10). He has redeemed us from the curse of the law. God sees the believer identified with His Son. Wondrous grace! The law is not dead, but we have died to it by the body of Christ (Rom. vii. 4). "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to *every one that believeth*" (Rom. x. 4).

“Free from the law! oh, happy condition!  
 Jesus has died, and there is remission;  
 On Him, on the cross, the curse did once fall,  
 And He hath redeemed us once for all.”

Now we are delivered from the law (Rom. vii. 6). The Christian is not under the law, but under grace (Rom. vi. 14). Believest *thou* this?

One might add much more on these subjects, but space will not permit. What is the result? As we have seen, the sinner who believes is *now* justified, *now* reconciled, *now* freed, *now* delivered. One more passage will further confirm the soul. Thus richly blessed of God, He sees us in Christ, created anew in Him (Eph. ii. 10); and in Rom. viii. we read, “There is therefore

Now *no condemnation to them which are in  
 Christ Jesus.*”

This is an absolute statement (see revised version). It is true of every believer. Is it true of you? Christ has borne the condemnation on the cross. He is now raised from the dead, and judgment is behind Him. And the believer is in Christ. Are you a believer? And, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (or there is a new creation) (2 Cor. v. 17). There is no condemnation to Christ, and therefore no condemnation to all that are in Christ. Not only shall we not come into condemnation, or judgment, which is blessedly true, but there is no condemnation *now*. Blessed news, joyful news! All condemnation is gone, for ever passed away.

“No condemnation! oh, my soul,  
 ’Tis God that speaks the word;  
 Perfect in comeliness art thou,  
 Through Christ, the risen Lord.”

What peace the blest assurance gives!

“Death and judgment are behind us,  
 Grace and glory are before;  
 All the billows rolled o’er Jesus,  
 There they spent their utmost power.”

And what a string of blessings! Justification, reconciliation, freedom, deliverance, and no condemnation,—all ours by faith in the Christ of God, and that *now*. *Now*, in this day of grace, or *never*. Again I appeal to you, my reader, are these blessings yours? Think of the terrible alternative. To remain unjustified, is to remain under judgment. Unreconciled, you are an enemy to God. Without freedom from the mastery of sin, you continue its wretched slave. Apart from deliverance from sin, its curse must fall upon you. And all who are not in Christ, delivered from all condemnation before leaving this scene, will most surely come into the eternal judgment of the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 15).

Oh sinner, guilty and lost, believe on the Son of God, and thus become His happy freedman. *Believe now*, lest you *never* have another opportunity. You will? Yes? Then take heed to this closing word for the children of God:—

“But *now* being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness,



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and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 22, 23).

E. H. C.



WHY NOT ACCEPT SALVATION NOW?



HERE is every possible reason why the sinner should accept salvation *now, at once*; and innumerable reasons why he should not put it off another day. What! put off the salvation of the soul, when the consequences are so appalling. What! defer that which is of the utmost possible consequence to the sinner in time and eternity. What! remain indifferent to that when the issues are so mighty. Mad folly, or blinding unbelief, or hardened indifference it must be, that prompts any soul to put off salvation.

Is not man a sinner, and lost? and is not that argument enough to urge him to long for deliverance from his present condition, and the awful and eternal consequences of that condition? Surely it is. Has not man by his sin plunged himself into a pit of ruin, and has he not by the same placed himself at an infinite moral distance from God? And what must be the just consequences of that sin? Oh, the very thought only urges the absolute neces-

sity of the sinner getting saved at once,—yes, at once.

Is not the God against whom man has sinned a holy God, a just God, a mighty God, an eternal God, —One who has power to execute the full and just reward of the sinner's sins upon him? Is He not that God "who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity?" Is He not that God who must, because He is holy, execute judgment upon sin to the full? His nature and character demand it; His moral government demands it; yea, the very throne upon which He sits, the establishments of which are justice and judgment, demands it. And can the sinner resist God? Is he stronger than God? Can he compel a compromise on the part of divine holiness with his sin? Can he cause that thrice Holy One to have fellowship with the throne of iniquity? Can he convert the moral government of God into a chaos, by causing his sin to go unpunished? I say, can he ward off the stroke of judgment, and live for ever, in defiance of the living God? Impossible! Impossible! God must be God, and He must, and will, act as God. What arguments, then, are these to lead the sinner to seek and know salvation? Yes, they are arguments which must stand for ever; they are words of truth and soberness.

But more! Has not man to spend an eternity somewhere? Are there not three solemn facts before him,—his accountability; his having to

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do with God; and the eternity that he has to spend? The conscience of man, as well as the Word of God, declare his accountability; everything around, as well as the Word of God, declare His eternal power and Godhead; and the Scriptures of truth make known—yea, unveil to us—the solemn facts of eternity. O Eternity! how solemn art thou. O thou wide and boundless Eternity, thou must receive all! Who can tell out thy mysteries, or measure thy fulness? Only God. Thou art infinite, undying, and eternal! Thou must receive all; thou must consign to glory, the redeemed; and to an eternal hell, the lost! O sinner, what a mighty argument is here, to move thee to repentance because of thy sins, and to lead thee to accept salvation for thy precious and immortal soul. It is as a mighty lever, to move thee from thy seat of indifference to living earnestness about the salvation of thy precious soul.

Again, God loves the sinner, and has met his deep need, and procured salvation for him. The love of God's heart led Him to give up His only and precious Son, His delight from all eternity. Yes, He gave Him up. What a thought! Had it come to this, that nothing could remedy the desperate ruin of the sinner, or save him from hell, but the giving up of the Son of God? Ah, yes; the Son of Man must be lifted up. If the love of the Father gave the Son, the love of the Son led Him, as freely, to come to accomplish the

Father's will. And, pray, what was that will? It was this, that salvation might be wrought for the sinner. Yes; when the sinner looks at the cross, he sees God's love in all its infinite fulness expressed to him, an individual sinner; love which he did not deserve, ask for, or even desire. Love was there expressed, and which could only adequately be expressed, by the gift and death of the Son of God. It is past all human thought. Well wrote one who knew it, though an inmate of an asylum:—

“ Could I with ink the ocean fill,  
 Were every blade of grass a quill,  
 Were the whole world of parchment made,  
 And every man a scribe by trade,—  
 To write the love of God above,  
 Would drain the ocean dry;  
 Nor would the scroll contain the whole,  
 Though stretched from sky to sky.”

If, then, God loves the sinner, and the blessed Son of God has died and risen again, and has procured salvation for the lost, there can be no possible reason why the sinner should remain unsaved. Why should he not be saved now? “ Behold, *now* is the accepted time! behold, *now* is the day of salvation!” If salvation is a procured thing, if it is a free gift, and if God offers it to the sinner; yea, if He presses the sinner to receive it; yea, beseeches him to accept it,—what hinders him from readily embracing it? Shall I say it is the greatest folly?

I appeal to you, beloved reader,—if you are un-

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saved, if you are yet away from God, if you are not pardoned,—and ask, Why do you defer the great and important matter of salvation? a matter which takes in the length and breadth of eternity, which involves the question of heaven or hell, the glory of God or the outer darkness, the joys and peace of the former or the unutterable woe of the latter. You have heard of the value of your precious soul, that it must live for ever; of the fact that you are a sinner before God, of the love of God and the dying love of the Saviour; you have heard of death, judgment, and eternity; you have heard that salvation is procured and offered you, that it is as free as the air you breathe, or the water you drain from the well, yea, without money and without price,—then, O my friend, why not accept it? You verily need it; you cannot be saved without it; and, alas! how shall you escape if you neglect it? I tremble for thee, lest thou should turn away and refuse it, and seal thine own doom for ever; lest thy persistent unbelief should crown thy many sins, and shut thee up in impenetrable darkness for eternity.

May God interpose, and, giving you to see your imminent danger, lead you to trust in Jesus, to accept salvation, and to be saved for ever and ever. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts xvi.).

“Look to Jesus, look and live,  
Mercy from His hands receive.”

E. A.

## GOD'S GREAT SUPPER; OR, SOVEREIGN GRACE.

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“**F**CERTAIN man made a great supper, and bade many” (Luke xiv.). Supper is the last meal before midnight. Sinner, the night of judgment is rapidly nearing. The heavy clouds are gathering; already the mutterings of the storm are heard by the circumcised ear, and the tempest of divine wrath is about to sweep over a guilty world. This Christ-rejecting age is about to be visited by the Lord of Glory, and “they shall not escape.” Sinner, be warned in time. Partake of God’s last meal; embrace the final call of the Gospel,—“Come, for all things are now ready.” Come, take your place at God’s feast of grace, ere the supper of judgment claim you for its guest.

God’s supper-table is spread. His love has provided the rich and magnificent entertainment, dressed the table, prepared ample room for all the guests, offers a hearty and generous welcome to *all*, for it is “a *great* supper,” and “*many*” are bidden. It is altogether a scene and entertainment worthy of God. Now look at the terms of the invitation. There is no question of character raised, or of respectability, or of moral or of religious standing. None are excluded. Simple, full, and free is the

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gracious invitation,—“Come, for all things are now ready.” Now herein is a marvel! The invited guests will not come. Most politely do men reject the gospel of God's grace. Thousands are falling into hell with the courteous rejection of Christ on their very lips,—“*I pray thee* have me excused.” Is this, dear reader, *your* answer to God's entreaties—to His calls of love?

Now, what is God's answer to the general refusal of the guests? “I must have sinners made happy; they must share my joy, and partake of my feast of grace and love.” Hence He says, “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” People foolishly discuss the question as to the number of the saved. We can answer the question when you can tell us the size of God's house. “That my house may be *filled*,” such is the largeness and freeness of God's grace to a perishing world!

Well, Lord, Thou hast gathered the chairs around the table, Thou hast spread the feast, but where are the guests? God provides the feast, the chair, as also the guest, for

“’Twas the same grace that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced me in,  
Else I had still refused to taste,  
And perished in my sin.”

The feast tells of God's unutterable joys. It is the place of love and light, where there is no bursting heart nor stained conscience. Inside with Christ. Inside where the music, and dancing, and singing of heaven thrill every heart. Do you say,

"I am not fit for such a scene; it is all too much for a poor sinner to enjoy"? That is true; but this rich, joyous, and present salvation is worthy of God to bestow. The sinner deserves hell. My work fits me for the lake of fire, but Christ's deserves the heights of glory, and His work merits the "Paradise of God." For every soul of man it is either the *depths* of hell (Luke xvi.), or the *heights* of glory (Eph. ii.). What is due to the "first man" is the former, what is due to the "second man" is the latter. Are you connected with the man in judgment, or with the man in glory? Are you a believer on Jesus? Are you resting your guilty soul on His finished work? Why delay another hour? Oh, will "too late! too late!" be your eternal mournful and despairing cry? Salvation is within thy grasp. It is offered thee without money and without price. Neither your tears, experiences, feelings, prayers, or religious duties can avail. Nay, they only hinder, for God's Son has paid the price, has shed His precious blood. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and then will be able to sing,—

"*He* opened. I could only see '*whosoever* ;'  
 Against no name was written '*never*.'  
 I searched till I was satisfied  
 That '*whosoever*' meaneth me—  
 And '*whosoever* will' beside."

W. S.



## THE TEN VIRGINS.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.”—MATT. xxv. 1-13.



WE cannot afford to put off the question of readiness for an hour. People are saying, When will the Lord come? “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour,” is the Lord’s reply.

This scripture brings before us the exact state of matters which will be found on the earth when the Lord does come. Not when He comes to “judge the earth.” If you think of the coming of a Bridegroom, you cannot connect that with judgment. You think of affection and delight on the part of the one for

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whom He comes. It is not cringing fear, but affection.

This scripture presents the responsible side of Christianity. If I am a believer in the Lord, I am responsible not only to wait for Him, but to show that I am waiting for Him. Outwardly the ten virgins were very much alike. All took their lamps and went forth, and all slumbered and slept. Shortly after the death of the Apostles the truth of the Lord's coming went out of the minds of Christians, the world so came in and absorbed them that the coming of the Lord was lost sight of,—“they all slumbered and slept.”

At the beginning of Christianity, what was the truth? That every one who bowed to the Lord as Saviour had also this thought, that He was coming again. They “turned to God, from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, . . . even Jesus,” as Paul said of the Thessalonians. The daily hope of the early Christians was the Lord's coming,—not the judgment-day. They waited for Him who had delivered them from the wrath to come. The true Christian is not waiting for judgment. He is one who knows and loves Christ, and whose heart has been knit to Him, who has been made “ready” to meet Christ at His second coming by the work that He did for him at His first coming.

There is a day of wrath coming, but can one drop of the cup of wrath touch the Christian? Never. As secure as the throne of God is the salvation of

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the simplest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, because the believer is connected with the One who sits on that throne. Are you, my reader, thus connected with the living One who sits on the throne of God?

At the outset, all went forth to meet the Bridegroom. Have you, my friend, gone out to meet the Bridegroom? Does any one know you as one who has gone forth? Yes, you say, I have. Well, you will be tested. It is not head-work but heart-work. They went out to meet a person. Do you know anything about this? Oh, you reply, I should like to be saved. Take care, my reader, that you are not damned while hoping to be saved.

There must be a fitness to meet the coming One, and this fitness He, Himself, furnishes. It is nothing in ourselves. We read that of those ten virgins who went out, five were wise and five foolish. Outwardly all are alike; all make the same profession. Wherein was the wisdom of the wise, and the folly of the foolish? All took the lamp. A lamp is that which others can see. One who bottles up his Christianity does not take the lamp; but if a person's heart is full of Christ, it will soon come out in his life. When a man says to me, I will not have the thoughts of my heart made public, I am pretty sure there is nothing of Christ there to disclose. If, my friend, you knew Christ, you would want others to know Him too. If you were saved yourself, and knew it, you would want others to be saved also. When the heart is full of Christ, it comes bubbling out.

These virgins, then, made an external profession of Christianity,—they took the lamp. “They that were foolish” shewed their folly by taking “no oil.” The wise displayed their wisdom by taking it. You will ask, What is the oil? I have no doubt what the Lord means by the oil. The oil is that which alone could maintain the light. From end to end of Scripture oil is the type of the Holy Ghost. Take, in the Old Testament, the consecration of the priest, or the cleansing of the leper, it is there used as a figure of the Spirit of God. What marks the true Christian is this,—he knows Christ, and loves Christ; but more, he has the Holy Ghost. If you have not the Holy Ghost, do you think you are Christ’s? Impossible. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. viii. 9). Do you say, How can a person know that he has the Holy Ghost? Ah, if you do not know this, what a solemn state you are in. The Holy Ghost loves to minister the things of Christ to the soul that loves Him,—it is the seal of redemption.

The first thing the Holy Ghost does, is to present the gospel to the sinner. He tells him of his need, his danger, and of the impossibility of his extricating himself from the state he is in. He tells him, too, of Jesus, of His love, of His work upon the cross; and when that soul bows down to Jesus and believes in Him, the Holy Ghost takes up His abode in that person.

Are you, then, one who possesses the Holy Ghost? It is not the Holy Ghost to help you to believe.

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Scripture does not so put it, but thus, "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye *heard* the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye *believed*, ye were *sealed* with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13).

Who hears the gospel? The sinner. Who believes the gospel? The sinner; and when he believes, finds it to be the gospel of his salvation. If a man says I am a poor ungodly sinner, I have blessed news for him,—“Christ died for the ungodly.” What I find is, that people are unwilling to take the place of being ungodly. If you do not take that place, you put yourself out of the pale of those for whom Christ died. But when Christ is simply believed, the Holy Ghost seals the one who believes. Who then believes the Gospel? The sinner. Who is sealed? The believer. It is very simple,—it is the sinner who believes, it is the believer who is sealed.

Do you say, I have made a profession of Christianity? Quite right; but is it a real one? Have you been converted, turned to God? Have you turned round in a world of death to know “the living and true God?” Ah, these are charming words for us who live in a world of death and unreality,—The living God, who will never die; and the true God, whose word will never alter.

When a man is converted, he owns that he is past reformation, and that he must have something new entirely. Where does he find it? In Christ. God must have perfection. Where can He find it? Only in the person of Christ, and the believer is in Christ.

Are you then, my reader, a believer in Christ? Are you one of those wise virgins, or are you one of the foolish ones? Do you say, One cannot know? Did not those foolish virgins know that they had no oil? and did not the wise know that they had the oil? But the wise could not impart to the foolish of their oil. It is an individual thing. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." How narrow? So narrow that each must go in one by one. I must meet God alone; I must let His eye search me through and through. You may go on for a long time, and may pass current, even among Christians, for one; but the day is coming when you will be rung, as it were, on God's counter, to see if there be a true ring or not. What makes the difference between a true Christian and a false one? The possession of the oil—the Holy Ghost.

Do you say, I want to have the Holy Ghost, I pray for it? Ah! but you must believe. Do you believe, first of all, that you are a good-for-nothing sinner? You must believe that, and, if you do, you will see that there is no remedy for you save in Christ. But God gave His Son to be that remedy, —gave the best thing in heaven for the worst thing on earth. When a man believes that God gave His Son for him, then the Holy Ghost comes in, and takes up His abode in the heart that has left off trusting itself, and has received Christ instead. This man is ready for the Lord's coming.

The Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly." The

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heart that loves Him says, "Come." The heart of the bride says to the Bridegroom, "Come." If you are a poor sinner who cannot say "Come," to you we say, "Take of the water of life freely;" get among the ready now, ere He does come. The Lord, I believe, is at the door. Never were people so rising and trimming their lamps as to-day. Souls are being saved right and left. God is wonderfully working in the urgency of His charity, and in the universality of its manifestation. He is saving men, women, and children on every hand. Will you be left out? There is a move, a stir, whichever way you look; and oh, solemn thought! perhaps yours is the only unmoved careless heart that shall scan these pages. Wake up! wake up! Sinner, flee to the Saviour, lest you find yourself outside when the door is shut.

Many will say in that day, I have been a professor of Christianity; a communicant; a Sunday school teacher; a tract distributor; but they are shut out. Son, you may turn round to your Christian mother, in that moment, and say, "Mother, save me;" but no, no,—“They that were ready went in.” Daughter, you will turn round to your godly father, whose prayers many a time went up for you, but you never sought the Lord for yourself. And you, careless husband, who knew that your wife was all right, but never turned to the Lord yourself, you who spent your evenings in folly and sin, you will wake up to find that your wife has gone in, and you are left outside for ever

And you, wife, occupied with the cares of your house, and thoughts of your children too, knowing that your husband loves the Lord, and that you are only a lifeless professor, you will find that the Lord has come, and they that are ready have gone in, and the door will be shut, but you are left outside.

The Lord's voice is *now* heard, saying, Come! Come! Come! But *then* the door will be shut, and and you will be outside for ever. "They that were ready went in,"—in with Christ, in the glory,—in where all is joy and gladness; while the voice of the hapless unreal professor is heard outside saying, "Lord! Lord! open to us." How truly solemn is His reply, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." I know nothing more terrible than that you should stand outside that door, and know that your prayer for admittance is for ever denied,—that you should hear Him say, "I never knew you;" instead of you being able to say, with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12).

Oh, make this scene an impossibility to you. Turn to Jesus now. Come to Jesus now. Taste His love. Love Him, serve Him; let your whole life be His.

"The Bridegroom comes, let no man doubt ;

Alas! for those whose lamps are out,

They'll find no oil to buy.

'Trim your lamps and be ready,'

Is the midnight cry."

W. T. P. W.



“WEEL, I’LL TAKE HIM.”

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“WEEL, I’LL TAKE HIM.”



OTHER, will th’ man speak till us if we gang till the meeting,” inquired Isa J—— of her mother, while getting ready to attend a Gospel preaching in the village of C—— one Lord’s Day evening in September 1877.

“Yes, Isa,” said her mother, “he’ll speak till ye if ye stay ahin’ the rest.”

“Weel, J——,” she said to her companion, “a think we’ll no gang. Weel, come; a think we’ll gang an’ sit gey near th’ door, an’ get oot as soon as he has done preachin’.” They both went to the meeting and sat on the end of a form near the door. That night the word was with power—and in power, too—to Isa and her companion.

The preacher in closing said, “I am sure some of you are very anxious to be out, but you are not leaving as you came in; you are under conviction of sin.” He then solemnly appealed to them, and pressed the necessity of decision for Christ *now*, as this might be the last offer of salvation. The meeting closed, and the anxious were asked to remain. The majority left the room, and among the rest, indeed among the first, Isa and her companion; but when they got to the bottom of the

stairs, Isa said to her companion, "J——, a think we'll gang in again." For a moment they weighed it, but with this decision, "We'll gang hame; he's gaun to preach again on Wednesday night, we'll come back then." Dangerous decision, when the soul is in the balance. Wednesday night came round, and as the hour of the meeting drew near, Isa's sister said to her, "Are you gaun to the meeting, Isa?" "Oh," she replied, "a hinna time." "O Isa," said her sister, "ye have time for everything but the ane thing needful; come awa." With that she went with her sister, and she afterwards said, "Just as sure as a was putting the shawl over my head a would be catchit that night;" and caught she was, but for eternal blessing.

The word was again in power, and with increasing power to Isa. She "stayed ahin' the rest," and the man spoke to her of Christ, for the heaving breast and eyes suffused with tears had already arrested his attention. She was really anxious to be saved. Among other scriptures read and quoted to her were John x. 27, 28, "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," &c. "Now," said the preacher, "haven't you heard His voice?" She said, "Yes." Well, then, to such He says He gives "eternal life, and they shall never perish." For a moment she gazed at the word, evidently feeling the power of the eternal truth, then, with a deep sigh and faltering voice, said, "Weel, I'll take Him." Did Isa know what un-

searchable riches she fell heir to by that decision? Verily not; and far less did she understand how He whom she had taken valued what He had received in her. Another of His sheep that was lost; another given to Him by the Father out of the world over whom He rejoices, and whom He keeps and loves unto the end. But her cup was full; she left the room with joy unspeakable, and calling on a friend, she said, “M——, I’m saved; I’ve got Christ.” Then home to her mother, and with deep feeling said, “O mother, I’ve got the Lord; I’m saved.” That mother’s heart was made glad that night, and had joy in common with the new-born soul. Was this simply an outburst of emotional feeling, or mere natural joy like the stony-ground hearer, soon to subside under the pressure of the trials in the way? No, but the fruit of the Spirit, the joy of a delivered soul now able to say, “Abba, Father,” and Christ was her theme ever after.

How well for Isa that she went to the meeting, and that she “stayed ahin’ th’ rest,” for not only did “the man” that was preaching “speak till her,” but the Man that “receiveth sinners” both spoke to her, and received her, having first wrought in her, and led her to feel her need of Him, and then to say, “I’ll take Him.”

