

ECHOES OF MERCY.

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"I will sing of mercy and judgment."—Psalm cii. 1.

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Echoes of Mercy.



“Prepare to Meet thy God.”

“And I also have given you . . . want of bread in all your places : *yet have ye not returned unto Me*, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you . . . : *yet have ye not returned unto Me*, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew . . . : *yet have ye not returned unto Me*, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence . . . : *yet have ye not returned unto Me*, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning : *yet have ye not returned unto Me*, saith the Lord. Therefore . . . prepare to meet thy God.”—AMOS iv.



THESE words were addressed to the house of Israel by Amos the prophet, two years before the earthquake. God had brought His chosen people out of Egypt, given them the land of Canaan, spoken to them by prophets, priests, and kings, but they had departed from Him and turned to idols. Then came various chastisements, as we see from the foregoing verses. Moreover, yet more was to come—an earthquake, which would

typify still worse judgments in the future, "in the battle in the day of the Lord" (Ezek. xiii. 5). Zechariah (xiv. 5) tells us that they "fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah" (which earthquake Amos had very likely foretold), and that by-and-bye they shall flee in like manner from before the Lord when He goes forth in judgment. If we think of "Prepare to meet thy God" in the light of what is coming on the Jews, and the way in which they will have to answer to God for their sins, it is solemn. Has this no voice for us Gentiles? To meet judgment is one thing, to meet God is another.

But let us read these verses from Amos again. Want of bread, lack of rain, bad harvests, pestilence, catastrophe,—are these unknown evils in our own days? Oh no; all these have we seen, and many more besides, in countries called Christian, and within ten years. And are such warnings from God to pass unheeded? "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord," sounds very true *now*, does it not? Have we who have escaped such calamities, even like firebrands plucked out of the burning, have we turned to the Lord? Have you? If not, "Prepare to meet thy God"!

“PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.”

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But you may say, I am not afraid; I have escaped hitherto, and I believe there is a good time coming. So Israel may have said when told about the earthquake,—but, “shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid”? (Amos iii. 6.) What saith the Scripture? “God is not a man, that He should lie; hath He said, and shall He not do it?” (Num. xxiii. 19.) He tells us in His Word what this, so-called, Christian world has to expect at His hands for having rejected His Son and refused His offers of mercy. “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 Thess. i. 7, 8). You may escape pestilence and famine, but you cannot escape this, which will be worse than any earthquake, though indeed earthquake there will be. “There was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great” (Rev. xvi. 18).

We talk of God's goodness to Israel, and we exclaim at their unfaithfulness; but what shall be said of those who live in a land of Bibles, and who refuse the gift of God's only begotten

Son? Can you measure that gift? We deserved death and punishment for our sins, we were under the wrath of God, and the deepest pit of hell would have been our due reward; and instead of that — ah! what human pen can describe “the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus” — He stooped from glory, He became a man, He suffered a shameful death on the cross, He endured the hiding of God’s face while bearing a heavy load of sins that were not His own, and then—*He died*—“For me,” do you say?

“Ah, my soul, it was for thee;
Yes, He gave Himself for me.”

There is no judgment to fear for the one who can say that, for He who gave Himself for our sins is now in glory without them, and coming again to take believers away before the judgment falls on this world. God’s *strange* work is judgment, but He delighteth in *mercy*, and His longsuffering is salvation. If you are ready to meet Him *now*, you will not be afraid to meet Him in the day of judgment, for already you have learned that “God is love,” and you may gladly sing,

“The *Father’s* face of radiant grace,
Shines now in light on me.”

H. L. H.

“THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH!” 5

“The Coming of the Lord draweth nigh!”

READER, these are solemn words! He who once trod this earth as the meek and lowly Jesus of Nazareth is *coming again*. When here, “all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke iv. 22). He, the eternal God, became flesh and dwelt among us, “full of grace and truth.”

But the world knew Him not; man would not have Him. Away with Him! Crucify Him! was their cry. Some few received Him, and “to them gave He power (or title) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” But He is *coming again*. Reader, are YOU ready to meet Him? Have YOU received Him? Have YOU believed on His name? He will come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; those only who *are* ready will enter in, and then the door will be shut. Then delay no longer; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

“Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

A. H. B.

“I will have Mercy.”

WHEN sitting one day in a small reception room attached to one of the public colleges abroad, waiting for some one I had called to see, my attention was drawn to a painting on the wall, which conveyed forcibly to my mind its own tale of sadness.