But Isa had not the privilege of bearing testimony very long. On Monday evening, October 14, 1878, she said to a sister in the Lord, “I’ve been thinking so much about a verse in th’ 16th o’ John th’ day, it has hardly ever been oot o’ ma mind a’ this day.

‘A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.’ I wonder what it means. ‘A little while, and ye shall not see me, because I go to the Father.’ A dinna ken what it means.” Before that week ended, He who has gone to the Father, and of whom she said, “I’ll take Him,” had taken her home to be with Himself up there.

That same preacher, while holding meetings in a town on the borders, had a letter on Lord’s Day morning, October 20, 1878, from a dear brother in the Lord, a fisherman, in which he said, “You will be sorry to hear that Isa J—— is with us no more. She went to be with the Lord yesterday morning.” Sorry indeed to lose her fellowship here, but glad, for her sake, that she was home to be with Christ, which is “far better.”

“He and I in that bright glory,  
One deep joy to share,—  
Mine, to be for ever with him;  
His, that I am there.”

Reader, what of you? have you taken Him? Can you say, I am saved? or are you anxious to be saved? If so, then come to Him. You will get a hearty welcome—and just as you are—from the One who “receiveth sinners and eateth with them.” He died for sinners, and is still “seeking and saving that which is lost.” Do you know that you are lost? Then come to Him, He will in nowise cast you out (John vi. 37).

But perhaps you are not anxious now, though

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you once were, and have often felt under the preached Gospel that you ought to accept Christ and decide for Him. But you allowed something to hinder that decision, and here you are, still unsaved; and your desire for salvation, that you once had, gone. Solemn position! You may have refused your last offer of salvation! Dear friend, take care, you are on dangerous ground! for if you thus continue to trifle, you certainly will reject once too often the message of mercy. "God is not mocked." The Lord Jesus says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

But another may say, "That does not apply to me. I am not so bad; I am not lost; I was never anxious; I have attended lots of meetings; I can stand any amount of preaching, it never touches me." Then, dear friend, does this apply to you?—"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). Satan may have blinded your mind, and hid these things from you; but remember, if the Gospel does not touch you, judgment will; and it is only in time that the sinner can make this bravado when in company with others, but when he stands *alone* in the judgment he will be speechless. Be warned, I pray you; you are a sinner, a *lost sinner*, and you

need a Saviour, and there is a Saviour for you. Then bow to Him, and own your state before God, and accept salvation on His terms. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psalm ii. 12).

J. H.

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## ETERNITY.

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TERNITY, ETERNITY, *eternity*! My reader, where will you spend it? Live to eternity you must, for you are an immortal soul. The life you have naturally, came originally from God, *the eternal God*. "The Lord God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became *a living soul*." All have a life from God that *must endure for ever*. Every one of Adam's race will exist for eternity.

Sin entered through the fall, and death is sin's wage; but death is not cessation of existence, but separation of soul and body, the latter going to corruption until resurrection. The soul lives on; is immortal; cannot die; it came from God, *the eternal God*. He will reunite soul and body by

Divine power. The sinner who dies in his sins, will be raised for judgment; the believer in Jesus, will be raised in glory. Which are *you*?

You must be in one class or the other,—a sinner in your sins; or a believer in Jesus, with your sins washed away by *His precious blood*. Every pulse you beat, every breath you draw, every moment you live, brings you nearer, and nearer, and nearer still to eternity. Eternity, *eternity*, ETERNITY! Ponder, my reader, I beseech you, this solemn word. Face it you must; and woe, woe, woe to those who enter it in their sins. Are you in yours? Blessed indeed are they who are ready to meet it, through faith in God's dear Son. Are you ready?

Stop, sinner, stop in your mad career of sin. Worldling, pleasure-seeker, careless one, religious professor, stop. Stop *now*; another moment may be too late. You are rushing on to eternal woe. Blinded, duped, deceived by Satan, led captive in your sins, a moment more and you may find yourself his victim for ever. Thanks be to God, it is not yet too late. Again the warning cry is sounded in your ears, "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos iv. 12). But how are you to escape judgment, and be prepared? The way is simple; it is God's own way. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Bow before Him in self-judgment, owning your sin, confessing your guilt. "Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). God has provided a Saviour, exactly suited to your deep, deep need. Christ is that Saviour.

Guilty and lost you are, if still unconverted; death, judgment, and hell—hell for eternity—lie before you, but He is *mighty to save*. *Believe on Him*, and pardon of sins, salvation from hell, peace with God, meetness for glory, all things *are yours*. Yours now, yours this moment, by simple faith. Will you trust Him? Will you venture your all on Christ? *Without Him*, a hopeless, Christless doom is yours, the blackness of darkness for eternity (Jude 13). *With Him*, an eternity of blessedness and joy is your sure and glorious portion. Eternity is before you; eternity is at your door; will you decide for Christ now?

Eternity, *eternity*, ETERNITY, where will you spend it?

Is it the *world* that holds you back? God says, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

Is it the *fear of man* that holds you back? God says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare" (Prov. xxix. 25).

Is it *Satan* whispering, "Time enough yet." God says, "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"Too many stay away,  
Too many still delay;  
Will you, poor sinner, come?"

Come to the Saviour; come, while 'tis salvation's day; come now. Christ is waiting to receive



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sinners, saying, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John iv. 37).

"Come to Jesus, just now ;  
He will save you just now ;  
Only trust Him, just now."

Can you go on another day resisting the wondrous grace of a Saviour God ? "How shall we escape, if we neglect *so great salvation* ?" (Heb. ii. 3.) The Holy One who inhabiteth eternity bids you come. Come now to Jesus, the Christ of God, the only Saviour, and His precious blood will make you meet for His holy presence. Delay, and if the Lord Himself should return, or death were to overtake you, His holiness will bar your entrance there, and demand your eternal exclusion.

Infatuated, deluded soul, give heed, I pray you, to the gracious warning. Eternal issues depend upon your decision. You cannot have the world and heaven too. It is Christ and heaven, or the world and hell. Which, then, is it to be ? The unsatisfying vanities, follies, and lusts of a world without God, under the power of Satan, and a Christless eternity in hell ? or, pardon and peace now, Christ in the fulness of His glorious Person, and joys and pleasures at God's right hand for evermore ? (Psalm xvi. 11.) Alas, for the folly of fallen man, that he should be so blind to his own eternal interests, preferring to be the captive of Satan, a slave to the world's fashions and ways, than to be the freedman of Christ, and enjoy the eternal liberty of the abounding grace of God.

What is the world after all? Ah, poor worldling, you who have drunk deeply of its greatest pleasures, the pleasures of sin, are you satisfied? are you happy? Happy! ah, maybe you are seeking to persuade yourself that you are; but if God were to say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," how then? With death right before, and all a blank beyond,—nothing but darkness in the soul, no light from God,—how then? And His word ringing in your ears, "After this the judgment," how then? A sinner, with a misspent life, called to give an account, how then? God neglected, Christ rejected, the Spirit resisted, the word refused, how then?

Which is it to be,—sin, death, judgment, and hell for eternity? or, Christ, life, salvation, and glory for eternity? "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36). Now is God's day of salvation, is it yours? Satan whispers again, "Time enough yet." Sinners, hugging their sins, loving the world and present ease, lend a willing ear to the archdeceiver, liar, and murderer from the beginning. Reader of these lines, you will never be able to plead ignorance, or that you were never warned. Plainly, faithfully, lovingly would I warn you, that nothing but "hell for eternity" is your sure position, if you die in your sins. But God has provided eternal salvation. It cost the blood of Christ, and is now free for you,—*a free salvation.*

## A BOOK WITH ONLY ONE WORD.

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It is offered to you, and you may have it now,—*a present salvation*. It is infinite in its fulness,—*a great salvation*. It is provided alike for all everywhere—*a common salvation*. And it will land you safely in the glory of God for ever,—*an eternal salvation*.

This is the glorious *salvation of God*, worthy of the Blessed One in whose heart of love it was planned. Superabounding grace waits still upon you, sinner, to receive it by faith. *Believe on the Son of God*, and this salvation is yours now, yours for ever. Henceforth are you one of the richly blessed ones, who have obtained *the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory?* (2 Tim. ii. 10).

Eternity, *eternity*, ETERNITY! where will you spend it?

E. H. C.

## A BOOK WITH ONLY ONE WORD.



WHEN in Indianapolis, some time ago, a Christian related to me his past life and conversion to God by the Gospel. He said: "When I was young my mother died, and I became reckless, caring for nothing, and lived without God, and only for myself. My mother was a Christian, and had often prayed for me. One night I

was sleeping, and as I slept I dreamed that a book was placed before me, and on its page was to be seen but one word, and that word was 'Repent.' My mother appeared in my dream, and with her finger pointed to the word, and as she pointed she looked at me and vanished.

"I lived on in my sin years after this, but the word '*Repent*' ever went with me—seemed never to leave me—it followed me everywhere. The book, the word, and my mother's finger pointing to the word, were always at hand.

"A little ago, a servant of Christ came to this town, and preached in one of the theatres, and I went to hear him. On one occasion he was preaching on the great love of God, that '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). As he went on, letting out and describing the great love and goodness of God, my poor heart was melted, broken down, and gave way for the first time in my life. I saw what I was, and had been, notwithstanding this warning to repent, — a poor, God-hating, Christ-rejecting sinner. But I saw also God giving His Son for me, and Jesus dying on the cross for me, bearing my sins in His own body there. I saw, I believed, and was saved. And though I have learned much precious truth since, yet it was then that the goodness of God led me to repentance, and to believe on the Saviour to life everlasting."

In this simple, yet blessed rehearsal, we learn how persistently the Good Shepherd goes after the lost sheep, *until He finds it*; and how it is the *goodness of God* that leads any sinner to repentance,—“Repentance to salvation not to be repented of.”

“God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed: then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man” (Job xxxiii. 14-47). It was so in this man’s case; God came to him in the midnight watch, when fast asleep, and caused him to see this book, and the solitary word in the book, and his beloved mother pointing to the word “Repent;” and ever after kept that word pressing on his conscience, until the sweet tale of His own infinite love, in the giving and dying of His own Son, for His enemies, broke him down and won his heart. It was a triumph of grace divine; Satan was defeated, and the brand was plucked out of the fire.

Reader, think of that book and its solitary word—**REPENT!** From Genesis to Malachi, it is *Repent*; and from Matthew to Revelation it is *Repent*. “Repent, and turn to God.” “God commandeth all men, everywhere, to *repent*” (Acts xvii. 30). “Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke xiii. 3). It is the voice of God to men,—men

of every class and condition, of every clime and colour. The eternal God, from His eternal throne, calls upon man—His guilty rebel creature—to repent and turn to Him.

Now, my friend, have you heard His voice? have you obeyed His command? have you yielded to His goodness that leads to repentance? have you bowed at His footstool, in all your solitary guilt and wretchedness, and prayed, "I have sinned. God be merciful to me a sinner"?

If so, let me tell you that the attitude of your soul, your self-abasement, and self-judgment, and the full confession of your sins to God, has caused joy in the presence of the angels above. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke xv. 10). Oh, how intensely Heaven is interested in man's repentance and salvation! Would that man was as interested!

But more, the sinner's attitude of repentance leaves God free to act according to the love and mercy of His heart. "He freely justifies by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). The father of the prodigal had the embrace, the kiss, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, a place in the house at his table, all ready for him the moment he returned in the spirit of repentance, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son" (Luke xv.).

As it is impossible for God to lie, so, beloved reader, it is morally impossible for the sinner to be

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saved without turning to God in repentance. "Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," go together. Remember the book and the solitary word—REPENT.

E. A.

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A WONDERFUL CORN OF WHEAT.


FEW weeks ago, whilst passing through the village of Hanwell, my attention was arrested by a thick bunch of wheat displayed in the window of a baker's shop. I had often seen bunches of wheat thus displayed, but never one like this. There were sixty-three stalks, *all from one root*, and a label declared that the yield of 3683 grains from the sixty-three ears was the production of one grain of wheat.

Passing recently by the shop with a Christian friend, I called his attention to the specimen, remarking that I could scarcely believe that a single grain was the cause of the tuft before us. My remark was overheard by the baker, who, unobserved by us, was standing at the door of his shop. He kindly came round the corner, where we were looking at the wheat as it stood in a side window, and began to assure us of the fact of the wonderful tuft being the produce of *a single grain*.

After some further conversation, suddenly looking at him, I said, "Well, now I come to think of it, I know of a production *far more wonderfully prolific* from a single grain." Upon hearing this our baker friend seemed rather crestfallen, evidently not liking the idea of a rival curiosity. My friend corroborated my statement, whereupon the man, quite interested, asked where it could be seen.

"Twelfth chapter of John's gospel, 24th verse," said my friend, and I quoted the passage at length,—"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." And then we pointed him to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour, showing how that, unless He had given up His life, He would have had to go back to the glory without saving a single soul; but that, having died to satisfy and glorify God about the immense question of sin, that shut out man from His presence, God raised Him from amongst the dead by His right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins; and now—fruit of the travail of His soul—there are associated with Him, yea, united to Him by God the Holy Ghost, countless multitudes of men, women, and children—millions upon millions—who, their sins washed away in His precious, precious blood, are destined to be conformed, by the same mighty power that raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, to His own blessed image; all the result, not of their own works, prayers, tears, Bible-reading, or other



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merit whatever — mark that — but of His work (Eph. ii. 10), His merit (Eph. i. 3–6), His prayers (John xvii. 24); in short, of His becoming the blessed *corn of wheat*, going on to the cross, and into the dust of death, in perfect obedience to the will of God, and for the glory of God. Now, raised from amongst the dead to highest glory, there He sits to-day, a Man, a real living Man, in the glory of God, the sure pledge that every soul who trusts Him shall be there, with, and like Him (John xiv. 19; Col. iii. 3, 4; 1 John iii. 1, 2).

Well, the only response we could get from this poor man was, that we, because we averred that we were *saved* through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Word of God, were setting up ourselves as better than others, like the wretched Pharisee of Luke xviii.; and, further, that one of the most learned men of this day—(“educated at Oxford,” he took care to explain)—had lately stated, in the course of a lecture, that the laws contained in Moses’ writings were such that no court of justice in the present day would receive or notice them.

This was surely a mere “shift,” just like the poor sinner at Samaria’s well, who, when her conscience was reached, turned from the subject under the Lord’s consideration to something else. We, however, answered the man (Prov. xxvi. 5), asking him if he believed that Christ was the Son of God, and that the New Testament was part of the Word of God. On receiving his answer in the affirmative, we pointed him to John v., where the Son of God

vouches for the Divine inspiration and authority of Moses' writings; and with respect to the learned lecturer mentioned above, we called attention to 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Now, dear reader, what is this precious corn of wheat to you? What think ye of Christ? Do you know that YOUR ETERNITY of weal or woe hangs upon the answer you are able to make in the presence of God?

On parting with our baker friend, we pointed out that, whenever he looked upon his wonderful specimen, he would remember that the Christ of God died in order that sinners might be saved and brought to God. You, dear reader, have not what that man has to call these things to mind; but oh! I say, you have the twelfth chapter of John, and if you turn away from THE Saviour, refusing to receive His loving offers of pardon and peace, eternal life and glory, you need only cast your eyes down the chapter, and you may gather some idea of what awaits, inevitably awaits, *you*. "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 47, 48).

C. C. W.

To ensure your eternal damnation, my unsaved friend, you need do no heinous sin. You have only to go quietly on as you are, neglecting salvation, and your place in hell is sure.

W. T. P. W.

## "SETTLED."

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**W**HAT is settled? I think I hear my reader say, "Oh, that I could find something that was settled! I would rest my soul there, and find at last what I have longed for and hitherto failed to obtain; for, to say the truth, I am restless, and still seeking for something I hardly know what, only that word settled seems to be the key to what I want. What is it? Can you tell me of anything that is settled, and where?"

By the grace of God, I can. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89).

Is that enough for you? I want no more. Happy are they who trust in Him; for I cannot disconnect the word from Him who speaks, for it is His voice. Do you hear it, and rest on that word?

There are two sets of people in the world. The one obey God's word, the other oppose it. The first set are blessed, and happy in proportion as they are found doing it; as the Lord said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John xiii. 17). These, however poor and humble, only need to be encouraged to more earnest diligence in seeking to God's word, and to continuance in prayer, that their souls may prosper more and more, as each one for himself is found hearkening to God.

Those who oppose the word of Jehovah, are dashing themselves against an immovable rock, and if persistent in doing so, must perish.

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” What can move that? But that can move you, and I pray God it may now, for it concerns you. It is written, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John xii. 48). May you, my reader, be among the number of those who by grace build upon that rock which no storm can ever shake. Will not every doubting heart drop the anchor of its soul in this eternal haven of rest,—the truth of the Living God,—and be settled too? “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” R. B.

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“WHEN is the next train?” I heard a man breathlessly ask, as he ran along the platform, vainly endeavouring to enter a train in motion, of which every door was shut and locked. Annoyed at missing the “express,” he was fain to accept a “slow” an hour after. I thought what a picture that is of many a sinner just half a minute too late in coming to Christ. When the Lord comes the door of mercy—of heaven too—will be shut. For all late comers how awful will be the shock. Fancy a man in earnest to be saved, but just half a minute too late. There will be no “slow” to glory following the “express.” Reader, are you “in Christ,” or still outside in procrastinating unbelief? Beware of delay!

W. T. P. W.

## "I'M WAITING FOR A SIGNET."

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ONE summer morning I started with a party of young friends to visit a little village about five miles distant, of much historical interest.

It is said that some of the battles in the Wars of the Roses were fought there, but no traces of war can now be seen; the soft turf and grazing cattle forbid the thought of bloodshed, or the clash of arms.

While my party were climbing the mounts, and exploring the moat, which I already knew so well, I turned my steps towards some cottages, asking my God and Father to give His child a message of peace to some heart there.

The village lay bathed in sunlight, and the inhabitants surely knew but little of the strain, and hurry, and bustle of life; for not a soul was to be seen, or a sound to be heard in the quiet street.

I knocked at a door which stood ajar, and it was immediately opened by a bright-looking old woman.

I think I see her now, as she stood before me leaning upon her stick, her sweet old face furrowed with wrinkles and surrounded by a snowy cap tied under her chin; her short cotton gown just down to her ankles, covered by a clean white apron, and

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the little time-honoured three-cornered shawl pinned over her shoulders.

A look of surprise came into her face as she saw a stranger at the door, but she responded to my "Good morning" with a low curtsy, and said, with a smile, "Will you please to walk in, miss?" Wiping a chair, upon which there was not a speck of dust, she placed it for me, and then seated herself opposite in the chimney corner.

After a little friendly chat, during which she told me she was over eighty, I said, "May I ask you if you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" Without a moment's hesitation she clasped her hands together, and looking up, said, with deep earnestness, "I love His blessed name!"

The answer came so unexpectedly, it was so different from what one so often receives in reply to such a question, that it thrilled me with delight. "Oh, I am so glad," I said; "then He is your Saviour, and your sins are forgiven!"

The brightness faded from her face, and slowly she replied, "Why no, miss; I should not like to say that."

"Not saved," I said, "and yet you 'love His blessed name!' Why, my friend, how is that?"

"I'm waiting for a signet, miss. My mother had a signet afore she died. She see the Saviour hanging on the cross right agin the foot of the bed. He held out His arms to her, and said, 'Come unto Me;' and then she felt very happy, and she knew she was all right. And I'm looking to have such a sight when my time comes."

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I confess I was disappointed.

To think that this poor old dear had been taught by the Spirit of God to *believe* in and to *love* the Lord, and yet she did not know that “he that *believeth* on the Son *hath* everlasting life” (John iii. 36).

“You are making a great mistake, my dear old friend,” I said. “Never, from beginning to end of the Bible, will you find that God promises you a sign.”

“Why, don’t He, now? Well, I’m no scholard, miss.”

“Let me tell you what He does say. Shall I?”

“If you please, miss.”

“Well, first of all, will you tell me what sort of people Jesus died for?”

“Why,” she replied quickly, “*in course* He died for good people.”

“Did He?” I said. “My Bible does not say so. Think again.”

“Well there, I can’t find it in my mind to tell you, miss.”

So I took my little Testament, and read very slowly and distinctly from the fifth chapter of Romans, eighth verse:—“God commendeth his love towards us in *that* while we were *yet sinners*, Christ died for us.”

I read it twice, and on looking up the second time, was surprised to see the tears coursing each other down the dear old lady’s cheeks. Oh! the power of God’s Word!

"Well," I said, "*now* what sort of people did Jesus die for?"

She did not speak; her feelings choked her, and I waited anxiously for her answer.

At last it came, and it was worth waiting for.

"Well, there. I never heard the like o' that. Why, it says He died for *sinner*s, and *I'm* a sinner! He must ha' died for me."

"Of course He did. How glad I am you know it," I replied.

"And to think I should never ha' knowed it afore! I do love His blessed name!"

Only those who are privileged to carry God's blessed message of love, and, so, often have to tell it to deaf ears and dull hearts, know the joy of seeing it received and believed in with such childlike simplicity. And if it be joy to the messenger, what must it be to the Master! He sees of the fruit of the "*travail of his soul, and is satisfied.*"

Reader, have you satisfied the heart of the Saviour-God?

I found afterwards that my old lady had long known and loved the Lord Jesus. He was her joy and comfort.

But one thing was wrong. She knew she was not what a holy God could call *good*. Still she hoped to become better, and that at the end God would forgive her. But there was no *rest* for her heart in this. How could there be? Suppose she never got good enough for God. No wonder she could not say she was saved. But God saw her



heart's deep need, and light from heaven flashed in upon her soul even now. By faith she saw that the One she loved and trusted had made *Himself* chargeable with her eternal salvation.

Not because she *was* good, but because she was *not* good. He, who is now in heaven, had been down to earth, and in His own body had received from God the sentence which had been passed upon her: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Yet He was without spot or blemish—"knew no sin!"

O wondrous sight! God's own Son, the Prince of Life, hangs dead upon the cross!

Why? Sinner, it was for thee!

Thus *only* could thy sin be atoned for, else wouldst thou suffer for it for ever in hell.

See how God loves you. Rather than that you, the guilty one, should perish, He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21).

And now, in glory, the man Christ Jesus answers to God for everything that is against the sinner who trusts Him. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God" (Rom. viii. 33, 34).

That is what the old lady now saw for the first time, and from that moment she never doubted her salvation again.

I saw her but a few times after this.

"Bless yer sweet face," she would say, as I entered her little cottage. But she is gone home now, and I shall soon see her again where we shall together gaze upon *His face* who has won our hearts by His unutterable love, and taught our lips to say, "I love His blessed name!"

Unseen we love Thee, dear Thy name ;  
But when our eyes behold  
With joyful wonder, we'll exclaim,  
"The half had not been told."

For Thou exceedest all the fame  
Our ears have ever heard ;  
How happy we who know Thy name,  
And trust Thy faithful word !

J. W.

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## TWO SOLEMN SIGHTS.

(Eccles. viii. 10. Rev. xx. 11-15.)



AND so *I saw* the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done" (Eccles. viii. 10).

They had *come* and *gone* from the place of the holy. They had mingled with the people of God, possibly had taken part in the

same religious observances, but their condition remained unchanged. Maybe they were looked up to, respected, favoured, courted. But they remained in their sins, unsaved, unpardoned, and unblest.

The wheel of time turns round. They still *come*, and they still *go*, unblest. At last an unwelcome visitor appears; they start, they shrink back, terror lays hold on them as he makes himself known and felt. It is DEATH. Then he stretches out his cold icy hand, clutches them with his iron grasp, and stills the throbbings of their hearts for ever.

Solomon says, "*I saw them buried.*" The long mournful procession moved along. Every tribute of respect and honour was paid to the departed, but it was the burial of the wicked, and the ungodly sinners were borne along and laid in their graves.

They had run their course. Their sun had set. And the terrible gloom of that eternal night, which knows no morning, had thrown its thick heavy pall around them. The dark curtain of death had fallen, and their guilty souls had passed away into eternity. The last office was performed, and their bodies were deposited in the silent tomb, to await that moment when the voice of the Son of God shall call them forth to the resurrection of damnation (John v. 28, 29).

Poor, godless, careless souls! Their time history is soon told. They *lived*, they *died*, they were *buried*, and they were *forgotten*.

Can we follow them farther? Yes, indeed! The

Spirit of God draws the curtain aside, and gives us a glimpse into the other world, and shows us what Solomon with all his wisdom could never make known. Solomon leaves them in the grave, *forgotten* by man. The hand of God sweeps aside the veil for a moment, when, to our horror, we see them *forsaken* by God, and *suffering* in hell (Luke xvi.).

How solemn the sight that met the gaze of the Preacher in Ecclesiastes viii. 10. But how much more deeply solemn the scene revealed to the apostle in Revelation xx. 11-15.

“And *I saw* the dead, small and great, stand before the throne; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were *judged* out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

Alas! alas! alas for the Christless souls! The sea, and death, and hell can no longer retain their captives, when the voice of the Son of God calls them forth to the resurrection of judgment. They rise to face Him whom they once despised. Their wasted, misspent lives are fully manifested. Every act is brought out. Nothing can be covered up. All, all is manifested by the dazzling brightness of that great white throne. The book of life is opened, but their names are not written there. Maybe they were written in church registers, class books, or communion rolls here, but not in the book of life up there. And at the word of the Judge they are

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seized and cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

O ye who are regular attenders at meetings, who have *come* and *gone* so often, who have heard thrilling addresses, but remain in your sins, BEWARE!

Showers of blessing have fallen, but you have never participated in it. Neighbours, relatives, friends have received mercy, but you have refused it. Wave upon wave of blessing has rolled over the land, and carried thousands of precious souls into liberty and peace. But like a rock you have remained immovable in your sins, Christless, careless, and hardened.

For your soul's sake trifle no longer. The wheel of time is turning; there is no stopping it. Your life is shortening as each breath passes your lips. Your opportunities for blessing are getting fewer. Soon you will attend the meeting for the last time. Oh, listen to the truth, and believe it, while you have the chance. "It has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to *save* them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21). And, "Faith cometh by *hearing*" (Rom. x. 17).

God sends out a message of peace and blessing to you. He is crying out, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24). What a ransom! None other than His own well-beloved Son. And, thank God, the work that saves your soul is *done*. *Done* by Jesus long ago at the cross. No works of yours are needed now that Jesus has cried out, "It is finished."

God does not want your *works, tears, prayers, or feelings*, but your *faith*. "By grace are ye saved, through *faith*" (Eph. ii. 8). Believe in Him who has done all at the cross, then His word to you is, "*Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace*" (Luke vii. 50). Then should you pass away to be with Christ, we shall not sorrow as those who have *no hope*, knowing you shall have part in the first resurrection, and that on such the second death hath no power (Rev. xx. 6).

W. E.



## "ARE THERE FEW THAT BE SAVED?"

(Read Luke xiii.)



THE Spirit of God has grouped together in this chapter incidents and scenes very different in their character, but they are put together to give us a beautiful moral picture from which we may learn deep lessons, if only our ear be opened to what the Lord would teach us.

You have the Lord here bringing out those words of grace and of truth which are so needed by you and me,—words which touch the heart, and which reach the conscience too.

It is a great thing, my reader, to have the con-

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science reached, and God's Spirit seeks to do this, to bring men and women to a true sense of who they are and what they are in God's presence. The first two incidents in this chapter the Lord brings up for this purpose, to bring the conscience into the light of God's presence.

People had looked on and had thought that these must have been very wicked people to meet with so very terrible a calamity, or on whom this great suffering came, but the Lord says, “I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.”

Let these solemn words of Christ reach your conscience, my reader, for they concern you. They leave out none, old or young, rich or poor, scientific or ignorant. “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” I ask you, have you repented? A person may be very religious and yet never have repented; he may be beautifully moral in his ways and yet never have repented; he may be a first-rate citizen, a good husband and father, and yet know nothing of repentance. Do you say, “What is repentance?” Ah, my friend, your very question proves you know nothing about it. When a man repents he judges the whole of his life as one grand mistake, because, till a man is brought to do with God, what is he living for? He is living for time and not for eternity; he is living for the world and not for God; and he is resting on himself and not on Christ.

Such a man is saying, like Job, “My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.” He may

not put it in so many words, but he likes to be thought a good citizen, a good neighbour, a good husband and father, or whatever it may be. A man who repents judges his whole life as utterly wrong; he must do so as soon as he gets into God's presence. While we measure ourselves with man we are very contented, but the moment I measure myself by God's standard I say, "Woe is me!"

Do you ask what is God's standard? God's standard is Christ, and when I measure myself by Christ what do I find? That everything about me is a total failure.

Ver. 6. "He spake also this parable. A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon and found none." God was looking for fruit from man's heart, and what is fruit? That which will suit God. Man, as a creature of God, is responsible to bring to God that which will suit Him as the Creator. Has he brought it? "He found *none*." Do you think there has been anything in your life suited to God? If you think so, my reader, you have been totally deceived. If you have not been brought to Christ there has not been one single thing that God could own as suited to Him, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh."

It is not only three years that He has been seeking fruit in your case: it may have been thirty, or forty, or even sixty, that He has had His eye upon you, and finding no fruit, and it may be the solemn command concerning you has gone forth, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"



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You are a cumberer of the ground if you are not bringing forth fruit to God. Ah, my reader, thank God that you were not cut down yesterday in your sins. You owe your life to Christ, to His work, to His pleading "Let it alone." Why does He let you alone? To give you an opportunity of bringing forth fruit.

How can I bring forth fruit? do you ask. You cannot unless the seed has been first put in. Have you believed the Gospel? Have you received Christ by faith into your heart? Then only can there be fruit to God.

Ah, my reader, the Lord is drawing near to you, and He is seeking to make you fruitful. You can only receive blessing as the result of the absolute grace of God.

Ver. 11. "And behold there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her he called her to him and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God." Look at this incident. This woman is the very picture of a sinner in his sins. Did she call to Jesus? turn to Jesus? No, she did nothing; He called to her when He saw her. It is a true picture of the grace of God. Satan had bound this woman, and Satan binds you in your sins. You may think you are free, but you are *bound* by Satan. Yes, and unless God in His mercy delivers

you, you will find out in the depths of hell that Satan had bound you, and blinded you, and led you on to destruction.

Do you ask then, as they asked in this chapter, "If Satan thus binds men, 'Are there few that be saved?'"

The Lord does not answer idle curiosity, but He turns round and says to them, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." If a man wants salvation he may have it, for Christ says, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved."

The Gospel is the unfolding of what God has done for the sinner, not of what the sinner has to do for God. The Gospel proclaims to you that though you are in your sins, Christ came down from heaven, and suffered and bled and died that if you turn round to Him you might be saved.

It is a strait gate, because you can only go in one at a time. It is individual. The faithful wife cannot take in her husband by her side, nor can the believing husband take in the wife. You must go in alone. The gate is so narrow that you must go through it without anything upon you. You must not be clothed with any righteousness of your own, nor with any good deeds of your own, nor with anything of your own at all. The gate is too strait to let you pass with any of your filthy rags upon you, but if you come as you are without any attempt to clothe yourself, you may enter in at that strait gate, and find it has led you to life everlasting.

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“I am the door,” Christ says, and not only “by me if any man enter in he shall be saved,” but also “*and shall go in and out and find pasture.*” There is liberty, and the soul is fed. The man of the world is always looking about for something to make him happy. The Christian carries about with him something that makes him happy always.

“Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door.” I believe the day is near when the door will be shut, when the last note of warning will have been given, when the Lord will have come and taken all His people out of this scene. Every preacher of the Gospel will then be gone, and there will come a time of terrible awakening, when many will cry, “Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say, I never knew you.” Oh, what a terrible thing for the Lord to deny all knowledge of you in that day!

You may have eaten and drunk in his presence. You may have been a communicant at His table, but you never believed in your heart; there is a missing link, and the Lord will say to you, “I tell you I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.”

Oh, what an awful discovery, after spending a long lifetime, thinking you are all right, to have all knowledge of you denied, and when you seek ingress to that door to find it shut, and you shut out and for ever refused entrance, and to hear the

Master of the house from within say to you, "Depart from me." Oh, let not that be your fate, my reader. To-day He is calling out, "*Come unto me.*" Will you not listen to His voice? How unspeakably awful to be called and not to come yourself; and then with your own eyes—eyes that will stream with tears unavailing—to see the saved go in, to hear the music and the singing, to see the happy portion of the believer, when for you it is *too late*. Oh, take salvation now, believe the Saviour now, before for you it is too late. Make it impossible for the Lord to deny you, in that day, by coming to Him now, when He is calling you and waiting for you. The one who owns Him now He will own then. He will never deny in that day one single soul that has come to Him now; He will confess him then before His Father and before the holy angels.

Will you not trust Jesus, my reader? And if you have trusted Him, own Him, confess Him, and seek to live for Him. Now is our only opportunity of living and witnessing for Him. In eternity we shall be with Him, resting, worshipping, adoring. Here, now, we may serve and please Him. That we should do so was the apostle Paul's fervent desire. "We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead: and he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). Shall not we judge likewise?

W. T. P. W.

## THE WRATH OF GOD.



HE moment sin came into the world, the wrath of God came in and rested on the sinner.

God's majesty was outraged, and the holiness of His nature demanded that sin should be punished. It was impossible for Him to pass over it without judgment, and the effects of that judgment upon man were the bringing in of death, by which his earthly life was cut short, his body returning to dust, his soul being ushered into eternity, to endure ages of weary waiting, until, in resurrection, he should stand before God's judgment throne, to receive sentence of eternal banishment from His presence to the place of outer darkness, there to spend an eternity of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Man has an immortal soul, and it follows that unless his sin could be put away, and God's unchangeable holiness satisfied about it, divine wrath *once* upon him must abide there throughout time and an endless eternity.

And *who* could put sin away?

Man, the offender, was outside paradise, and without strength. God might, as indeed He did, test and try him for forty long and weary centuries, but the trial merely demonstrated the sorrowful

fact of man's utter inability to deliver himself from that wrath that loomed over him, embittering his short life on earth, and threatening him with eternal woe in the dark future.

The universe might be searched, and still no creature found competent to deal with the question of sin, so as to take it clean out of the scene, clearing God's majesty from the insults put upon it, satisfying His holiness, and annulling its effects upon the sinner.

Here then are seen the respective positions of God and man. On the one hand, God—grieved, insulted, offended; pledged by His unalterable holiness to punish sin. On the other hand, man—polluted, wretched, helpless, groaning under the terrible burden of God's wrath; his prospects as to earth merely a few fleeting years of sorrow and toil; as to eternity, *hell*.

But GOD IS LOVE; and never before, throughout the course of eternity or time, had such an opportunity been afforded Him to display Himself as such. And what is more, it was just the occasion that He sought; yea, the opportunity which He in His omniscience had foreseen ere earth's foundations were laid.

It was in the redemption of man that God's love could be manifested, and apparently only a slight exercise of His power was needed to effect this; but GOD IS LIGHT, hence something more than *power* was required for man's deliverance; *atonement* was needed, that wonderful work, which meets the

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claims of righteousness and forms the medium for the revelation of love divine.

And the wonderful Book of God, that slowly and patiently evolves the ways and purposes of God, and the history of man down to the point at which we have arrived, now reveals to us One whose dwelling-place from eternity was the Father's bosom; discloses Him who came from the realms of light and glory with that wonderful utterance, "*Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.*"

Thus Jesus, the Father's well-beloved Son, came to this earth to do that Father's will—a will that had for its object the putting away of sin, and the salvation of the sinner, but a will that could only be accomplished *by the sacrifice of Himself.*

And yet He came, and in His life on earth was God's faithful and true Witness. Never deviating from that path of fragrant testimony for God, He journeys on until Gethsemane is reached, where, bending before the Father in the perfection of that obedience and self-surrender that became the One charged with the mighty work of human redemption, He Himself accepts the cup of wrath the sinner should have drunk. "Father, not my will, but thine be done," He says; and passing onward to the cross, drains that bitter cup to its very dregs. He who knew no sin is *made* sin, and as such is subjected to the infliction of divine wrath.

Mysterious sight! the Holy One of God has taken the place of the sinner, *and God's wrath falls on Him.*

But He was there experiencing divine judgment in order that the lost children of the first man might be saved. The only way by which the wrath of God could be removed from them was for Christ Himself to bear it.

Heaven veiled its face at the awful sight; earth shook and trembled. The dying Son of God cried out, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken ME?*" and gave up the ghost. The blood of atonement answers the thrust of the soldier's spear. The veil of the temple is rent in twain from top to bottom by God's mighty hand. Halleluia! The Father's will is done; atonement for sin made; God's purpose fulfilled; man's redemption accomplished.

That mystic veil, *entire*, had ever been the solemn witness of God's place and man's. God was *inside*, man *outside*; the sad proof, too, that no way into His presence had yet been found.

The same veil, *rent*, is the blessed pledge that a way has *now* been made; yea, that God in righteous love has Himself come *out* to take the sinner *in*.

And Jesus rose and ascended into glory; and the Holy Ghost came down to earth to remind the world of those wonderful words spoken while Jesus was yet here, "*The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John iii. 35, 36).

Thus are we brought down by successive stages to the present moment, and the light of eternal



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truth streams in upon, and makes manifest, the present condition of men and things.

We have seen that God's wrath abode upon Adam fallen, and that it pursued and rested on each member of his family. Now the death of Christ has not altered the fact of man being under wrath through sin. Nay, the Word of God is precise and positive in its assertion, that *His wrath abides on every unbeliever alive at this moment on earth.*

BUT, as the result of that death, the Holy Ghost, for nearly nineteen centuries, has made the wonderful announcement to mankind that whosoever believeth on the Son is at once delivered from the wrath, and receives everlasting life.

Christ has come in between the sinner and God, that by the shedding of His own precious blood of atonement He might bring together the twain, and God's answer to that glorious work is His offer to eternally deliver from wrath all who believe on the Son.

Reader, have *you* got everlasting life? or is the wrath of God still abiding on you?

What an exchange! "Everlasting life," in lieu of the "wrath of God." Do you inquire how you are to obtain this? The Spirit answers, "*Through believing on the Son.*"

Is it strange to you that God's wrath is removed from the sinner, and everlasting life gained by him the moment he believes in Jesus?

Ah! have you not heard that the Father loveth the Son? The heartless world might see no beauty

in Jesus of Nazareth, and in its haste to rid itself of His presence might hurry Him to the cross; but the Father loves the Son, and has given expression to that love by causing the sinner's acceptance, deliverance, and eternal blessing to depend exclusively upon that Son's atoning work, by making it the sole way and medium to the Father's presence.

God's word to man is now no longer "He that keepeth my holy laws shall live," but "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." *Your* works of righteousness and goodness, *your* piety and religiousness, *your* endeavours and resolves, are as nothing to the Father who loves the Son, and has given all things into His hands. *He* is the only Saviour, and can only be found, and His salvation obtained, through faith. "*He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life.*" You may possess every known virtue, your reputation may be spotlessly perfect, and your attention to religious duties most scrupulous, but for all that, unless you have the Son you have not life, but are still a poor lost child of Adam, with the wrath of God abiding on you. Remember, "*He that hath the Son HATH LIFE, and he that hath not the Son of God HATH NOT LIFE*" (1 John v. 12).

Do you desire to add anything to that, dear reader? Then you must live and die with that wrath abiding on you. Are you content to come to Jesus as a poor, heavy-laden, helpless sinner, resting simply on the value of His blood? Then the wrath shall at once be removed, and you shall dwell with God's beloved through God's eternal day.

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But the world is full of careless ones led captive by the devil, and willingly ignorant of their terrible destiny, and I now address myself to such, while in love to their perishing souls, and that their blood may not be upon my hands, I inquire,—Is it nothing to you *that the wrath of God is this moment abiding on you?* Is it a matter of no concern to you that, whether awake or asleep, whether eating or drinking, in gay mood or sorrowful, that wrath HAS BEEN, and IS abiding. Yea, and will, if you die unsaved, FOR EVER abide on you!

Satan may make the world pleasant and attractive, and lead you to count on a long term of existence in it, but that does not alter the terrible fact that *the wrath of God abides on you.*

You may be young and amiable, talented and beautiful, your company courted, and your virtues esteemed, but none of this can affect the solemn truth that *the wrath of God abides on you.*

You may scoff and sneer, and call these truths old-fashioned ideas, and inconvenient, but for all that, there, on the page of eternal truth, is inscribed the terrible record, that *the wrath of God abides on YOU.*

Yes, on *you*, young men and maidens; on *you*, fathers and mothers; on *you* of the hoary head; on each and every one of you, who are yet in your sins.

Business may occupy one, pleasure another, the cares of a family others, but there, naked and terrible on the page of holy writ, is revealed the

awful truth, that *the wrath of God abides on all who have not believed on the Son.*

And if you persist in rejecting that Son, you will *die* with that wrath upon you; you will *wake up in eternity* with it still abiding on you; you will find it eternal in its duration, unendurable in its effects, you will experience no alleviation of its torment; the everlasting ages will roll on in endless succession, but the wrath of God will still abide upon your lost soul, with all its resistless, quenchless, accumulated force.

Sinner! surely your heart grows faint at the terrible thought. Oh, while there is yet time, I implore you, as you love your soul, to give heed to that Spirit of grace who still pleads with thee, pointing you for refuge from this fearful wrath to Jesus the Saviour, *once* at Calvary, *now* in glory. Hark, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands; HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE."

Oh! accept the gracious invitation, and come this moment to that Son. God is offering thee the blessed fruits of that death—salvation from the consequences of your sin, for Jesus has suffered that you might never suffer.

Have you accepted it, my reader? I warn you that there is not a moment to be lost, for listen, the Spirit proceeds—God grant His solemn words may not be prophetic of your doom—"He that believeth not the Son SHALL NOT SEE LIFE, BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM."

W. H. S.

## NO TIME TO LOSE.



“**V**E HAD PLENTY OF TIME,” was the brief but ominous statement of a Christian man at the funeral of one who had died suddenly.

He had reached all but the extreme limit, and therefore he had many an opportunity for the settlement of the most momentous question in life.

He had plenty of time to eat and drink, plenty of time to buy and sell, plenty of time to make merry and live gaily—all that, and much more—plenty of time, too, to look into the future and to ask himself how things stood with him in reference to it—plenty of time to repent, to believe, to be forgiven, to become a child of God, and to live to His glory. But were these last done?

Now, my reader, I feel sure that you too have had plenty of time for this. Have you not? I can't tell your age, but it is not necessary to become old and greyheaded in order to have salvation. No; this is a question that should be settled *at once!* Every moment makes it more serious. Oh! look into your future. Is it all dark and full of uncertainty? You feel that you have sinned, and the dread of meeting God is at times intolerable.

Many a young person makes this plan in his soul, that a short time before death he will devote all his attention to the matter of salvation, will acknow-

ledge his guilt, and throw himself on the mercy of God. True, he is not certain that mercy will be shown him, yet he hopes so; and thus Satan lulls his conscience to sleep. He persuades himself that there is salvation at the eleventh hour; and, if he should spend the ten to himself, the few last moments will suffice.

But, unfortunately, there are two very forcible reasons against this common mode of procrastinating. The first is, that Scripture never speaks of an eleventh hour salvation. It loudly heralds a present salvation, and implies on every page that it may be *now or never*, and, just as "the Scripture cannot be broken," neither can it contradict itself. The passage that mentions an eleventh hour is dealing with workmen in a vineyard, and not with sinners in their sins. It is a householder in quest of labourers, and not a Saviour in quest of sinners (Matt. xx.); and a man who is a sinner cannot, as such, be a servant of God. The difference is most important.

And, second, if it did mean salvation, who can say that this is not the eleventh hour of his life?

The fact is, that no man had hired these labourers! They had stood all the day idle, and they accepted, notice, the very first offer. They did not once refuse. Who can say that he has not refused times without number? Have not you, my reader? Hence I return to my point, that God calls upon souls to come to an immediate decision, and gives abundant warning as to the consequences

of delay. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, . . . . but now thou art tormented."

Ah! reader, these "*good things!*" I pray you not to despise them — these invitations, warnings, mercies, corrections, all designed to lead you to repentance. Shall it be said to your soul by-and-by, and soon, for ought that you can tell, "*Remember,*" where memory—instead of being able to recall the moment when grace sought you, found you, cleansed you in the precious blood of Christ, made you a child of God, sustained you in your path of faith, and eventually placed you in glory—can only remind you of refusal after refusal—cold, heartless, deliberate refusal of every mercy God could show! What a retrospect, and what remorse will wring the soul that must endure such memories!


"I had plenty of time"—yes, plenty! Make use then of the present moment! The next may be too late! Are you a sinner? Come to Christ! Are you a great sinner? Come to Christ! Have you sins of scarlet dye? Come to Christ! His sufficiency is infinite. But *come now*—yes, COME NOW.

J. W. S.

PROCRASTINATION is the devil's most potent soul drug. Its effects are most certain and lethal. Know therefore, O halting sinner, that it has been well called "the thief of time,"—"the thief of souls,"—"the recruiting officer of hell." Avoid it as you would the lake of fire!

W. T. P. W.

## COPY THE FISHES.

“ AN you tell me what becomes of the fishes during a storm?” asked an old Christian man of some children one day. It seemed they had never thought of them in that time, and though rather struck by the question, were unable to find an answer.

He then told them that however wild the storm at sea, there was always an under-current of peaceful water (as it was only the surface which got troubled), and the fishes went down into it, and hid in the rocks beneath.

He drew from this little story a beautiful picture of Christians, who, however great their trials and difficulties, could always be at peace, even amid the “storms,” while trusting in the Lord Jesus, the “Rock of Ages.”

How comparatively few, though, do *rest in Him*, but, on the contrary, go with the tide of their difficulties, and so get crushed beneath the storm. Would that every one knew the sweetness of “casting all their burdens upon Him who cares for us,” and who would have His people without carefulness; and having committed their way unto the Lord in things small as well as great, find what it is to “be *still* and know that He is *God*.”



## THE COAL PIT AND THE "CAGE."



T was quite a new experience to find myself upwards of 170 fathoms beneath the surface of the earth. At first, however, it did not come up, or rather down, to the level of my expectation, for the state of matters below was not quite so dismal as I was led to expect. Close at the bottom of the shaft the excavation had been bricked and arched, the whole of it had been whitewashed, and two or three large lamps suspended from the ceiling gave a measure of light sufficient, after my eyes had become accustomed to the gloom, to enable me to discern objects, and thus avoid collision with human beings or "tubs," *i.e.*, trucks for carrying coal. Still it was dismal enough, for the whitewash had become dingy, and the lamps did not give overmuch light; but when, leaving this comparatively clean and airy space, we began to penetrate into the recesses of the mine, then it was that I began to realise that I was indeed in "an horrible pit."

Into these recesses—these long, low, dismal galleries, where the coal yet lies in its native bed in seams four feet and a half thick—the large lamp must not be taken on any account whatever; to do so, would be to peril the lives of hundreds of human beings, and property to the value of many thousands of pounds. The only lamps that are

permitted are the "Clary," "Geordie," or "Davy," lamps of scientific construction, designed to prevent explosion, for the mines are often full of dangerous gas, amid which the miners at times work at the peril of life and limb. Let the miner beware how he injures his lamp; if he does, he may forfeit his own life and destroy the lives of many others; and even though he does not do that, he will require to pay a fine of a sovereign or be dismissed.

It was by the light of a "Clary," the ray of which was scarcely as bright as that of a farthing candle, that we groped our way along through the thick darkness, our guide ever and anon calling out, "Take care of your feet," or, "Stoop your head;" most needful injunctions, for want of due attention to which I stumbled oft, and got more than one knock from the black beams overhead. But this had the effect of awakening reflection, and I began to think, Does not our present position, stumbling along through this visible darkness, illustrate the condition of sinners in this dark world, having no other guide than that of unassisted reason?

The "Clary" is certainly better than nothing, but how much better is the light of the sun? and reason is better than animal instinct, but how much better is the knowledge of Him who says, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"? And even the big lamps, which, when contrasted with this glimmering "Clary," may be compared to the brightest light that reason can shed, how dim are

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their rays! Besides, these scientific lamps do not always prevent explosions, and assuredly reason does not always restrain the wild rage of human passions. What folly, then, to reject revelation and substitute reason in its stead! And what folly to be content to live in darkness, when we may have "the light of life"! Yet this is what thousands are doing. Living in "an horrible pit," they turn away from the bright light that streams from heaven, and prefer to walk by the rushlight of their own vain thoughts, by "sparks of their own kindling."

Returning from our explorations, we again stood at the bottom of the shaft, and then turning to our very civil guide I propounded to him this question:

"Suppose there was no cage,\* how could we get out of this pit?"

Said our guide, "We could not get out at all."

"Then," said I, "you do not think we could climb up the 170 fathoms between us and the daylight?"

"Certainly not," said he.

"And supposing there was no Christ, how could we get to heaven?"

"We could not get at all," was the answer.

"But if we get into the cage, it takes us up to the daylight; and if we are in Christ, He takes us up to heaven. Is not that so?"

"Yes, it is," said the miner.

"Then Christ is our cage?"

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\* The machine for taking miners and minerals out of the pit.

"Yes," said he, thoughtfully, "He is our cage."

"And," said a brother in the Lord who was standing by, "when we are in the cage we don't require to work to get up, it is the cage that takes us up." And again the miner assented.

It would give me pleasure to be able to say that the miner, who apparently saw the force of the illustration, had actually got into the heavenly "cage" himself, but, alas, he had not. Like many other sinners, he saw the truth of salvation intellectually, but had never acted upon it; it had never reached his heart through the medium of his conscience, and so it had no power over him. Living in the "horrible pit" of a world at enmity with God, and with his soul defiled by the "miry clay" of sin, he had never availed himself of the salvation of God; and so to him the "cage" which alone can lift him or any one to the height of glory, is of no more advantage than if it had never existed. Alas, that there should be so many like him.

Several years ago I was speaking to a man and his wife in Canada about the gospel of the grace of God. "Oh," said the man, slightly, "that's too easy." Said his more enlightened wife, "It was very hard for Christ." This incident was recalled to my recollection by the conversation with my mining friend. It was a very easy matter for me to get out of the pit, for all that I had to do was to go into the cage, and I immediately soared to the sunlight. Nor can I believe that my Canadian friend, had he been there, would have thought the

way "too easy." But it cost the owner of the mine a very large sum of money to sink the shaft, and erect the machinery by which it could be made available. And it is very easy, provided only we have faith in God and a sense of our need of Him, to avail ourselves of His salvation. But oh, it was "very hard for Christ," before the shaft of love was sunk sufficiently deep to reach sinners who set at nought all God's counsels and would none of His reproof! Look at the bloody sweat in Gethsemane; listen to the bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" from Calvary,—and then say, if you dare, that salvation by the cross is "too easy."

But by-and-by the signal which announced the descent of the cage sounded, and so we made for the wished-for conveyance; but when I reached it, lo, I found it half filled already with miners, as black and dirty as coal dust could make them. For a moment I shrank from their company, but knowing that I had no choice in the matter, I went *in*, and I went *up*. Ah, thought I, I cannot choose my company on my way heavenward, for there is no respect of persons with God, and no royal road to heaven. If the Queen gets there,—and may God grant it!—she will ascend by the same conveyance which takes the poorest and meanest believer, even by Him who says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

IN, and UP. The whole secret of salvation—and,

blessed be God, it is an open secret—may be said to be summed up in these two little words. “In Christ,” and up to glory; out of Christ, and down to woe. It is a question of position. Reader, where are you?

H. M.



## TWO BASKETS OF FIGS.

(Read Jeremiah xxiv.)



TWO baskets of figs, not *three*, were seen by Jeremiah the prophet before the temple of the Lord. The contents of one were a complete contrast to the contents of the other. In the one basket the figs were good, very good, like the figs that are first ripe. In the other, they were evil, very evil, that could not be eaten, they were so evil. There stood the two baskets, peculiar puzzle to the mind of the prophet. Who would unravel the mystery?

“God is *His own* interpreter,  
And *He* will make it plain.”

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, giving clear explanation of the sight which he saw. God had chosen this forcible way of setting forth *His*

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thoughts of the men of Judah. He saw them divided into two classes. Men might see many classes, at the least three,—good, moderate, and bad; but before God's eye they formed only two companies, and these were as distinct a contrast as the contents of the two baskets upon which Jeremiah's eyes rested. The good were in His eyes *very* good; the bad were *very* bad. Would not the prophet be eager to know what favoured persons they were who formed the first class? He might have thought, Perhaps in the midst of this evil and rebellious people there are a few good persons hidden from public gaze but seen by God's eye. Listen however, to God's explanation.

“Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.” If you turn to 2 Kings xxiv. 8-16 you will find a brief account of those who were taken captive. Having read these verses you may exclaim with wonder, These were evil men and not good ones at all! It is true, my reader, that they were evil, and on this account God had to bring upon them the chastisement of Nebuchadnezzar's army and the siege. But notice this point. These men bowed to God's judgment, and *went out* to the king of Babylon (ver. 12). Instead of fighting against the judgment of God, and resisting Him, they practically owned its justice by submitting and going out. (Compare Jer. xxi. 8-10.)

The God of all grace, whose compassions fail not, had mercy for such. His purposes of mercy He unfolds to His servant the prophet. He does not bid them do many things, but He shows Jeremiah what He Himself will do, accomplishing for them *sevenfold* blessing:—(1.) “*So will I acknowledge them;*” (2.) “*I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and* (3.) *I will bring them again to this land;* and (4.) *I will build them and not pull them down;* and (5.) *I will plant them and not pluck them up.* And (6.) *I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord;* and they shall be my people, and (7.) *I will be their God.*” How good and gracious of God thus to acknowledge the poor captives, to look upon them, to free them, to build them, to plant them, to give them a heart to know Him, revealing Himself as their God! All was sure and certain, too, for it was the fruit of His own grace, to be done out of the kindness of His own heart, wholly accomplished by Himself, without any help from them. All the goodness they had was the acknowledgment of their badness, and the righteousness of God’s judgment against them, submitting themselves to it.

But now of the other basket. The Lord goes on to explain to His servant that the basket of evil figs sets forth the condition, as He sees it, of those who remain in the land. Proud and boastful of their city and nation, but disobedient to God, He had sought to make them conscious of their sinful state, but all in vain. They did evil, humbled not



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themselves, profaned the oath of God, stiffened their necks and hardened their hearts. The God of their fathers had compassion on the people, and sent His messengers, rising up betimes (as one in deep anxiety) and sending. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people *till there was no remedy* (2 Chron. xxxvi. 12-21). These were the bad figs, so evil that they could not be eaten; there was *nothing* for them but judgment. God had tried every way to draw them to Himself, but they persistently refused to listen.

Turn, my reader, now, and read Luke vii. 29, 30. Two classes, not *three*, come before us in these two verses. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, had come with a stern message of judgment, crying, "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth *good fruit*, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." This was no time for boasting of their privileges as a nation: if they had not *good fruit*, judgment must do its work. Many came confessing *their sins*, as though they would say, We have been very bad trees, and have only brought forth evil fruit; we are only fit for the fire. John baptizes them in Jordan: figuratively, the place of death. They are spoken of here as having "justified God." They owned the justice of God's sentence against them. Jesus, in grace, associated Himself with these, "the excellent of the earth" to Him, the basket of good

figs in His day. But where was their goodness? you ask. It began with confessing their badness with true contrition of heart before God. Let us look at a specimen from this basket which is set before us in the beautiful and well-known incident at the close of the chapter.

A woman of the city, who was a sinner, had heard John's message of judgment, and the sweet music of the grace of Jesus also. He had won her heart, and she determined to reach Him, though He was a guest in the house of a rigid Pharisee. She gained her point. She stood behind Him as He reclined at meat. Her tears of penitence fell upon the beautiful feet of Him who had brought good tidings of good. No goodness had she in herself,—scorned as "*a sinner*" by the proud Pharisee in whom the love of God abode not. But her tears of bitter sorrow told in unmistakable language of her knowledge of her own badness, whilst her caressing kisses showed that she understood something of His goodness. Ah! let the haughty religionist scowl! Here, to the eye and heart of Jesus, was good fruit, very good, like the figs that are first ripe. To her He could freely publish peace and salvation (Isa. lii. 7). "*Thy sins are forgiven.*" "*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*" Sinner though she might be in man's eye, unfit for a prophet's feet in Simon's judgment, *Jesus* acknowledged her, freed her from captivity; built her, never to pull down; planted her, never to pluck up; to her He had given a heart to *know Him*, revealing Himself to her as her God.

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But what of the other class? "They rejected the counsel of God against themselves." They were moral, perhaps religious to an extreme, punctual and accurate in the observance of duties and ordinances, understanding the letter of God's law and well acquainted with man's tradition, — but *they rejected the counsel of God*. John's message of judgment moved them not, and before the sweet pipings of the grace of Jesus they were calm and perfectly indifferent. What must we say of such? Surely, "Evil, very evil," as the figs which could not be eaten, they were so evil. John beheaded, Jesus crucified, the Spirit insulted, would fill up the cup of their iniquity, and bring upon them "wrath to the uttermost."

Two companies, not *three*, exist before God at the present time, my reader. To which of them do *you* belong? Jeremiah saw no middle basket, with figs which were neither good nor bad. Luke wrote of no medium class of men who neither positively accepted nor rejected Jesus. There were *two* baskets, two classes; and in the present day men are divided just as strongly before God.

ALL are guilty before Him by nature; *not one* righteous, *not one* doing good (Rom. iii.). Our mouths are stopped in His presence. But there are those who have heard His true testimony, and have bowed before it, justifying Him, owning themselves only sinners, worthy of death and eternal judgment. Such, and such alone, are acknowledged by God; not on account of any merit they possess,

but simply because He delights in mercy. The moment they took their *true* place before Him, as sinners, He had liberty to bless them according to the fulness of His own heart of love, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He frees such from their sins, and the cruel slavery of sin and Satan. He builds them up as living stones, and will never pull them down. He plants them with His own right hand, and will never pluck them up. He gives them a heart to know Him, revealing Himself to them as their God and their Father. *All* the work is His; *all* the blessing is theirs. Dear reader, may you be found in this happy basket, with the sevenfold blessing of God yours!

But the other company? Here we may find the careless worldling, the busy pleasure-seeker, the procrastinating neglecter of salvation, the human moralist, the austere religionist, with many others. All in their sins; all out of Christ; unrepentant and unsaved; going on together to judgment. If God's grace be rejected, His mercy slighted, His messengers of peace unheeded, His words despised, *how, oh, HOW SHALL THEY ESCAPE THE DAMNATION OF HELL?*

J. R.

WHAT a striking statement as to classes does the Lord make in John iii. 18. "He that believeth in him is *not condemned*: but he that believeth not is *condemned already*, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Dear reader, which class are you in?

W. T. P. W.

## THE BABE AND THE WIDOW.



MOST interesting scene is brought before us in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, eight days old, is brought by Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord. As they enter the Temple, they are met by an aged man, named Simeon, just and devout, who was *waiting for the consolation of Israel*. Now the Holy Ghost was upon him, and had revealed to him that he *should not see death*, until he had *seen the Lord's Christ*. The Spirit led him to the Temple, and the moment the Babe is brought in, he takes Him up in his arms, and blessed God, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," &c.

Wondrous mystery! the Creator of the universe, made in the likeness of men, sin apart, a babe in the arms of this aged disciple, who recognises and owns Him as the Christ of God. The consolation of Israel *had come*, and as the eyes of Simeon rest upon Him, he blesses God, and rejoices in *His great salvation*.

And there was one *Anna*, a prophetess, of great age, a widow of above fourscore and four years, which departed not from the Temple, but served God day and night with fastings and prayers, and

she *coming in that instant*, gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to *all them that looked for redemption* in Jerusalem. Taught of God, this aged widow beholds in the unconscious Babe of Bethlehem, in the arms of Simeon, the object of her hope and the desire of her heart, Israel's Messiah, the sent one of God.

Filled with joy, she pours out her heart in thanksgiving to Jehovah, and becomes the first messenger to all in Jerusalem who looked for redemption. It was a day of glad tidings, and she could not hold her peace (2 Kings vii. 9). Her heart was full, inditing a good matter, and out of its abundance her mouth spake of Him, so that there was not one that looked for redemption in that city, that did not hear the glad tidings at her lips. Israel's Light had come, and an aged widow of fourscore years and four is the chosen vessel of God to declare His name to the people of God. His ways are perfect. A wondrous theme was Anna's, the Person and the work of Christ, as yet a Babe, but the promised Redeemer, the One of whom Moses and the prophets had written. She saw Him; she believed on Him; and she spake of Him. It was with Anna as with the Psalmist, "I believe, therefore have I spoken" (Psalm cxvi. 10). Blessed news! Joyful news!

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke ii. 40).

Years after this, Jesus, at the age of thirty

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having been foreannounced by John the Baptist, went forth on His public ministry. But the world was opposed to the grace and truth that fell from His blessed lips. "He was despised and rejected of men" (Isa. liii. 3), and finally crucified, the Scriptures being fulfilled in His condemnation and death (Acts iii. 18). On the cross He endured the hiding of God's face, and bore the awful stroke of Divine justice and judgment against sin once for all. He died, and was buried, and rose again according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4). And He entered in once into the holy place, *having obtained eternal redemption* (Heb. ix. 12).

Aged Anna pointed all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem to the Babe of Bethlehem. That same Jesus is now a glorified man at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and if you, my reader, desire redemption, let me point you to that Blessed One. In Him alone is redemption to be found. "*All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. iii. 23, 24). "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). *All have sinned, but Christ gave Himself for all.* All therefore may have the blessing. Redemption was obtained by Him. Do you want it? It is utterly impossible for you to obtain it by your own doings. It is *obtained for you* by another, obtained already.

We read in the 130th Psalm, 7, 8—“ *With him is plenteous redemption*, and he shall redeem Israel from their iniquities.” And what is true for Israel, is also true in the highest sense for every one that now believeth. With Him is plenteous redemption for all who believe on His name. Christ on the throne of God is God’s testimony to accomplished redemption. Cease therefore from your own fleshly efforts. Believe on the Son of God, seated in the glory of God, and redemption is yours, *eternal redemption*. Then will the words of the apostle (words which the Holy Ghost teacheth) in 1 Cor. i. 30, be true of you, “ *Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.*” And again, “ *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*” (Eph. i. 7). This is plenteous redemption indeed. Can you take these precious truths to yourself?

Perhaps you are one who trembles at the thought of God and His holiness on account of your sins. It may be that you have striven to set matters right, trying to mend the past by struggles to give up sin and to live righteously, and yet you do wrong continually. You have thought and sought to please God by reforming your ways, but still find your ways crooked and mixed with sin. You have tried to master sin, but found sin mastered you. You have striven to overcome Satan, but only to find to your sorrow that he led you captive still. Ah! my reader, if this be your miserable experience,



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it is evident that, like thousands more, you are still fast entangled in the deceiver's snare. You have been trying to save yourself, seeking to be your own Saviour, as though you could redeem yourself. You are occupied with the wrong person, "*I*" instead of "*Christ*;" *self*, instead of the ever blessed One, the Son of God.

And what is the result of all this? Why, you are no farther than when you first started, no, not one single inch. In fact, you are farther off than ever, having yourself sought to heap up a great barrier of *self-righteousness*, in addition to your many sins. You are still far from God, miserable, afraid to meet Him, afraid of death, because you have no knowledge of redemption in Christ, nor the pardon of your sins. Oh! unhappy soul, wherefore toil you so? Do what you will, your efforts are utterly vain. You cannot obtain redemption thus. It is too late to be *doing* to get to God. *Christ has obtained eternal redemption for us* (Heb. ix. 12). Believe on Him, and *eternal redemption is yours*.

The trembling sinner feareth  
 That God can ne'er forget;  
 But one full payment cleareth  
 His memory from all debt.  
 When nought besides could ease us,  
 Or set our souls at large,  
 Thy holy work, Lord Jesus,  
 Secured a full discharge.

"Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things  
 . . . but with *the precious blood of Christ*"  
 (1 Peter i. 18, 19).

Again, dear reader, I appeal to you, "Is this redemption yours?" Are you washed from your sins in His precious blood? It is not yet too late, but every moment shortens the day of grace, and brings nearer the day of judgment. Christ still waits on the throne of God, but at any moment He may come again. Christians, redeemed by precious blood, yea, having eternal redemption in Him, await His return for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23). At that glorious moment all His loved ones shall be translated to glory. Are you one? If not, I beseech you to come to Him now. The *redemption of the soul* is precious (Psalm xlix. 8). God sent redemption to His people of old (Psalm cxi. 9). He has sent His Son also, who has obtained it for you. At your peril you neglect or refuse it. Oh! heed the voice of warning, and listen to the voice of beseeching, "Come unto me" (Matt. xi. 28).

All who looked for redemption in Jerusalem were pointed by Anna, the aged widow, to Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem. To that same Jesus you are pointed now, Christ the Lord, in the glory of God, a present Saviour, bestowing *eternal redemption on every one that believeth*.

"In the Lord we have redemption,  
Full remission in His blood,  
From the curse entire exemption,  
From the curse pronounced by God;  
What a Saviour Jesus is!  
O what grace, what love is His!"

E. H. C.

## PEACE: HOW TO GET IT.

"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood; which said unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them? Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. The righteous see it, and are glad; and the innocent laugh them to scorn. Whereas our substance is not cut down; but the remnant of them the fire consumeth. Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee."—JOB xxii. 15-21.



DESIRE to put before you, dear reader, the subject of *Peace*, and the way to possess it: what it is, whence it comes, and who has it. This 21st verse of Job xxii. is very sweet. There is no doubt that till the heart is acquainted with God there is no peace; but to know Him is peace, because one learns what He is in goodness, what He is as absolutely righteous, but at the same time the sinner's Friend; One who has acted in such a way that the soul, however guilty and depraved, when it gets to Him, and knows Him, has peace.

Eliphaz says (v. 15), "Hast thou marked the old way?" The old way, is the way we have all trodden. What was the old way? Away from God, not towards Him. There is the new and living way, and that way is Christ, but we have all been in the old way.

Are you still in the old way, my reader? Sooner or later, then, the judgment of God *must* overtake you. God is very patient, but sooner or later He must judge. Do you say, "Oh! but it is the wicked that He will judge"? Mark well, my reader, you may be very nice outwardly, but in the sight of God there is but one word that marks the unregenerate soul, and that is, "Wicked." Look at verses 16, 17, "Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood; which said unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them?" Perhaps you say, "What a dreadful thing!" But have you never said to God, "Depart from me"? It may be some one has sought to speak to you of Christ, and you have not cared to listen. Is not that saying, Depart. But oh, consider, my reader, *you* may say "Depart" *now*, but there is another who will one day say to every soul that knows Him not, "Depart from me." Oh, think of it. You may be careless, my friend, but you have not peace; there can be no real peace without the knowledge of God, therefore He comes and says to you, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace."

Do you say, "I am afraid of Him"? Why? "Because I am such a sinner." That is the very reason that you should come to Him, for who can forgive sins but God? who can wash away your transgressions but God? therefore He is the very one to come to, and to come to *now*, for by-and-by it will be too late.

By-and-by you will acquaint yourself with damnation; if you wait till you are dead and buried, you will acquaint yourself with hell and the devil then, and surely you have had quite enough to do with the devil already; part company with him now, once and for ever, and acquaint thyself with God.

Do not put it off till to-morrow. At this very moment you may get to know God, and it will be eternal life to your soul. Scripture says, "*Acquaint now.*" It does not say, "*Acquaint to-morrow.*" To get to know God is the most wonderful thing in the world, and you may get to know Him in the way He delights to be known in this day—as the God of peace.

In the Old Testament He was the God of creation, and the God of government, and God the lawgiver; but now He is the God of peace,—not the God of judgment, or wrath, or vengeance. Nay, nay; He who is love, has expressed His love in the gift of His son, and now He can show Himself in this new and lovely character—the God of peace. "*Acquaint now thyself with him,*" this God of peace, "*and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.*"

There is a very solemn contrast between the man who knows God, and the man who does not know Him. Psalm xxxvii. 37, says,—"*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*" Who does the Psalmist mean? Why, the man that knows God, and the end of that man is

peace. What would your end be, my reader, if God cut you down to-day? Would it be peace? or would it be the pit of hell? Look at it. "The transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off."

What is the end of the righteous? Peace. What is the end of the wicked? He is cut off; eternally separated from God, in outer darkness, having the company of Satan and his angels for ever.

The Psalmist tells you what the end of the wicked is, and the prophet Isaiah speaks of what the present state of the wicked is. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. lvii. 20, 21).

Is not that your state, my reader? You cannot rest. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." What a description. I daresay you may have seen the sea sometimes, and have thought how beautiful the foam on the waters looked; but take up some of the foam in your hand on the shore, and what is it? All mire. Yes; and you may look very nice at a distance, but bring you into the presence of God, and how is it with you? What does He see? Sin coming out moment by moment, and hour by hour, and no peace.

But oh, He would delight to give you peace. He has a way of meeting your uneasy conscience, your troubled soul, your restless heart. "I will

heal," He says. Do you ask, "How does He do it?" Turn to a few scriptures in the New Testament and you will see.

Look at Luke i. What is the Lord doing? God visits the earth. What to do? To guide your feet into the way of peace. Read Luke ii. The Son of God is born into this scene. What to be? A Saviour for you. With the birth of this blessed babe there comes into this weary wretched scene, where evil had been rampant for four thousand years, where the devil seemed to be getting it all his own way, something quite different—*Peace*. "On earth peace, goodwill toward men."

In Luke xix. 38 we read, "Peace in heaven." In the 2d chapter it was "on earth peace." Why is it peace in heaven in chapter xix.? Because the Saviour had been refused and rejected, and He was then going to the Mount of Olives, and from there to Calvary to die. Men were about to cast Him out of earth, and God was going to take this blessed One, whom earth would not have, to heaven; and now, if your heart seeks peace it must follow Him to heaven, for it is no longer "peace on earth," but "peace in heaven."

He was rejected by the world, and He goes to the cross, and there He dies. And what was the work that He then accomplished? Colossians i. gives you the answer. The 20th verse tells you that He "*made* peace through the blood of his cross."

Between God and man there was no peace. There could not be peace on man's side, because

there was enmity in his heart towards God. There could not be peace on God's side till the cross, because He must judge sin. Sin had not been put away, and He could not have sin in His presence.

Sin had come in and marred the relation between God and man. Righteousness on God's side forbade any thought of peace, because sin must be judged and put away, and enmity on man's side precluded the thought of peace; but on the cross Christ did a work, whereby peace could be between man and God. He went down into death, that He might make peace through the blood of His cross.

God desired that a righteous way might be made, that your feet and mine might be turned into the way of peace, and how could this be? While any question of sin remains unsettled, not to my satisfaction but to God's, I cannot know peace. What makes peace? My tears? my prayers? No; nothing I have done or could do, but what Christ has done. His sufferings, His death, have availed, so that there is nothing shining from that throne of God to-day but the smile of perfect satisfaction. He, the blessed Son of God, after we have sinned, and before God judges, steps in, bears the sin, pays the debt, lays down the ransom, and makes peace by the blood of His cross.

Peace, then, is *made* by Christ. What does God do? Raises Him from the dead. In Heb. xiii. 20 I get God's answer to the work of Christ. He is "the *God of Peace*, that brought again from the



dead our Lord Jesus." He takes this beautiful character of the God of peace, because His Son has done a work that takes away from Him the character of God the judge, and that establishes peace between Himself and the believer.

The "Prince of peace" is raised from the dead by the "God of peace," and His first action in resurrection is to come and say to His own, "Peace be unto you" (John xx. 19). He has made it, and therefore, as Acts x. puts it, He is "preaching peace." He who makes peace for the poor sinner proclaims it, and I ask you, my reader, Have you got it? Christ made it, Christ comes and preaches it, but there's more than that, "*He is our peace*" (Eph. ii. 14).

The work of atonement gives God liberty to come out and proclaim peace. I want your heart to be at home with me, He says.

This peace, too, is eternal, everlasting; and it is not a feeling, it is a wonderful blessed fact. Christ has drained the cup of judgment, that I ought to have drunk, to the very dregs, and He has filled the cup for me with peace and blessedness. I ask you, Is there a question between God and the Lord Jesus? Not one. Is there a question between you and God at this moment? If you are His, not one. Jesus answered every question for you when He died on the cross, and God showed His satisfaction with what Christ had done when He raised Him from the dead, and now *He is our peace*. Christ made peace, preached peace, is our peace; and now, how do I get it?

Rom. v. gives the answer, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There are two wonderful facts upon God's side, and two upon our side. Christ was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Then, I say, if Christ was delivered *for* my offences, I am delivered *from* them; and if Christ was raised again for my justification, then, I say, therefore I am justified; thus the apostle goes on to say, "Therefore, being justified by faith." What is faith? Taking God at His word. My faith turns to God, and I say, I believe God, believe He has an interest in me; for He gave His Son for me, and His Son has died for me; and God shows His satisfaction with the work of His Son, for He raised Him from the dead. He who bore my offences was raised without them, and I can turn round and acquaint myself with God and be at peace.

Christ then has made peace, preaches peace, is peace; and now the question for you is, Have you got this peace?

It is Christ *risen* gives me peace, for that is the evidence to me of God's entire satisfaction. My sin, which marred the peace, was eternally obliterated when God's Son died on the cross.

There can be peace between my soul and God, because there is nothing left to judge. I stand on the spot where the fire of judgment has been.

The Gospel puts me in Christ; and if I am in Christ, I am in One who has borne all the judgment

already, and there is nothing left to judge; and therefore, being justified, I have peace, and the Lord wants us to be filled with it. The apostle says, in Rom. xv. 13, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." The Lord would have us not only to know peace as a fact, but would have us joy in it also.

There is another scripture which speaks of the "peace of God"—that is the Christian's portion.

How sweet! I acquaint myself with Him, and am at peace, for I find He is my Saviour and my Friend; He Himself is my peace, and the Holy Ghost comes in to shed it abroad in my heart, and to give me the enjoyment of it all the way along. Oh, who would not be a Christian?

W. T. P. W.

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### "A GREAT ONLY."

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OW often we use the word "only"! "It is only for a little," "only once," and so on; and how often the thought that "only" a little longer and we shall be with the Lord cheers on the believer. Again, looking ahead, and taking thought for the morrow, as we often do in spite of Matthew vi. 34, how often we find what we dreaded most was "only" meant for our blessing!

Many things too we dread are "only" blessings in disguise.

Standing a little ago by the deathbed of a young woman dying of consumption, I said to her, by way of comfort, "It is '*only*' to be with Christ," alluding to her death, which took place that day. "Ah," said she, "that is a great *only*." I was struck with the words, and have thought since how true. It is indeed a great *only*.

Reader, have you ever thought of death like that? as "only" to be with Christ? Have you ever thought of what that "only" involves? "In thy presence is *fulness* of joy," we find in Psalm xvi. 11. To be with Christ, is to have every wish, every desire, satisfied. Again, it is "only" the blood of Jesus can give you a title to heaven, or make you fit to go there (1 John i. 7). It is "only" through His name you can be saved (Acts iv. 10-12). It is "only" sinners Jesus saves (Luke v. 32). It was God's "only" begotten Son who died on the cross (John iii. 16), that not "only" we might not perish, but have everlasting life. And, in conclusion, I would say to any poor doubting sinner, what the Lord said to Jairus in Mark v. 36, "Be not afraid, '*only*' believe." M.

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It is very solemn to recollect that *only* a hairs-breadth, so to speak, divides time from eternity. The reader of this may never read of Christ again. How does he drop this paper? Saved, or only hoping to be? W. T. P. W.

## THE KEEPER'S CONVERSION.



F the gun go off, and I am killed, I'll be damned," was the rapid thought of a young gamekeeper, as his foot stumbled on the fence he was just crossing, whilst he held in his hand a gun loaded and at "full-cock." "*Lord have mercy on my soul,*" was his immediate and awfully earnest prayer.

What big events often arise out of very small things! That stumble on the fence originated a chain of conversions, the effects of which are being felt now, as the grand and blessed results of them will tell on eternity, and cause a fuller anthem of praise to rise to Him whose ear is always open to the faintest and most informal prayer, whilst His gracious hand is ready to save in a moment any soul, no matter who or what, when or where, that, under a sense of guilt, cries to Him for mercy.

Yes, my reader, assuming that you are one of such, I have glorious news for you—news that announce IMMEDIATE SALVATION, this moment, now! Not something gradual or progressive, or demanding a period of time for its accomplishment, but that which can fit you for the blessed presence of God in a moment of time!

Listen not to those who would say that salvation

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is a lengthy process, consisting in a patient victory over besetting sins—the mortification of the body—the assimilation of the mind to religious dogmas, until, in a supposed result, the lion becomes the lamb, and the sinner is gradually changed into the saint.

Don't listen to such theology. Had a lengthened time been necessary, you may be sure that Christ would never have said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," or Paul have preached, "Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." A progressive salvation would have ill suited the young keeper as he fell on his loaded gun; nay, it would have secured, had he died, his damnation.

Believe me, the Word of God always and only presents salvation as a thing to be had in a moment, and never as a thing of attainment or gradual acquisition.

The apprehension of it in the soul may, of course, be gradual—specially in days of clouded Gospel truth—but the thing itself, coming from God as it does, is implanted in the soul that believes far more quickly than the eye can twinkle.

"Twixt the saddle and the ground,  
I mercy sought and mercy found,"

said a fine saint of olden time. Now this may prepare you for the instantaneous conversion of the keeper—for truly converted to God he was in that moment of time.

That stumble into the jaws of death, as he sup-

## THE KEEPER'S CONVERSION.

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posed, was his step into life eternal—that gun, the instrument of death, was to him the cause of salvation. After falling he found that the muzzle of the gun had sunk into the ground, and that the dreaded explosion had not taken place. Unhurt he rose from the place of his fall, but he rose a saved man!

“Make haste and come down,” said the Lord to Zaccheus, “for to-day I must abide in thy house.” Zaccheus ascended the tree a sinner, he descended it a saint; for you cannot “come down” to Jesus without getting salvation! But in this old story there are two “comes”—the one is the coming of Jesus to Zaccheus, the other the coming of Zaccheus to Jesus. “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost;” the second would have been impossible without the first, but the first makes the second divinely possible. If Jesus came for the lost, then the lost may come to Jesus.

Yes, thank God, they may come, and come now, and in coming they are saved; a seeking Saviour and a seeking sinner form a perfect picture, and the one is the complement of the other.

Some time after the above, at the close of a Gospel meeting, another young man remained for the sake of private conversation. He was anxious, convicted of sin, and desiring peace with God. A few words of Scripture applied by the Spirit chased the doubts away. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” settled every soul-difficulty with him.

"Have you been long anxious?" I said to him.

"Yes, for some time; and the only man that ever spoke to me about my soul was my brother," said he.

That brother was the keeper!

Happy fruit of faith! When Christ is enjoyed He is also proclaimed. He cannot be in the heart, in the affections, and not on the tongue or lip. The confession of His dear name is the simple, spontaneous outflow of the heart that really believes; and the greater the abundance in the heart so will be the confession of the mouth.

And so the circle increased, for no sooner did this second soul get everlasting life than he, too, in like manner, announced the fact to another brother, who, with others of the same family, were reached by saving grace as well.

"He first findeth his own brother, Simon." Yes, "*first*" but not last, for whilst divine charity begins at home it does not end there. However, it is perfectly right in beginning at home. "Go home to thy friends," said the Lord to a man who once had a legion of devils, but now a legion of blessings, "and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

This kind of testimony is always of use. It is fresh and real and personal. It may cause a little irritation where ties are so close, but to be irritated out of sin or self-righteousness by a brother or a friend is better than no irritation and death. What an honour to be the channel of blessing to those you love the dearest!



## THE KEEPER'S CONVERSION.

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And this has been one of the far-reaching effects of the keeper's conversion. What a joy!

Now, dear reader, what about yourself? It is high time you should cry, "Lord have mercy on my soul" too. Is it not? Had you to die this moment, are you ready?

I beseech you not to mistake the meaning of my story by supposing that, because salvation is the immediate portion of the soul that truly turns to God, you may therefore take your time. Such a thought is the abuse of grace.

No, the coming of Christ, His death and resurrection, have made it a possibility for God to save you, but not an obligation. Take care that you do not presume on His long-suffering. Depend upon it, there's many a soul in hell that always intended to turn to the Lord, but kept on deferring till the last moment, and then he was *just too late*. He "knew not the time of his visitation," and what then? "*Let him alone!*" Take heed, take heed. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

"What, sinner, canst thou do?  
Where, sinner, canst thou fly?  
Eternal wrath hangs o'er thy head,  
And judgment lingers nigh.

"This only thou canst do,—  
Believe in Christ and live;  
Fly to the shelter of His blood,  
And peace with God receive."

J. W. S.

## JUDGMENT APPOINTED, AND HOW TO ESCAPE IT.



T is a momentous and solemn fact that all must face—that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. ix. 27). The former none ever attempts to deny; the fact is too patent. The latter many foolishly deny; but what is the denial but the vain effort of an uneasy conscience to escape the consequences of sin, whilst still indulging in it? But the two stand or fall together. Death is appointed, and judgment is appointed. All are obliged to own the reality of *death*, and must therefore own the reality of *judgment* also. Both are found in one verse. If you deny one, you must deny the other.

Moreover, not only is judgment appointed, but *the Judge is appointed* also. “The Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed all judgment unto the Son*; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,” &c. (John v. 22, 23). “And *hath given him authority to execute judgment* also, because he is the Son of man” (John v. 27). “And his judgment is just” (John v. 30).

Now the judgment is two-fold; that is to say, He shall judge *the quick* and *the dead* (2 Tim. iv. 1). The former will be at His coming to establish His kingdom; the latter at its close. Do you ask when

the judgment will take place? Let the Word of God reply, "No man knoweth the day nor the hour" (Mark xiii. 32). But this we read, "Behold the Judge standeth before the door" (James v. 9). Again, "He is *ready* to judge the quick and the dead." And again, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because *he hath appointed a day*, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness *by that man* whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 31).

Nothing can be plainer than the Scriptures on this deeply solemn subject, and therefore, sinner, to go on with indifference, is to go on in wilful blindness, forsaking your own mercies, and to deliberately expose yourself to the sure judgment of God. Under judgment you are, as long as you remain unconverted in your sins, and at any moment the door of mercy may be closed, and grace to the guilty cease to flow. Have you a single question left upon your mind as to your solemn condition? read the following: "Now we know," says the apostle, "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that *every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*" (*margin*, subject to the judgment of God) (Rom. iii. 19).

Hence, my friend, we are face to face with these three momentous facts:—

The judgment is appointed.

The Judge is appointed.

The day is appointed.

And if *you* pass on without *judging yourself*, *you* are appointed for judgment.

But how blessed to read that judgment is God's *strange work*; His strange act (Isa. xxviii. 21). And that He is a "God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (Neh. ix. 17). If it were not so, long ago His wrath must have been poured out upon this ungodly world; long ago He must have swept the scene with the besom of judgment, and launched every sinner of Adam's race into endless woe in the lake of fire.

But He delighteth not in the death of a sinner. The desire of His heart is that *all* should be saved (not judged), and come unto the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. ii. 4). He is "not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9). Hence it is that He "now commandeth *all men everywhere* to repent" (Acts xviii. 30). It is His mercy and grace. But have you repented? To repent is to *judge ourselves*. Have *you* judged *yourself*, dear reader? He commands men to judge themselves now, that He may not judge them in the future. Judge yourself, and you will discover that He is a Saviour-God. Refuse, neglect, and you will surely meet Him in judgment, and who then shall escape? Ah! sinner, not one. "*Enter not*," said the Psalmist, "*into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*" (Psalm cxliii. 2). But judge yourself, and you will find that judgment is behind instead of before you.

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In His infinite love, God has already given His beloved Son, and judgment has already fallen upon Him upon the cross. Own that you are guilty and deserve judgment. Take your place, self-judged, before Him, and believe on His Son—now seated on the throne of God, whom He hath raised and highly exalted there, as the One in whose death He was infinitely glorified—and your judgment is passed (John iii. 18). For God is just and the justifier of him which *believeth in Jesus* (Rom. iii. 26). If you seek to justify yourself, God will judge you, but if you judge yourself, God will justify you. And who shall condemn the one whom God justifies? Who would not sooner pass through this scene with judgment behind him, rather than before? Oh! sinner, think of it, weigh it, look this all-important matter in the face. Meet God you must. Woe, woe, woe to him who meets God in judgment. But have to do with Him now, and surely, as has been said, you will find in Him a *Saviour-God*.

God is *light*, and in righteousness must deal with sin, but He is also *love*; and it was love, wondrous love, to this poor condemned world that led Him to give His Son. And He has said that “he that believeth on him is not condemned” (not judged), but “he that believeth not is condemned (or judged) already” (John iii. 18). The believer is not judged, for Christ was judged in his stead. The unbeliever is judged already, for he is part of a world subject to judgment; he is under it.

The sentence is already passed, and every one who fails to accept the grace of God, must appear before Him in his sins, when judgment will be executed upon him—eternal woe (Rev. xx. 12-15).

But hark again to the precious words of the Saviour! "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* (or *judgment*) but *is* passed from death unto life" (John v. 24).

Do you tremble like Felix, as you hear of judgment? Oh! take warning from him, and procrastinate no longer (Acts xxiv. 24-27). He talked of "*a convenient season,*" but though his opportunities were many, we never read of a convenient season ever having come. Delays are dangerous. Satan is active in lulling souls into carnal security. "Time enough yet" is the will-o'-the-wisp with which he infatuates thousands, until he allures them into the judgment of God. Now, now, sinner, is the time to repent and believe the glad tidings of grace. Now, now is the time to hear the Word of the Lord, and live. Now, now is the time to escape the judgment of God. Now, now is the time to pass from death unto life. Listen to the Saviour's voice. "Verily, verily, *I say unto you.*" The Son of God speaks. Will you listen? He speaks with authority, and His word is sure. Hear Him. Believe on Him who sent

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Him; and He Himself declares to every such one, that he

- (1.) *"Hath everlasting life; and*
- (2.) *Shall not come into condemnation; but*
- (3.) *Is passed from death unto life."*

Take Him at His word. He says it, and He means it. It is the present blessed portion of every one that believeth. Dost *thou* believe on the Son of God? Then surely it is yours. *You* have everlasting life. *You* shall not come into judgment. *You* are passed from death unto life.

As long as you tread the broad road, your back is towards God, and Christ, and glory; your face towards death, and judgment, and eternal woe. But the moment you believe on God's beloved Son, your face is towards God, and Christ, and glory, and your back towards death, and judgment, and eternal woe. For if Christ were to come, the believer would be glorified, without passing through death. Or even if death cometh, for him it is but to sleep through Jesus (1 Thess. iv. 13, 14). Reader, which is it with you? Can you sing from the heart?

"Death and judgment are behind me,  
Life and glory lie before;  
All the billows rolled o'er Jesus—  
There they spent their utmost power."

If you can, you are one of God's justified ones. And the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. iv. 18).

E. H. C.

## IS THERE A DEBT WE MUST ALL PAY?



T'S hard times we've had. Ever since my husband was hurt he hasn't been able to do much on the diggings, and so we've had to struggle on as best we could, and now *I'm* laid up."

"But there will be an end to all this trouble down here, will there not?"

"Ah, yes, there's a debt we must all pay."

"Is there? And what remains for us after that, then?"

"Well, that we don't know."

The first speaker was a woman of about fifty years of age, with livid face and difficult breathing, denoting a dangerous physical condition.

She died within about three days of the date of our conversation related above, and we write to call attention to her two statements:—

Firstly, that "there's a debt (and death was referred to) that we must all pay."

Secondly, that "we do not know what is beyond the grave."

Now, as to the first, we read in 1 Cor. xv. 51, "we shall not *all* sleep, but we shall be changed."

It is evident, therefore, that there shall be some who will not pay that which is often termed "the debt of nature."

Who, then, are these?



## IS THERE A DEBT WE MUST ALL PAY? 265

If we turn to the first chapter of the epistle we find that the words quoted above were written "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" (*i.e.*, saints by divine calling).

Again in the fourth chapter of 1st Thessalonians, ver. 14, we read:—"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangels and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain *shall be caught up* together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

And in the first chapter of this epistle we find that this is written to those who were "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, . . . even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come."

And has this promise of the return of our Lord, written by Paul, "moved by the Holy Ghost," fifty years after the birth of Christ, been fulfilled?

We know that it has not.

Has it then become obsolete, or did it refer only to the time at which it was written?

No; else had the immutable words of the living God, "who cannot lie," been then fulfilled.

It remains therefore as a hope for us.

For whom? "Those who love not our Lord Jesus Christ?"

Assuredly not.

How shall *they*, in their sins, be "caught up" to enter in with that spotlessly pure One?

If not “turned from idols”—and we need not go to heathendom to find such—then *they serve not* “the living God,” nor do they “wait for his Son from heaven,” but on them “the wrath of God *abideth*.”

Thus, then, we see that there are those who, if they go on as they are, *must* “pay the debt,” and who well may *wish* that they might have some excuse for not knowing what is beyond; and there are those who do not look even for the transition sleep, but “wait for God’s Son from heaven,” even He who paid for them the debt.

Dear reader, how do *you* stand as to this? Are you going along dreading death, feeling that it must come, that each week brings you nearer to it, and yet desiring that it might be far off. Or do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who *died* in order that you might have eternal life, and might then look for His coming to take you into that eternity of bliss of which He is the centre?

And now as to the second point—viz., that if we die, we depart not knowing what is beyond.

Is this true?

Men *try* to believe it, and urge as a reason for it that “no one ever came back to tell us what was beyond.”

The statement that “we don’t know” bears the mark of the Serpent who deceived Eve, and the statement that “no one ever came back to tell us” emanates from the same source.

## IS THERE A DEBT WE MUST ALL PAY? 267

Firstly, we *do* know, for the Word of God tells us clearly that on the one hand there are some who shall be for ever with the Lord in that place of which He is the sun and centre; and that on the other hand "the fearful, and the unbelieving . . . shall have their part in the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. xxi. 8).

Secondly, One did—after that He had been crucified—rise again and show "himself alive by many infallible proofs, . . . speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts i.).

Dear reader, again we urge in all earnestness and love, do *you* know this One of whom the believer can say, "He was given for *my* offences, and raised again for *my* justification"? or are you striving to prove that the word—true of so very many, alas! in these dark days—shall be true of you also, "Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 31).

A. F. S.

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### A QUESTION.

The natural man says, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways" (Job xxi. 14).

The believer says, "Teach me *thy* way, O Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 11).

Which, reader, do you say?

## THE VALUE OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.



T had come to my knowledge that some Spiritualists were holding meetings at a village near my house, and it was pressed upon my heart to go there and distribute some Gospel books.

Now Spiritualists deny the atonement, and the divinity of Christ; they claim to be in communication with the spirits of the dead; certain among them termed "mediums" are said to be under the influence of the spirits who speak through them, and, among other things, describe the unseen world and the condition of the departed.

It is one of the most awful wiles that Satan has ever invented for the destruction of men; it is a revival of that abominable system which Jehovah warned Israel against in Deut. xviii. 9-12, for the spirits who speak through the mediums are not those of the dead, they are demons who personate the departed, and, as the agents of the devil, allure millions to eternal destruction. Paul spoke of it as a terrible form of wickedness that should characterise the latter times—"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils" (demons), 1 Tim. iv. 1.

Well, one Lord's Day I and my two brothers

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started off with a quantity of Gospel books, and on arriving at the village, went from house to house distributing them. We had nearly finished our work, when I was directed in a most wonderful way to the house of the leader of the Spiritualists.

The door was opened by a respectably dressed, elderly woman, to whom I at once gave a book.

As she glanced at it, I said, "It is about the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Oh," remarked she quietly.

"Yes," I said, "there's nothing like the blood, is there?"

"We don't believe in His blood," she quickly replied; "it's His love."

"And because of His love He shed His blood for us," said I.

"It's a lie," roared a voice from behind a screen that hid the other occupants of the room from me.

"Oh, but," replied I, "God's Word says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'"

"It's corruption," again roared the voice.

"I've been a Christian for years," said the woman, "and I know all about these things."

"Yes," said I; "and you will know something else if you die unsaved and stand before the Great White Throne of Judgment—you will then know that you are lost for ever, because you haven't got Christ."

"It's all rubbish," shouted the unseen speaker; "we don't believe in it."

"It's our works that'll save us," said the woman confidently.

I replied, "God says, 'without the shedding of blood is no remission,' for 'it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul'" (Heb. ix.; Lev. xvii.).

While I was speaking the door was banged in my face, but as I turned away from these determined rejecters of the blood, I thanked God for having permitted me to deliver my message, and prayed that His blessing might rest upon it.

At the present moment there is to be seen on all sides an awful disposition among men to treat the death of Christ as a thing of nought. Much of the popular preaching, and the so-called Christian literature of the present day, while descanting upon the *life* of Jesus, and holding it up for imitation by unregenerate men, as a means of their moral and social improvement, and ultimate salvation, deliberately keeps His *death* in the background, or else ignores it altogether.

It is easy enough to trace this soul-destroying system to its source. Satan is deceiving men as to their true position before God, leading them to think lightly of sin, and persuading them, that as God is love, He will not punish His creatures; and because this suits the sinner's desires, he eagerly embraces the lying suggestion. But God is also light, and the cross is the eternal witness to created intelligences of God's abhorrence of sin. His holiness and love were there fully and perfectly dis-

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played. His *holiness* in the judgment of sin in the person of the Son of His love *made sin*, though *personally* sinless. His *love* in the wonderful fact, that that Son, as the only one who could enter into the question of sin with God, so as to make a perfect and eternal atonement for it, was sent to the cross to endure the judgment instead of the sinner, that the latter might be saved.

It is thus in atonement—the very work that men are seeking to discard—that God, in His nature and character, has been perfectly manifested, and can alone be fully known.

Now, whosoever refuses to avail himself of that expiatory sacrifice, is the destroyer of his own soul, for he shuts up to himself the *only* way of escape from hell, and must personally bear the weight of God's wrath for ever and ever.

The *life* of Jesus could never save the sinner, for God had said, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission," for "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Without doubt, His life was a wonderful one. It stands on the page of eternal truth in all the glory of its absolute devotedness to God, *the standing witness against the terrible and irretrievable failure of the whole human race.*

Never before was man's utter ruin and incompetency to fulfil God's righteous requirements made so manifest. It was a divine light that fully disclosed his condition, his guilt, and the condemnation in which he lay on account thereof.

But man refused the light, and cast Jesus out of

the world; the crucifixion of God's Son was the most complete proof of the incurable evil of man's wretched nature. The descendants of the crucifiers are amongst us to-day, preaching salvation by works, as determined rejecters of the light as their fathers.

It is an awful proof of his blindness and ignorance of the truth of God, when an unregenerate man coolly, and without exercise of conscience, expatiates upon the perfection of a life which is but the witness and measure of his own failure; for the *life* of Jesus never assists the sinner to do better than he has done, it merely shows him what is lacking in his own. To endeavour to imitate it, is to demonstrate at once his weakness, and to court still greater failure; the divine and *only* remedy is to be found in the expiation for sin made by a *dead* Christ, and the communication of a *new* and divine life and nature by Christ *risen* from the dead.

Jesus sounded the death knell of every hope and aspiration of fallen human nature when He said to the fairest and best of unregenerate men, "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN;" but He instantly pointed to Himself as the one who, when lifted up at Calvary as representing the sinner, should receive in His own sinless person the judgment due to unregenerate man, that out of *His death* everlasting life might spring forth as the gift of God to every sinner that believeth (John iii.), a life which should connect the receiver with Himself as the one risen out of death, and ascended into the glory of God.



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Jesus Christ, the Man there crowned with glory and honour, is the beginning of the *new* creation of God. On *that* Man and *His* race God looks with ineffable and unchanging delight; but as to the family of the man who was driven out of Paradise six thousand years ago—the world of sinful men and women on whom the wrath of God is resting, and whom Satan is deceiving as to their real state before God—none can ever enter heaven unless they first accept the death of Jesus—which before God closed the history of the *first* man—and receive as His gift that eternal life and Holy Spirit which bring the redeemed into eternal association with Christ the *second* Man.

In His earthly life Jesus might, as indeed He did, alleviate in measure the woe and misery of men in drying the mourner's tear, in healing the sick, and giving sight to the blind; but *sin*, the source of all the woe, was not so easily disposed of—the *life* of Jesus, all grand and beautiful as it was, was ineffectual to put *that* away, *death* alone would suffice, and the Spirit of God, in Rev. v., directs our gaze from earth to heaven, the seat of everlasting bliss, the place where sorrow and pain can never come, and there shows us the redeemed host saved and taken out of the misery of earth, whose triumphant anthem of worship is to the Lamb who was slain, and has redeemed them to God by (not His *life*, or His love, but) His BLOOD.

Their redemption from sin and its consequences, their eternal joy and glory, are seen to be founded

on that very cross which men are now endeavouring altogether to ignore.

The crimson thread of atonement runs right through the Book of God, from Genesis to Revelation, uniting and reconciling the truths of the love and righteousness of God as displayed in the forgiveness and salvation of the sinner, who has brought wrath upon himself, and had nothing to bring to God to satisfy His holiness.

These unhappy Spiritualists, and indeed all who deny or seek to explain away the atonement, are of the same persuasion as Cain, the first man born into the world, for *he* was a despiser of the blood. Though born of sinful parents, the inheritor of a sinful nature, and consequently at a distance from God, he yet considered he had a perfect right of approach to Him; if he thought at all about sin, he doubtless relied, as do his followers of to-day, upon the mercy and love of God, forgetful of the fact that sin has outraged His majesty, and that His holiness demanded its punishment. So he came into God's presence with a gift, on the ground of his own personal merit and acceptability, *and was instantly rejected.*

His brother Abel, who was exactly like him as to natural sinfulness and unfitness for the divine presence, came also to God with a gift, *but he, first of all, put the blood between himself and God*, and he and his offering were at once accepted. Honestly and sincerely accepting the truth of his sinfulness and personal inability to satisfy the holy claims of

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God, and that nothing but *death* could satisfy them, Abel, in simple faith, offered up a sinless victim, and God, in view of the offering up of its antitype at Calvary, was satisfied.

Now mark the after-career of the *first* despiser of the blood. He murders his brother, goes out of Jehovah's presence a fugitive and a vagabond, builds a city, and becomes the founder of a godless family, every member of which perished in the flood, which, seventeen hundred years afterwards, came as the judgment of God upon a world of incorrigible sinners.

Abel is the type of those saved by the blood in all ages.

Cain heads the list of all subsequent despisers and rejecters of the blood, whose end, like his, is eternal misery.

From eternity it was ordained that the blood of Christ should be shed to put away sin.

When Adam lost his innocence God drove him from His presence, and though in after-years He, in grace, came down to dwell among Adam's sinful children, it was on the ground of sacrifice that He did so. Even then He was in a sense hidden, for He dwelt in the holiest, between the cherubim, shut off, by the veil, from men. "The priest went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God, but into the *second* went the high priest once every year, *not without blood*, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people, the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the *way* into

the holiest (God's presence and dwelling-place) *was not yet made manifest*" (Heb. ix.).

During the first four thousand years of the world's unhappy history, while Satan wielded o'er men his awful power acquired through sin, God unweariedly taught by type and symbol the solemn truth that it was only through sacrifice (*i.e.*, the death of a victim as a substitute for the sinner) that man could escape either present or future judgment. The varied offerings under the law were but so many voices foretelling the atoning death of the Son of God, presently to be accomplished at Calvary.

The New Testament commences with the record of the incarnation of the Son, and the Epistle to the Hebrews explains the reason and necessity for that incarnation. The Jewish offerings could not take away sins; "Wherefore," the Son says, "*a body hast thou prepared ME.*" In that body He offered Himself at the cross as a sacrifice for sin, and by that death He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Of such God says, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more."

The moment Jesus emerged from the obscurity of Nazareth, the Baptist, sent to prepare His way, directed the attention of men to Him as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" a title given to Him to indicate the sacrificial character of His death and its results. And the Spirit traces through the gospels His wonderful pathway, from Bethlehem's manger to THE CROSS, a destination which Jesus had ever in His mind; and when,

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at last, the hill of Calvary is reached, we see the Son of God suspended in death on the central cross, with the blood of atonement flowing from His riven side.

“And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom. . . . Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS, by a *new* and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, *through the veil*, that is to say *his flesh*, let us draw near” (Matt. xxvii.; Heb. x.).

There is no veil or barrier *now*, the death of Jesus has removed it for ever, and the God of glory beckons the sinner up that blood-marked way, to Himself and His home of light and love.

And now, out from that wonderful past, come to us the voices of the apostles,—those mighty servants of Christ, who sealed their testimony in their martyrdom; bearing witness, in language clear and unmistakable, to the necessity for, and the value of the blood of Christ.

The ardent Peter, who once, through ignorance of God’s thoughts and counsels, would have saved his Master from that death, now glories in the redemption that springs from “the precious blood of Christ.”

The gentle John, who, when Jesus was on earth, reclined in His bosom, and learned its thoughts and secrets, now points to *the blood* as the source and ground of that holy and blessed fellowship with the Son and with the Father; for, he says, “The blood

of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

The dauntless, lionlike Paul, who once, as the self-righteous Christ-rejecting Pharisee, hunted to the death the followers of the Nazarene, now announces to Jew and Gentile that through the blood of the cross, peace has been made, forgiveness of sins granted, and a way made for the believer right into the glory of God, *and then threatens with the eternal vengeance of Jehovah all who count that blood common or unholy* (Heb. x. 26-31).

And faith in the Accomplisher of the work is all that God requires from the repentant sinner, for it is written, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi.).

Fellow-traveller towards eternity, in the presence of that eternity, I ask you on what are *you* resting for the salvation of *your* soul?

A. Z.

CHRIST has gone up on high, as man, into glory; and as His work was for us, righteousness must put us there. It is righteous, for God has been perfectly glorified in His whole being and nature by Christ on the cross. And we know the first-fruits of this in His being glorified; but thus it becomes but righteous that we should be in the glory with Him.

J. N. D.

## WORKS.



**W**HAT a terrible thing it is to find any one trusting to their (supposed) good works for salvation. On the other hand, how dreadful to hear people *say* they believe in the Son of God, and yet in their "works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus i. 16). When the unconverted Jews asked the Lord, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (John vi. 28), His answer was, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (verse 29).

All works are dead works, done by sinners dead in trespasses and sins, till they have believed in Him whom the Father hath sent; and, so surely as there is faith in Christ, there will be good works as the fruit of that faith. The following cases will illustrate these points.

I was asked to visit a woman who was supposed to be dying. When I got there I found her much better, but she had been very ill, almost at the gates of death.

"How did you feel lying there at the thought of death?" I asked her. She replied, "I felt quite happy." "What made you feel happy?" "The thought that I had never told anybody a lie," was the rotten foundation on which she was building.

How solemn! How blind she was! How unbelieving as to what God says in Romans iii. 13, where He speaks of "all," and says, "with their tongues they have used deceit." And how presumptuous to thus make God a liar, as we read in 1 John i. 10, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Poor woman! I tried to show her how fatally she was deceived and blinded, and that even if she had never lied, that would not suffice to stand with before God, being only filthy rags.

On the other hand, we should show our faith by our works (James ii. 18).

One day, in a fair, a drunken man said to a preacher, who was unfolding the Gospel of the grace of God, "I believe all that." "Do your neighbours know that?" was the quick response of the preacher, but to this there was no reply. How could there be? The man was plainly a drunkard, not a believer; as his own works showed, and as Scripture says, "Faith without works is dead" (James ii. 20). There is the profession, but nothing more; it is profitless.

You may be sure, when there is living faith it will be manifest in good works, by which your neighbours will know and own you as a Christian. Reader, on what are you building? Is it Christ and His finished work? All other ground is but sand. Do you make a profession of believing? and do your neighbours know you are a believer?

M.



## THE COLLECTING CARD.



T was after breakfast one summer's morning, some years ago, that I was sitting reading the letters, which the early post had brought, when a knock was heard at the hall door, and the servant mentioned that there was a girl in the hall who wished to speak to me. I accordingly went to her. She was a stranger to me, about twenty years of age, and of very respectable appearance. I noticed a little collecting card in her hand, as I asked her what I could do for her. "I am the daughter of Mr —, the schoolmaster, and I want you to give me a subscription for my card."

"May I ask what is the object of the collection?"

"Oh, it is to convert the Roman Catholics," and she explained to me a little of the work that was being done by the missionary society in which she was interested.

"Your object, you say, is to convert the Roman Catholics. A very good work for Christians to have fellowship in; but may I ask, Are you converted yourself?"

"Oh, I am a *Protestant*, sir!" she exclaimed, looking surprised at being asked such a question.

"Yes, but Protestants need to be converted as

well as Roman Catholics, for the Lord hath said, 'Except ye be converted . . . ye shall all likewise perish;' so allow me again to ask you, Have you been converted to God yourself?"

"I don't understand what you mean," she replied, looking graver. "I go to church, and say my prayers, and I have a class in the Sunday school, and I do the best I can; but what you mean by being '*converted*' I do not understand."

"Well," I said, "I mean have you been 'born again,' and had your sins forgiven? for 'except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3). Thousands have done all that you have spoken of, and much more, and yet gone down to hell in the end; so I want to know, Have you been born again?"

The young woman blushed, and seemed very uneasy, whilst a look of sadness crossed her countenance. She again replied softly, "I really do not understand the question."

"Well," I said, "I will put it as plainly as I possibly can—*If God were to call you into eternity now, as you stand in this hall, are you ready to meet Him?*"

As I asked this solemn question fear was depicted in her expression, her head hung low, her eyes glistened with tears, and scarcely audibly, but very emphatically, she answered, "No, no, sir; if I were to die at this moment I believe I should go straight to hell, and I never saw it before."

"Well," I remarked, "I do not want to hurt your

feelings, but you will pardon my saying that it appears to me to be rather an irregular proceeding for you to be collecting money to convert other people when you are not converted yourself!"

"You are quite right, sir," she answered, almost overcome, for she had begun to realise, for the first time in her life, that she was a *lost sinner*, notwithstanding her natural amiability and exemplary life.

Seeing how miserable she had now become, I asked her, would she like to be saved, assuring her she would have that great blessing the moment she came to Christ and believed the Gospel. I invited her into a sitting-room, and we had two hours together, during which I sought to show her more fully her guilty and lost condition from the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. She was greatly moved, and intensely interested in the Scripture, and verily a new era seemed to have opened in her life. She left thanking me most warmly for having spoken to her about her soul's salvation.

On the following morning, about eleven o'clock, a lady with whom I was slightly acquainted called upon me, and after a few commonplaces about the weather and so forth, she said, "May I ask you to tell me was Miss —— here yesterday?"

"She was," I replied.

"Would you have any objection to relate to me what took place on the occasion?"

"Not the slightest; but why do you ask?"

Mrs E—— then informed me it was she who had

given the card to the girl, and that soon after our interview on the previous day Miss —— had returned the card, saying, “*There* is your card, ma’am. I cannot collect any more money, for I am not converted myself!”

“And what did you say to her?” I inquired.

Mrs E—— answered that she had expressed to the girl much surprise, considering how good and praiseworthy her life had always been, and reminded her how she was always regular at church, of her class in the Sunday school, and how she had been lately received to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

I then told the lady what had transpired, and how my conversation had ended by the unhappy soul admitting that she was perishing in her sins, whereupon I had pointed out to her the apparent inconsistency of endeavouring to get others converted when not converted herself.

At this Mrs E—— got very angry, and said, “Why, she is the model girl of the parish, and is one of the communicants at our church!” and she proceeded to lecture me rather stiffly upon the mischief I had done in frightening this poor girl so terribly, and telling me in what a distressed state Miss —— had come to her, saying she was lost!

I quietly remonstrated with my visitor for not being rejoiced beyond measure, as I was, that one who had been so manifestly resting on her good character and religion for salvation should now have discovered it was the certain road to hell.

"Surely," I continued, "Mrs E——, you must admit there are thousands who have outwardly just as much to show as she has of religion, and outwardly blameless character, who nevertheless have not been convicted of their sins and lost condition, and fled to Christ *alone* for salvation."

The lady was not satisfied, however, and as she left the door I was deeply saddened at the evidence thus given, of the spirit of ignorance concerning, and opposition to, the truth which this now anxious one would have to encounter from so unexpected a quarter.

However, I had never been more firmly convinced that a real work of God had begun in any soul than I had in her case, and comforted myself with the verse, "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6).

Five months passed away, when one morning I received an urgent letter from Miss ——, telling me how awfully miserable she had been ever since our conversation, and how night and day she was troubled about her sins, and sometimes feared the loss of her intellect. The letter concluded by an earnest entreaty to come and see her at once.

I delayed not an instant. A few minutes' walk brought me to her father's house. She was alone. God had prepared the way, and was about to give her the peace she so longed for.

She told me much of what had transpired during the interval—of how the clergyman had come to

her and asked her why she was not at the sacrament, and how she had replied in the words of 1 Cor. xi. 29, that she would be "eating and drinking judgment" to herself, as she was unsaved, and the Lord's Supper was only intended for Christians; of how the neighbours had come to her and said, "But why are *you* so unhappy, you were always so good?" But the Lord had taught her that all her "righteousnesses were filthy rags"—that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 12), and that it is "him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly" whose "faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5).

These would-be friends, in fact, were only crying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," and the tossed and troubled soul looked for a better haven of rest than her own character, which she had found to be vile in the sight of God.

She also related to me what had tended to deepen the solemnity of eternal things to her soul, namely, that a young man to whom she had been engaged to be married, had, a few weeks before, fallen down dead suddenly, while playing ball in a ball-alley. "If it had been me," she said, "I should have gone down to hell straight!"

It was evident this dear girl had now given up "doings" and self-righteousness completely, but she had not yet learned to look to the Lord Jesus Christ alone as her Saviour. It was now an easy and delightful service to be allowed of God to lead this thirsty, wearied soul to the living fountain of

waters, and to tell her how, that "when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the *ungodly*;" that "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" and that as He had on the cross by His death made full satisfaction to God on account of all our sins, God had raised Him up from the dead, and glorified Him at His own right hand in heaven.

She saw now all the *doing* was over, and she had nothing to do but "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and she would be saved on the spot.

She then and there rested her soul on Jesus and His accomplished work, and found peace with the Holy God, whose delight it is to impart it to those who believe His testimony as to the all-sufficiency of the blood of Jesus to cleanse from all sin.

Soon after I ceased to reside in that part of the country, but for years after I continued to hear of her as one who sought to live for her Saviour alone.

Reader, are you converted?

J. C. T.

It is impossible that an awakened soul should not feel the necessity of having the heart set right, and turned to God; and hence, not submitting to the righteousness of God, he thinks to make the favour of God depend on the state of his own affections; whereas God loves us while we are yet sinners.

J. N. D.

## THE TWO HOURS OF JOHN V.

“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. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is; when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”—JOHN v. 24-29.



HE chief thought of the fifth of John is the value of the word of the Lord Jesus Christ—the absolute, intrinsic value of Christ's word. The Lord lays great stress on this, and on what the effects are of hearing His word. In certain cases blessing unspeakable follows the hearing of it, because it is believed and accepted; in other cases—and, ah, how many they are—because His word is rejected now, that word brings untold misery another day, for He has to judge then those who will not give ear in this day. There is coming a day when those who will not listen to His word now, must and shall listen to it, when at the sound of His name every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall own Him Lord. But, oh, what



a terrible thing only to own the Lordship of Christ when compelled to by His power; only to bow to Him when too late; only to listen to His voice when that voice says, "Depart!"

The difference between this day and that is just this, that the very One who now says, "Come unto me," will then say, "Depart from me," and those who will not listen when in grace He says "Come," must listen when in judgment He says "Depart." In righteousness He says both; the voice is as righteous that graciously says "Come," now, as it will be when it says "Depart," then.

"Oh, but," you say, "I thought He was a Saviour, and not a Judge." So He is a Saviour, but you will not have Him. He is not *your* Saviour; you do not want Him; you reject Him; but I beg you to ponder the fact that if you do not own Him as a Saviour now, you must meet Him as a Judge then.

Reader, you are committed to making your choice, either to hear His voice in grace now, or to put it off, to procrastinate, and to risk hearing that voice in judgment—for hear it you must and shall. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Oh, will you procrastinate any longer? Will you put it off till death overtakes you, and you go down into the grave as you have lived? From the depths of the grave will you rise before Him in your uncleanness? Will you rise in your ungodliness? Will you rise in your sins? Will you

rise before Him in your Christless state, only to hear that voice say, "Depart"?

But very likely you say, "Why do you thus speak? I am not dead." Let me ask you, "Has your heart in reality and truth ever bowed to the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you obeyed His voice? Has your soul been drawn to Him, to own and acknowledge Him? Have you heard Him whisper in your ear the words, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"? You reply, "No;" then, my friend, you and Christ are total strangers—you and Christ have never met—you *are dead, yea, dead!*

Listen, now, the Saviour's voice is speaking in this twenty-fifth verse. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The hour is coming, and *now is*: that voice still speaks. The Saviour's eye is now fixed on you with the greatest earnestness. His heart is yearning over you with tenderest love; it is His voice speaking to you through His Word. His voice is heard in that of the preacher, and by the pen of the writer—for what is an Evangelist, a Gospel preacher? He is only a pipe of communication, a channel between the reservoir of the Water of Life up there, and the heart of the poor thirsty sinner down here. The voice of Jesus is speaking to you, will you not listen to it? What does He say? "The hour cometh, and now is;" but remember there is always an end to an hour. This hour of grace has been extended, in the lovely

plenitude of the mercy of God, for more than 1800 years, till this present moment, that His grace may meet you, that you may hear His voice, ere the sand in that hour-glass runs out, and then comes another hour—the hour of His judgment. When the last grain of sand in the hour-glass shall have run out, the hour of His grace is at an end; the glass is turned, and another hour begins. That second hour is very, very near, but the first hour still lasts—the sand has not all run out yet. His voice still speaks, and tell me, shall it not now reach your heart, though up till this moment you have been dead?

Till Christ came the truth had never come out that man was dead. But now this solemn truth is asserted by the Lord, and also the simple, but wondrous, way and moment in which the soul, dead in trespasses and sins, passes into life. And when is that moment? The moment the soul hears the voice of the Son of God. "They that hear shall live." What a wonderful change. Verse twenty-four is the effect of hearing Christ's word. See what importance He attaches to hearing His word. The word that bids you come to Him; the word that bids you acknowledge you are among the dead. Will you not heed that word to-day? Did not the thief hear the voice of the Son of God? and what was the result? He owned his own condition, he owned the power, and the dignity, and the person of the One hanging by his side, and what did he get? A present, an instant, an eter-

nal salvation was in possession of the dying thief that day; he heard and believed the word of the Lord, and the very day that Jesus entered Paradise, so did that thief.

Do not say, You press things too much; you are too personal. It is quite true, I am personal, for it is you I am addressing, because you are still unsaved, still unconverted. "I say unto *you*," the Lord says. Now, intensely personal. You have fixed on you now, at this very moment, the soft tender glance of the Lord Jesus, and He is speaking to you; listen to Him. "*Verily, verily*,"—there is something coming of special sweetness now,—"*he* that heareth." "*He*," that is individual again, "he that heareth my word." Do you hear that word? Do you acknowledge the truth of your position? Do you say, "I know that word 'dead' fits me, that terrible word '*dead*'"? It is a terrible word, indeed, "*dead! dead! DEAD!*" Then listen, "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." "Is passed! is passed!" How sweet! If you have never heard His voice before, you have heard it now; will you listen to it?

Faith ever turns to God, and the believing soul acknowledges that Christ brings the word of God. The soul that hears the voice of the Son of God, learns the heart of the Father who sent the Son. The awakened sinner hears the word of Jesus, and finds out that the Father loves him; and what is

the consequence? "*hath* everlasting life." That is the present thing. What does Christ say the feeblest believer has got? Eternal life! Dear trusting soul, your heart may rejoice in it, you have eternal life. *I* would not dare tell you so, but the Lord Jesus tells you so. "Verily, verily," says Christ; could you doubt Him? Tell me, long-doubting heart, can you longer doubt the word of Jesus? If I have any doubts at all, rising like a dark cloud before my soul, those two words, "Verily, verily," must surely drive them all away; those words are simply ravishing to the soul who is content with the word of Christ.

And not only is there eternal life for the present, but for the future I have this, "Shall not come into condemnation," or judgment. The Lord Jesus came under judgment for you,—the Lord Jesus was condemned for you,—God, in righteousness, has condemned His beloved Son on the cross, that He may not have to condemn you. The one who believes in Jesus has eternal life as a present reality, and "shall not come into judgment" as a future prospect. How can God condemn you for sins for which He has already condemned Christ? The death of the Lord Jesus has for ever settled the question of sin for those who believe. You have nothing to do but to receive Christ, and to enjoy for time and for eternity the fruit of the victory of Christ for you, tasting all the sweetness of it as a present reality.

Who shall condemn? Will Christ, who died for

us? No; He has been condemned for us, and there is "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." For the present, then, I have everlasting life; for the future there is no terror, no condemnation; and when I look at the past, what does the Lord say?—*is* passed from death unto life. How does this all come about? It is the hearing His voice that produces this mighty change. Where *were* you, unbelieving? Among the dead: and now, believing, you are among the living. What *were* you?—"Condemned already." What *are* you?—"Not condemned," and never shall come into condemnation. You have cleared the dark, deep billows of death, and your feet are planted on the shores of immortality, in resurrection-life with Christ. You have in one single moment, I say, by simple faith, cleared, and cleared for ever, the gloomy sea of death, and the pit of hell, and your feet are standing on the blooming shores of immortality, and eternal life in Christ!

Ponder again, dear reader, the Lord's emancipating words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." When my soul is filled with the word of Christ, what room is there for a doubt to come in? Do you ask me, "Are there no clouds in the future? Do you not shrink back from the judgment-day?" Not I! I shall be glad to be there, for I shall be with, and like, the Judge. I shall be like Christ

when I am there. I go in for the first hour. Are you going in for the second hour?—the hour of His judgment; and “the hour cometh.” It has not yet come, thank God, but it “cometh.” Then all that are in their graves shall come forth.

I speak not now of that bright and glorious morning, that morning without clouds, when the saints of God shall hear His voice and rise out of their graves to meet Him in the air. For all do not rise together. There is a thousand years between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the wicked dead. The resurrection of the just is the morning when the Lord shall come into the air, and we shall hear the voice we have known and loved, and shall rise to meet Him. All the people of God, from every land, and of every age, shall hear His voice. The sea, too, shall give up those whom it holds, and we shall rise together, to be for ever with Him; but the book of Revelation tells us, “The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished.” The saints rise—the rest of the dead are left behind for judgment.

The second hour is ushered in by the resurrection of the just dead, and ended by the resurrection of the wicked dead. Christless soul, what a future is yours if you are found among the latter! “I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.” How do they stand? They stand as on earth, body and soul reunited. Then, oh! what will that be for you, you who have rejected Christ? You stand before Him in your sins. You stand before Him in your ungod-

liness. You stand before Him, having despised all His offers of mercy. You stand before Him unsaved, unwashed, unclean, unholy. You rise from the grave. Whom do you see? Whose voice has called you from the dead? The voice of the Son of Man.

At whose word have you come from the dust, O wicked Christless soul? At the word of the Son of Man. "The hour of his judgment has come, and who shall be able to stand?" You rise and you see Him, the one you have despised and rejected now, whose voice you will not listen to now, and He is your Judge. Is there no pardon? you ask. None. No mercy? None, none. No way of escape. No; the door is closed, and closed for ever. There is no escape, no salvation, no pardon, no mercy, no way of escape. By your unbelief you really compel the Lord to judge and condemn you. He cannot save you then! He can only say "Depart." If you will not hear Him now, when He says "Come," you must hear Him in another hour, when He can only say "Depart." He has often said "Come." He will say "Depart" but once; for you will obey Him instantly, as you flee from His face to the lake of fire, your eternal abode. Will you risk it? Oh, tell me, tell me, will you risk it? Will you risk rising before Him with all your sins upon you, only to be eternally shut out from His presence? Oh, if you are unsaved, undecided, Christless still, let me entreat you. Turn, turn. Receive Jesus—hear His words, listen to His voice. Believe on Him now.

W. T. P. W.



“MUST I NOW ASK HIM TO FORGIVE ME?” 297

“MUST I NOW ASK HIM TO FORGIVE  
ME, OR MUST I NOT THANK HIM?”

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RS G——had been much troubled in her soul for several weeks. Her anxiety came about in connection with a series of Gospel meetings, in which God manifested His saving grace by numerous conversions; and it was of so real a character that, being unusually protracted, it to a degree affected her health.

One of the conversions above referred to was that of her husband, which made her long all the more ardently for a definite knowledge of forgiveness. But, alas! like so many, she was looking *within*, rather than *backward* at Calvary and *upward* to the Throne, for evidence that her sins were gone.

“Oh,” she said, “if I could *only be sure* that I would not go to hell! and when I think I *might be sent there at any moment*, I’m overdone and must weep”—and she did weep.

In attempting to comfort her, the love of God to us, even while enemies, was appealed to; the proof of that love in giving up His beloved Son to die; the desire also of this blessed One to afford the only means, in His unspeakable sufferings, by

which God could righteously pardon; and God's satisfaction with Christ's work on the sinner's behalf, testified to in the place He has given Jesus on high—all without apparent effect.

"I went to the meeting" (one held in a neighbour's house a few nights previously) "the other evening," again she bemoaned, "hoping to hear something to give me relief, but came away without it; and *uch*, oh, I'm miserable."

She was pointed to 1 John i. 9, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" The words emphasised were dwelt upon. *Confession*, our part, which part certainly Mrs G—— fulfilled. *Forgiveness*, God's part, which she *could not believe Him willing to fulfil!*

Oh, how this dreadful distrust, this deeply rooted lie of Satan, lingers in our poor vain breasts!

But God *is* faithful to forgive. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it?"

And is He not *just*? Has He not already accepted the ransom—the precious blood of His Son? and may not poor sinners *therefore* enjoy the pardon so dearly purchased? Will He deny the sinner this? Nay! God is just, and He is faithful *to forgive*. Dear reader, why not enjoy the forgiveness?

Mrs G—— had all this set before her, and yet had no peace. How strange!

She suggested, "Is not God's salvation only for a few?"

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How many stumble here! God offers His salvation to "*whosoever will*" receive it.

"Tell us, Mrs G——," we said, "whether is God's salvation for those who confess, or for those who do not confess? for the careless or the anxious?" She at once replied, "For those who are anxious and confess—so the verse says." The question made an impression, and with this we left her for nearly an hour, but on returning found her still unhappy.

One more barricade of the father of lies had to yield to the power of the blessed Word of God.

She said, "Does not Scripture say that we must love God with all our heart?"

"Yes, certainly," we replied, "we *ought* to love Him so; but it was when we *did not*, and *could not*, that He proved His great love to us in giving His only-begotten Son to die for us (1 John iv. 9, 10). When we were lost and dead towards Him, He loved us thus! We learn to love Him in return; 'we love him *because* he first loved us.' You cannot expect a child of God to walk before it can creep, can you? We go on from little to more."

The work was now done, blessed be God! A beaming smile glowed on the hitherto anxious face, testifying to a newly found rest in OUR GREAT RESOURCE—*the love of God*.

After thanking God together, and a hymn of praise, she said, "Must I now ask Him to forgive me, or must I not thank Him?"

J. K.

## “THAT WORD ‘THOU’!”

“If *thou* shalt confess with *thy* mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in *thine* heart that God hath raised him from the dead, *thou* shalt be saved.”—ROM. x. 9.



N speaking to a dear man, who had lately confessed Christ, he said, “It was that word *Thou* that laid hold of me” (referring to the above verse), and led him to see that Christ was his own Saviour. He had been leading a good life, as people say, and was more or less religious, but with no decision for Christ, no certainty of salvation up to this time. Perhaps the reader of this paper is in such case; brought up, it may be, in a Christian family, under religious influences, yet still as unsaved and unforgiven as if you had no religion at all. Whether anxious about your soul’s salvation, or utterly careless, let me tell you affectionately, that there is no salvation, pardon, nor peace for you till you, as an *individual* sinner, believe for yourself on the Lord Jesus Christ as your own Saviour.

It is common enough to speak of ourselves as all sinners, or as all Christians, in a general way, but that will not do for God or for eternity! When Nathan the prophet spake in the parable to David (2 Sam. xii.), and roused him to the sinfulness of the rich man, who took the poor man’s only lamb, instead of one out of his own flock, then he said to

him, "THOU art the man," thus bringing his sin right home to himself. So it must be now. The publican in the temple (Luke xviii. 13) cried out, "God be merciful to ME a (or *the*) sinner." The awakened jailer at Philippi (Acts xvi. 30) says to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Reader, have you been brought to this, to own *yourself* a *lost sinner*, *unfit* for the presence of God, and deserving His righteous judgment? "*Thou* art the man," the *sinner*, for "ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). It must be real conscience and heart work with each one of us. Isaiah says, "Woe is ME, for I am undone" (Isa. vi. 5). When he sees the glory of the Lord, Paul says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to *save sinners*, of whom *I* am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). Peter, all conscious of whose presence he was in, says, "Depart from *me*, for *I* am A SINFUL MAN, O Lord" (Luke v. 8). So must it be with you, dear friend, and the sooner you own it the better. "*I have sinned*," was the prodigal's cry in Luke xv., and it may well be yours too. Then will you see the beauty and the force of that word THOU.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and THOU shalt be saved," was Paul's blessed answer to the trembling jailer. So in Romans x., from which we quote, the same apostle by the Holy Ghost says, "The word is nigh THEE, even in THY mouth, and in THY HEART: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if THOU shalt confess with THY mouth the Lord Jesus" (or Jesus as Lord)—Pause here a

moment! Art thou prepared for this, my friend? Wilt *thou now*, as a lost, ruined sinner, *confess* Him as thy Saviour and Lord? Will thine heart bow to Him in adoring gratitude, thy lips confessing His worthy name?—"and shalt believe in THINE heart that God hath raised him from the dead." Surely you cannot doubt this blessed fact, but rather with triumph say, "*He is risen*" (Mark xvi. 6). "God hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xi. 32). If so, then there is the divinely written Word for you this moment to rest upon, "THOU shalt be saved."

Let your heart and voice be heard, saying,—  
 "Blessed, thrice blessed Saviour, Thou didst say on the cross, 'It is finished!' the work of salvation is done. Death could not hold Thee; the grave could not retain Thee. Thou *art risen*! 'Thou wast raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.' Thou hast triumphed gloriously; I gladly confess Thee; I rejoice in Thy salvation as my present and eternal portion. That word THOU assures me of it."

O friend, be in earnest. Let it be a personal matter with thee now. *Believe*, confess, rejoice! for God says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU shalt be saved." There is no uncertainty about it.

Perhaps you say, If I could only *feel* it; but there is not a word about feelings here. It is, "THOU SHALT BE SAVED." A *fact*! not a feeling; but as you believe the *fact*, then you will feel happy

as a consequence. Well, you say, I *hope* to be saved. Does the verse read, Thou shalt *hope* to be saved? How many read it that way; but that is not believing God, but your own heart. Why not take God's word as it stands, and rejoice in present salvation. "*Thou shalt be saved.*" Yes, if *thou*, the *needy* one, the *sinner*, wilt but confess and believe, for "with the *heart* man *believeth* unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The mouth confesses what the heart believes. We read in John xi. 24, that many believed, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, for He knew what was in man. So, friend, a mere head belief, or intellectual assent, will not do. The more in earnest you are, the more will you seize hold of these words, "THOU SHALT BE SAVED," as applying to you now.

Many go on hoping, doubting, fearing, wishing, but not *having* and rejoicing. The secret of this often is that they have never *confessed* Christ. If this be your case, dear reader, nail your colours to the masthead! Confess the Lord Jesus now; confess Him to God; confess Him as your own living Saviour and Lord. Rejoice, too, in the divine assurance of your own salvation. That word THOU! May it be God's word to you. As you read this little paper—

"*Thou shalt be saved.*"

*Thou* the guilty, trembling sinner,

*Christ* the Saviour of the lost;

*Now* as Saviour Lord confess Him,

Make in Him e'en all your boast. T. E. P.

## THREE KISSES.



SOLOMON, the wisest of men, said, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. xxvii. 6). Such was the first of three kisses spoken of in Scripture, to which I would draw the reader's attention.

It was

## THE KISS OF BETRAYAL.

Jesus had taken the last passover supper with His beloved disciples, when the false and deceitful Judas, the son of perdition, having received the sop from the hand of his Master, *Satan entered into him* (John xiii. 27), and Jesus said, "That thou doest, do quickly." And he went immediately out, and it was night.

Jesus, as He was wont, went to the Mount of Olives. There He passes through agonies of soul, as He prays with deepest earnestness, whilst His disciples sleep. And behold, a multitude, with swords and staves, draw near to lay violent hands upon the spotless Christ of God. Judas, going before them, forthwith comes to Him, saying, "Hail, Master," and *kissed Him* (Matt. xxvi. 49). And Jesus said to him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss." Then took they Him, and led Him, and brought Him before the judgment seat.



## THREE KISSES.

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His hour had now come. Falsely charged at both Jewish and Gentile bar, surrounded with bitter foes clamouring for His blood, the only Perfect One that ever trod this scene is consigned by the grossest injustice, with every mark of dark dishonour heaped upon Him, to a felon's death (Matt. xxvi., xxvii.). Thus man consummated his guilt, and the world henceforth stands charged at the bar of God with the rejection and murder of His Son.

But this crowning act of man's perfidy and wickedness, the crucifixion of Christ, was the channel for the outflow of the love and grace of God. On that cross He bore the judgment of God against sin, drinking the bitter cup to the very dregs. God hid His face from His Beloved, and eternal redemption was obtained in the shedding of His precious blood (Heb. ix. 12). Buried in the grave, He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and now sits at God's right hand, His work done, henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool (Heb. x. 13).

In His blessed name, *pardon* and *salvation* are proclaimed to all. In the long-suffering of God, He still lingers there, but the moment fast approaches when He shall come forth in power and great glory, accompanied with the angels of His might, and avenge Himself of His adversaries, treading His foes as ashes beneath His feet. Take heed, therefore, sinner, to the words of the Psalmist, addressed to the great of this world, but surely

having a moral application to all, "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. *Kiss the Son*, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, *when his wrath is kindled but a little*. Blessed are *all they* that put their trust in him" (Ps. ii. 10-12). This is

### THE KISS OF PEACE.

Have *you* kissed Him? A kiss is a token of affection and love. Do you love Him? And do you know His love? Are you still ranged on the world's side, with your heart and mind filled with enmity against Him, or is it peace? If still amongst His foes, beware! He will break them that day with a rod of iron. He shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. ii. 9). "Be wise *now* therefore. . . . *Kiss the Son*." It is not *yet* too late, but *to-morrow* may be. Be wise *now*. *Now* is God's time. True wisdom is to kiss the Son. Be instructed *now*. "Blessed are *all they*," adds the Psalmist, "*that put their trust in him*." Thenceforth ye shall be wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Him.

He is ready to judge (1 Peter iv. 5). "Behold," saith the Scriptures, "the Judge standeth before the door" (James v. 9). All judgment is committed unto the Son. But He is yet a Saviour, pleading still with sinners, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40). Oh, come then, poor sinner, to the Saviour now—make no delay.

## THREE KISSES.

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"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." He died, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life. He is worthy of your love, for it was for sinners Jesus died. Think of His love that led Him from the glory to the cross. Be wise. Be instructed. Kiss the Son. Kiss Him now, and henceforth you are amongst the ranks of the blessed. For "blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." And instead of coming into judgment, you shall be found amongst the myriads of the redeemed, who, raised or changed, shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, when He first comes, as He will, to claim His own (1 Thes. iv. 15-18).

But not only is there deliverance from judgment through Him, and peace, but God welcomes, reconciles, and lavishes upon all that come to Him all that love can devise. This is beautifully illustrated in the familiar story of the prodigal son. A dissatisfied, selfish spendthrift, reduced to the greatest poverty and misery, comes to himself, and returns, after long absence, to a loving father, confessing his sin. The father, whose heart is occupied with his long lost son, saw him when yet a great way off, and having compassion, ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. This was

## THE KISS OF RECONCILIATION.

His eye saw him; his heart was filled with com-

passion; his feet ran; his arms embraced; and his lips covered him with kisses.

And this is the manner of the welcome that every sinner receives from God Himself, who *comes back* to Him, *in self-judgment*. Have you come? Sinner you are, sinner in your sins, but only return to Him, and in the tender compassion of His loving heart, He will cast around you His everlasting arms, and kiss you with the kisses of His mouth,—blessed token of your reconciliation to Him. But the riches of a Father's grace stop not there. The best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fattest calf, the lordly feast, merriment, music, and dancing, are the manifold expressions of the delight and joy of the heart of the father in the case of the return of his long lost son. And so also, the sinner reconciled to God is clad with heaven's best robe, the righteousness of God, *His Christ*, sealed with the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. v. 21; Eph. iv. 30); fitted to walk before Him, to share communion with Him and the enjoyment of heavenly merriment at His festal board.

Beloved reader, is this portion yours? If not, why not? Oh, that like this poor prodigal, you may come to yourself, and return, saying, "I have sinned," that God may lavish His grace upon you. If you follow the world, you must reap its portion, but kiss the Son, and you are delivered from wrath; return in self-judgment, and the kiss of everlasting reconciliation with God will be yours.

E. H. C.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED YEARS TOO LATE. 309

## EIGHTEEN HUNDRED YEARS TOO LATE!



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WAS listening to an earnest preacher of the Gospel the other day, who, when he came to speak of the work that was necessary to put away sin, to meet God's claims, and save the sinner, and wishing to show that the sinner's doings would not avail, cried out,—“My friend, you are too late—eighteen hundred years too late,—it was done and done by Christ upon the cross of Calvary!”

It struck me as being a very novel way of putting the matter, the truth of which is irresistible if people will only look at it for a few moments.

It is quite clear that the work of atonement was absolutely necessary. “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. ix. 22); “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. xvii. 11). These two scriptures place it beyond question that a sacrifice must be offered up, and that the blood of the victim must flow ere atonement for the soul could be made, or remission for its sins obtained. A work must be done. *But by whom?* Christ or the sinner? This is an important question, and, for the inquiring soul, would settle a host of difficulties. Was the work done by Christ on the cross, or has the sinner to do it? Is it by

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the death of Christ, or the works of man, that redemption is accomplished and the soul saved? By Christ on the cross most assuredly. He came "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. xi. 26); "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12); "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. ii. 24); "Having made peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. i. 20); "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost" (John xix.); "I have glorified thee upon the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John xvii. 4).

Christ having come, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!" and having done it, could add, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," hence it is too late for the sinner to attempt the doing of it. IT IS DONE! not being done, but done, absolutely done, by Christ, eighteen hundred years ago. Does the sinner persist in his doings? How applicable the preacher's words,—"*My friend, you are too late, the work is done; you are eighteen hundred years too late; it was done, and done by Christ, upon the cross of Calvary!*"

No wonder, then, that the Word of God says, again and again, that it is not by our works that we are saved, but by believing in *Another*, who has accomplished the work for us. It is "to him that worketh not,"—that is, renounces the very idea of salvation by works—"but believeth on

## SATAN'S FORT.

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him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 5). Works flow from the knowledge of salvation, but never are the means of obtaining it. Just as a stream never produces the spring, but the spring the stream, so with salvation. When I am saved by grace, through faith in Christ, I have life, eternal life, and the natural consequences of that life, and of that saved state, are praise and gratitude to God, and service to man.

How blessedly in its place, then, are the Apostle Paul's words to the jailer,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts xvi. 31).

E. A.

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 SATAN'S FORT.


HE following melancholy incident occurred some years since, and illustrates the dreadful issue of a soul's entanglement in Satan's delusions.

The S—— were one of two families in the outskirts of T——, in the south of England, who were regularly visited. One winter's evening the writer sat with S——, his wife, and their two daughters, seeking to lead

them to Christ; but instead of asking that question of questions, "What must I do to be saved?" S—— raised some question concerning *election*, by doing which he, like so many others, doubtless sought opportunity to show his orthodoxy on this much controverted point of truth. He was a staunch Calvinist, so that *election* was his *boasted fort*. But, through the misuse of Scripture, alas! this doctrine, so precious and sustaining to the saved, was Satan's fort too for poor S——, who used it to retain him captive, immuring him finally by his devices in the lowest dungeons, as the sequel proves. It is Satan's common and delusive practice, to occupy the unsaved with what alone is applicable and yields joy to the saved, and *vice versâ*. What profit is there to be found in a consideration of "election" for guilty, hell-deserving sinners, when "God *commands all men everywhere to repent*," in view of the dreadful day which fast hastens on?

One Lord's Day morning, after the conversation above referred to, the boys of my Sunday school class told me that S—— had disappeared the evening previously, after I, having been visiting in a neighbour's house, had passed by his door; that he was absent all night from home, and nobody knew where he had gone. Going to his house next day, I learned there was hope that he went to see relatives living at some distance from T——; but the hope was doubtful, inasmuch as, contrary to his usual custom, he went out in his worst clothes.



It was known that he was in depression of spirits, for he had been out of work for some six or eight weeks, with a sore leg, and his family was in want in consequence. Days passed by and nothing was heard of S——, until, a fortnight after his disappearance, his body was discovered in a canal, where he had committed suicide, to terminate his anxiety, as he vainly hoped.

Dear reader, want, anxiety, distress, may not drive you to this awful earthly end. But have you not want? are you not anxious? in distress, perhaps, in view of what you may expect *beyond death*? Death here may not occasion such sadness as did that of poor S—— to his friends; you may have kind friends to smooth your dying pillow; kind hands to close your lifeless eyelids; your body may be committed to the dust with most becoming reverence;—but, your soul? Before a holy God, will it not realise, in ten thousand-fold greater degree, all the *want* and *distress* which drove S—— to *his* end?

But is there need for this? No, thank God. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil; by His death at Calvary He has done so for every believer. Take *Him* as your refuge; and there also you will find all that can satisfy your needy soul. Jesus said, “He that cometh to ME shall never hunger; and he that believeth on ME shall never thirst.” “And him that cometh to me I will *in no wise* cast out.” “*Believest thou this?*” J. K.

## THE FOUNTAIN.



WHILE waiting for the boat to convey me from R. to N. Y. one sultry day, I noticed in the centre of the waiting-room a fountain had been erected for the convenience of thirsty passengers. Though many, very many, came to drink, still the water flowed on unchecked, undiminished, just as abundant, just as fast and freely as when the first person partook of its refreshing streams; and I saw with pleasure that none were refused—there was no difference or distinction made between the comers. Did the little hand of a child grasp the cup and hold it up, freely did the fountain fill it to the brim; did an aged one, with a weak and feeble hand, hold it up, the same undiminished stream filled it until it would hold no more; was it a beggar that came, there was no hindrance—the cup was filled, the fountain was FREE, and its streams just as quickly sent the brimming cup to his thirsty lips; or did a rich man (alas! I noticed but few who had that appearance go to it), oppressed by the heat of the day, take his stand for a moment on a level with the poor, and become debtor to the fountain, it also sent the overflowing cup with refreshing and healing water to his lips, and he, like all that came, might drink his fill; and all the thirsty ones went away satisfied—

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none were refused, none were stinted; truly it was FREE, and free to ALL!

Every one that thirsted might go to this fountain—yea, he that had no money was welcome, for its waters were free, without money and without price. Then I thought, what a vivid picture of those waters that we read of in Rev. xxii. 17, to which all thirsty ones are invited in this remarkable language,—“Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life FREELY.” And again (Rev. xxi. 6),—“And he said unto me, It is done; I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end; I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”

And now, dear unsaved reader, let me ask you, in love to your soul, if you had gone into that waiting-room weary, hot, and thirsty, and looked upon the gushing waters of that fountain, and were told it was free, but refused to drink, could you blame the fountain? Surely not; but going away with your thirst unquenched, the full responsibility would be your own, and you must suffer the consequences of refusing to drink, which would be in this case but temporal. But oh, let me entreat you to ponder the consequence of refusing to drink of the water of life so freely offered to you by the living God Himself!

You may ask, Is it for me? Are you thirsty? are you needy? are you a sinner? Then surely it is for you. Take your Bible and look at the

thirteenth chapter of Zechariah, first verse, and you will see what this Fountain was opened for, even for sin and for uncleanness. But you may say, This is for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and I am not an Israelite at all. True, you may not be; but now turn to Isa. lv. 1, and you must be convinced it is for you,—“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk”—at what cost?—“without money, and without price.”

Mark, I beseech you, the deep earnestness of God: “Ho!” This is to attract your attention,—to halt you, that you may give special heed to that which He is about to say; and what will God say to poor self-willed guilty rebels against Himself?—“Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; YEA, COME, buy wine and milk WITHOUT MONEY, AND WITHOUT PRICE.”

Every needy one, every guilty one, every sinner, feeling his need of one to save, “Come ye,” and he that hath no money, hath no true riches, with nothing but filthy rags, to him the word from God’s heart is “Come.” And still yearning over you, He says, “Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Can you resist the pleading earnestness of God?

Remember that Christ Jesus went most fully into the question of sin and sins with God, and settled it for ever, for all who believe; yes, He has accom-

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plished all the work of salvation, and the fountain of His blood has been opened for "sin and uncleanness," and cleanseth for ever all that believe,—“The blood of Jesus Christ his (God’s) Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Yes, dear reader, from ALL sin; and though it cost Him more than we can ever know, to you it is free. Try for a moment to imagine yourself in that waiting-room I have spoken of, and that you see the thirsty ones going to the fountain; think of its fulness—enough for all—and still you see it flows on. How simple; the thirsty see it, they ask no question, raise no doubt, but walk straight up to it and drink, simply because they need the refreshing water. Do you not need the water of life? As a sinner do you not need salvation? Just as freely, just as simply, just as really, you may take it from the hand of God who invites,—nay, more, He beseeches you to drink and be saved.

Listen for a moment to what He says,—“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. v. 20).

Dear sinner, God can say no more; He can do no more; His richest treasure He has given, even His well-beloved Son: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John iii. 16).

Yes, Jesus was nailed to the cross for sin, and His blood maketh full atonement. Now simply

look by faith at Him there, hearken to His cry,—  
 “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”  
 and believe the precious truth, saying in your  
 heart, “My sins nailed Him to that cross; it was  
 for me He died; the judgment due to my guilt  
 was poured out upon His holy head, and I am free.”  
 And thus believing, God says you are saved, that  
 you have eternal life, and shall never perish, but  
 are “passed from death unto life.” J. C.

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## SATAN'S OPIATES.

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“PEACE! peace!” he quietly whispered  
 in the ear of the dying man. As he  
 stood gloating over his poor deluded  
 victim, he repeated, “I am the ‘mes-  
 senger of peace’ to you. All is well;  
 you need not trouble. You know the  
 Bible well. You cried to God to deliver you out  
 of your pain; soon you will pass away out of this  
 suffering. Then all will be well.”

Thus said Satan to a man who for years had  
 served him well, and who was now about to pass  
 into eternity. This, reader, is no picture drawn by  
 human imagination, but a solemn fact in the his-  
 tory of one whom I knew intimately for fourteen  
 years.

He was what even men of the world would call

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bad. His poor wife had been hurried to an early grave, and he, the victim of drink and debauchery, was now about to follow her. He was also a scorner, and reviler of God's Word, and God's people,—notoriously profane and untruthful.

Consumption of the throat seized him; but he would not believe that it was so—cursed the doctor, threw away the medicine, declared they wanted to kill him, and fought with all the intensity of a life-and-death struggle against the ravages of the disease; but at length he had to succumb. Unable to move about, dropsy set in, and at last he was forced to admit that there was no hope of recovery.

Was he terrified at the prospect of death? Alas! no. Satan had a gospel of his own, and he knew well how to lull with his deadly opiates the conscience of his wretched victim. "Peace! peace!" he preached, when there was no peace; and thus many a poor deluded sinner has passed unawakened out of this world, for "the wicked have no bands in their death."

Often did I wish that I might be the bearer of a message to the poor fellow. But weeks of his illness passed on, without the accomplishment of my wish being fulfilled. Alarmed for his safety, his companions in sin besought me to call to see him, though they well knew how he had previously ridiculed both my Master, and His message.

But how common is this, to find even the ungodly anxious about the eternal destiny of others, and

sending hither and thither, for a servant of Christ to read and pray with the dying, vainly supposing that the very presence of such will help to save the dying! How many a poor deluded soul has passed into the lake of fire with the sacrament on his dying lips, or extreme unction just administered!

I at last found my way to this poor man's dying bed—dying in the prime of life, dying without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world! I entered his dying chamber. A composing draught had just lulled him to sleep; and as I watched the pallid, deathly features, and listened to the laboured breathing, deep sorrow wrung my aching heart. Presently he awoke in a violent fit of coughing, and I feared lest he should then pass away. As soon as he had sufficiently recovered, I spoke to him of Christ, and of his need of a Saviour. He assented to all that I said, and then added that he felt that it was now all right with him, for he had prayed! Desirous to find out if his prayer was a cry for mercy, I asked him what he had prayed for. "Oh, that the pain might be less," he replied.

I then read Romans iii. and Job xxxiii., as a description of his lost condition and showing God's ways with man—how He chastens him with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his life abhors bread, and his soul dainty meat; yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyer. And all this in order that he may own, "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it pro-



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fiteth me not." Then God can say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."

"Ah," he said, "I know every word of that Book." And he looked quite secure; he was resting on that.

He then related to me, what I had heard before, that about three o'clock that morning the pain had ceased, and he felt that his end was come, and that he was being wafted into heaven! "Alas!" thought I, "what an awakening! when, instead of the holy paradise of God, he may find himself in the deep dark gloom of the eternal abode of the lost."

In vain was it that I set before him his lost condition as a sinner. He had prayed; that was sufficient. Alas! the devil's gospel. But a few brief hours, and he passed away.

Oh! what an awakening was his, as on last Saturday week the veil was thrown aside, and the terrible truth was out! The hell he had ridiculed in days of health must now be his abode, and that for ever and for ever!

"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

Reader, *God* is preaching peace by Jesus Christ, a peace procured at the enormous cost of the shedding of the blood of His beloved Son. *Satan* too is a messenger of peace; but his so-called gospel leaves out repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To whom are YOU listening? God or Satan?

H. N.

## THREE GREAT MEETINGS.

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HERE are three great meetings about to take place soon. I wonder at which of them you will find your place, my reader?

Countless Gospel meetings have been held these last eighteen hundred years; and millions of poor, perishing, guilty souls have repented of their sins, have been washed in the blood of Jesus, and enrolled amongst the redeemed, who shall join in the great hallelujah chorus in the glory of God.

In the Lord's days on earth, publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of God, while the religious people shut themselves out by refusing the Saviour; and we find it still the same.

Drunkards, harlots, thieves, hypocrites, empty professors or infidels, any or all may come to Jesus now, and "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," said the blessed Lord, and He is still the same (John vi. 37). Educated people who know the languages, or ignorant people who know not their letters, all alike need Jesus, and all alike may have Him; while all alike will be damned for ever, if they refuse Him, for "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34).

What madness for people to set up their own

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thoughts in opposition to God's Word! He hath said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). And remember,—“God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. xxiii. 19).

There is one course open, and one only, for the Christless soul to escape the wrath of God, and that is, “Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.” Judge and condemn yourself for all your sinful and Christless life, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners, but who is now on the throne in glory, the proof His work is done. Any person may attend Gospel meetings now, and hear the good news of salvation by faith in Christ. But remember Gospel meetings will soon be past! Reader, take care, and trifle not with *your* soul, lest you miss salvation and perish for ever.

The first of the three great coming meetings is an open-air one; but only certain persons will be there. If you would like to read the account of it, before it takes place, turn to 1 Thess. iv. 13–18.

Who will be at it? Every blood-bought, blood-washed sinner, from Abel down to the last saint before the Lord comes; and no one else. No! none but the saints will be there.

The Lord Jesus has been here once, and offered Himself as a sacrifice for His people's sins; and by that sacrifice has put their sins away for ever. Now, as the result of that wonderful work, *they* have *no more* conscience of sins, and *God* has *no more* remembrance of their sins. How blessed to look up into those opened heavens and see Him seated, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us four times over! And why? Because He has perfectly glorified God about the whole question of sin, and permanently put away the believer's sins. Just read Heb. i. 1-3, viii. 1, x. 12-18, and xii. 1-3.

Now, if you are clear as to the *sin question*, you can look at the *Son question*. The Lord is coming back again to receive the saints to Himself, according to His promise in John xiv. 1-3. And where is the meeting to take place? In the air!

The moment He descends, all the saints will rise. The cemeteries, graveyards, and sea shall yield up their bodies. The living saints, also, "shall be changed," and "caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Reader! will you be amongst that happy throng that shall rise to meet their Lord, and thus have part in that grand open-air meeting? or will you be left behind? It will be terrible to be left. All the Gospel-hearers who have been Gospel-rejecters will be damned (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12).

Perhaps you reply,—“I don't believe it; and if it be true, I suppose I shall not be there.” Well,

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then, let me tell you of a meeting you will be at—the prayer-meeting.

Probably you care little for prayer-meetings now, considering yourself too manly to pray. Ah! remember you *will* pray. If not before, you will when the door is shut, and the saints are inside with the Master of the house, and you are outside knocking for admittance. Then you will pray, and pray earnestly too. “Lord, Lord, open to us!” Alas! alas! the only answer for you then will be,—“I know you not” (Matt. xxv. 10-12). Too late! too late! too late!

There is another prayer-meeting spoken of in Rev. vi. 15-17. Just look at the persons who will be there. “The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the chief captains, the mighty men, the bondmen and the freemen.” These are the persons. Now notice what they do. “They hid themselves in dens, and in the rocks of the mountains.” Now listen to their prayer. They say to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand.”

If you look at Luke xvi., you will read the prayer of a rich man in hell—one who possibly never prayed much on earth. “He lifted up his eyes in hell, and said, Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” Alas! he was too late, and his prayer

was not answered. Beware, sinner! lest *you* put off the salvation of *your* soul till some convenient season which may never come, and find yourself at last not at the grand open-air meeting, but at the awful prayer-meeting, where all your prayers will be in vain.

Thank God there is another meeting, and the heart of the saint longs for it. It is the worship meeting, when all the redeemed shall cluster round the Lamb, and ascribe "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever," and "fall down and worship" (Rev. v.).

Ah! many of the Lord's dear people have given Him very little praise and worship here. How worldly they have been! How occupied with themselves and their own blessings—always seeking something for themselves, and having little or nothing to give to the Blessor. But there all will be changed, and the blessed Lord shall have full praise. All evil will be banished; the saints will be there in bodies of glory like Christ's, and there will be nothing to hinder the outflowings of full hearts throughout eternity.

Often here, when worshipping the Lord, we are recalled to the fact that this is earth still, and our various duties claim our attention. But, thank God, there will be no clock there, to tell us of time, and remind us we must part. No, it will be an eternity of blissful worship, as we bow before that One who alone is worthy of it all.

## NOAH'S CARPENTERS.

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Now, my reader, which meeting will you be at? The open-air and the worship meeting? or will you be at the prayer-meeting? Oh! I beseech you, ere it be too late, throw aside your empty form of religion, and receive eternal life as the gift of God (Rom. vi. 22). Accept Christ as your own personal Saviour, then live for Him here in the power of an ungrieved Holy Spirit, as you will live *with* Him there, and worship Him for ever and ever.

W. E.

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 NOAH'S CARPENTERS.
 

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“YOU don't look at all like a patient, Miss Emmie,” I said, as a fresh, rosy-cheeked girl of seventeen, the very picture of health—the daughter of Christian parents—came one day into my consulting-room.

“No, doctor. I'm not come for advice, but mamma said that she thought you would help me with a little subscription;” and at the same time she produced a collecting-book, entitled, “Indian Vernacular Society.”

“What is the object of this society?”

“Oh, its object is to teach the little boys and girls in India to read the Bible in their own lan-

guage; and I am doing all I can to help it forward," she answered most eagerly.

"A capital idea," I replied. "I suppose, then, the real object is that the children may hear of Jesus, and be brought to believe in Him, and thus be saved, and know that they are?"

"Exactly so."

"Well, I hope the Lord will use this effort to the blessing of many of them," I replied; "but before going further, may I ask you, Miss Emmie, Did you ever hear of Noah's carpenters?"

"Noah's carpenters! No; who were they?" she replied, rather uneasily.

"They were people who may have helped to build the ark, by which others were saved, and yet never got in themselves."

"I never thought of them before."

"Very likely. But do you not think you are somewhat like them? Here you come trying to help other people to be saved, and yet, so far as I have ever heard, you are not saved yourself. Tell me, Do you think you have ever yet come to Jesus yourself, and had your sins washed away? To put it plainly, Are you saved?" This query was followed by a lengthened silence; her face flushed crimson, her eyes filled, and then, with a burst of tears, she replied,

"No, I know I am not saved. I see, I have been like Noah's carpenters."

The bow drawn at a venture had truly entered the joints of the harness, and she was from that



moment a spirit-wounded, and convicted sinner. A long and interesting conversation followed, which I need not relate. We looked at the Word of God, and she found out to her utter dismay and distress, that all her own righteousnesses were but as filthy rags in the sight of God, and that she was an utterly lost soul, needing cleansing and pardon. In this awakened state, after prayer with her, she left me.

Some weeks rolled by, and I was wondering what had been going on in my young friend's soul, when she again came at my consulting hour. Her pale anxious face betrayed what her words soon confirmed, viz., that since we parted she had passed through days and nights of deep soul-anguish.

"Mamma said she thought I might come and see you again, for I am so miserable and wretched I don't know what to do;" and, indeed, she looked all she said.

"I am most glad to see you, Miss Emmie. I suppose to-day you want something for yourself, not for others?"

"Yes. I am most anxious to be saved, if I only knew how to come to Jesus; but I am so wicked, and my heart so hard, and I feel so dead."

"You must just come to Him as you are—in all your sins—for He has said, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Just believe Him simply. Take Him at His word."

"I do believe on Him, but I don't get any good from it. I don't feel any different."

"You must not look at your feelings; you must just hear what He says, and give heed to His word. Now, look at this verse," and I turned to John v. 24. "Mark what Jesus says, 'Verily, verily, I say unto *you*, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Now, tell me, who is speaking here?"

"Jesus."

"And to whom is He speaking?"

"To me."

"Well, do you hear His word?"

"Yes."

"And do you believe Him that sent Him? Do you believe that God sent Him to save you, to die for you, and to wash away your sins?"

"Yes, I truly believe He did."

"Now, then, see, you have complied with the two conditions given, you have *heard* and *believed*; listen to the three blessed consequences that the Lord says accrue to the one that *hears* and *believes*. Such an one '*hath everlasting life*,' that is a present possession. Inasmuch as you *hear* and *believe*, what does Jesus say you now possess?"

"He says I have '*everlasting life*.'"

"Good. Stick to that. But there is more in the verse. He says he that *heareth* and *believeth* 'shall not come into condemnation.' That, you observe, provides for the *future*. There can be no condemnation for the one who believes in Jesus, be-

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cause He Himself, on the cross, bore that condemnation. Now, since you have *heard* and *believed*, what does He say as to your future?"

"He says I shall not 'come into condemnation.'"

"If He says you shall not, do you think you ever can?"

"No; of course not. He would not tell me what is not true. He cannot lie."

"Exactly so. Thus you see He meets the present and the future in this verse. Nor is that all. We all lay in death; we were each one 'dead in trespasses and sins,' and out of that state we pass the moment we hear His voice, for He quickens us by His word; and so He adds here that the one who *hears* and *believes* 'is passed from death unto life.' Nothing could be simpler or more blessed."

"Yes, I see it now. I have heard and believed, and, therefore, I have 'passed from death unto life.' Oh, how simple it all seems now!" and the pent-up feelings again got relief in a shower of tears, not now tears of conviction and distress, but those joyous, gladsome tears that will flow down the cheeks of a redeemed, pardoned, blood-washed sinner, when God's grace is tasted and enjoyed. I prayed with her, and thanked God for His grace in saving her; and she left full of peace and joy in believing.

Many years have elapsed since my young friend found Jesus, but I rejoice to know she holds on her way, a bright, happy witness of the Lord's

grace, and is an earnest labourer for Christ, and true soul-seeker in her own quiet sphere.

Reader, where about are you? Are you a Noah's carpenter or a real genuine Christian? Let not 1884 pass away and leave you as it found you. Did it find you unsaved? As you value your soul, let it not die out and be for ever a witness against you and your unbelief. Be persuaded to come to Jesus now. Then shall your future be bright and joyous, for you will be saved, sanctified, and satisfied.

Did the year find you a simple, true believer in the Lord? May it leave you, dear fellow-believer, more true in heart, more devoted to the Lord, more like Him in spirit, word, and way.

To each reader of the *Messenger of Peace* would I fervently say, as the last message for 1884 goes out, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee

PEACE."

W. T. P. W.