It was a sunny and glittering sea, and the sunbeams were dancing on its slightly rippled waters. In the foreground there was a tiny skiff, into which had crowded some young and joyous girls enticed by the novelty and delighted with it, and full of mirth in their oarless and rudderless skiff—a very creel of a thing, which, as it danced by the sparkling shore with the flowing tide, must have been to them a toy of pleasure indeed.

But the light breeze had risen and the tide was now receding from the shore, and, with its freight of gay young life, the tiny skiff was being swiftly carried out to the wide expanse of sea, where the crested waves were seen, and where it must inevitably sink, and all its young living freight be lost.

"I WILL HAVE MERCY."

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I have often thought since, how like the light-hearted carelessness with which so many embark on the sea of this world's pleasures, and how the young are enticed on by its fascinations and vanities, heedless of their danger with nothing to stay the force by which they are impelled—no "anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." They throw themselves into its exciting enjoyments, little knowing or heeding where they are drifting, only to find that worldly pleasure is but a bubble which perishes with the using, and that "the end of these things is *death*."

The very thought of God is an intrusion on the world and *its ways*, but *His ways* in *mercy* and in *grace* go on, and He is seeking to save sinners *out of it*, for the heavenly mansions above. "I WILL HAVE MERCY," He says.

When afterwards in the same country a message was sent to us one morning—"Will you kindly go and see a young girl who is very ill, and who, I fear, may be dying." It was impossible from illness to attend to the message sent, and it was a real grief that no one was able to go and see this dying girl.

A few mornings later we were aroused by a

second and more urgent message—"Can none of you go to see this poor girl, who seems now to be rapidly sinking? I have done all I can for her body, but I can do nothing for her soul."

What touching earnestness there was in this request, and what a sense of the soul's deep need!

It came from one who had come across the Atlantic to spend the winter in Southern Europe, partly for health, and on account of the soft and genial climate of the place, and that she might find her enjoyment in the round of worldly amusements which such places afford.

She had not long arrived, when in God's great mercy, she was brought under the sound of the gospel. She had listened wonderingly to its tale of love and grace, as it was repeatedly and earnestly brought before her by one who sought to attract and win her soul to Christ, and her tears would often testify how her heart was melted under its power and sweetness. It seemed something so new to her to hear of the perfect salvation which God had provided, and that He dealt with such as we are in mercy and tender compassion, not for anything in us, but for what Christ is, and has done. The message, she so urgently sent, told that she

knew the dying sinner's need of a Saviour, and the awful reality of what it was to pass out of this world unsaved.

In the kindness of her heart she had tended this poor suffering girl, seeing that she was constantly cared for, and providing what she saw was needed for her comfort, and to alleviate the weary painfulness of illness; but as this rapidly increased, and there was no longer hope of her recovery, the thought of her soul's need grew stronger, and she felt that *it* was all uncared for.

To die without Christ! without knowing *the Saviour* of whom she herself had so often heard of late, and the thought of whose love, which was stronger than death, had so much touched and affected her, was too awful.

This young girl, as we afterwards learned, had thrown herself thoughtlessly into this world's frivolities. Its spell was over her, and she was allured on by its fascinations and its smiles, and heedlessly floated on, further and further from God. "God, who is rich in mercy," arrested her, in her career of folly, and she was laid down on a bed of sickness from which she never rose again. What was the suffering of weariness and pain, compared to the terror of

the soul that was all adrift, and now in such extremity, had no stay, no hope, no anchor! Her sins to answer for and death before her!

There was no time to be lost. This second touching appeal so urgently sent was quickly attended to. Under the care of a faithful and trusted guide, who knew the intricacies of the streets of this foreign town, the one who had so often spoken to this American lady of Christ and His dying love, and who was herself delicate and suffering, started off to see the dying girl, and to be in God's precious grace, the bearer of the message of His love and of His salvation to her soul. They threaded their way through the streets, and in time found the house, and were soon in the apartment where this young girl, so early laid down to die, was lying. Passing several persons who were in the room, the unknown visitor went straight to the bed, and sat down on it beside her.

As she looked at the emaciated and wasted form, and the pale and anxious face—so young and so soon to pass away—the tenderest pity and compassion filled her heart; and she felt the yearning longing for her soul which the known and enjoyed love of Christ creates.

The girl knew she was dying—and going—

“I WILL HAVE MERCY.”

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where?—she knew not. Only a vista of death and darkness lay before her—no light—no one to bring hope, or tell her of a Saviour Who had died for sinners, and Who was as ready as He was willing to save.

Drawing her Bible from her pocket, the stranger read to her the heaven-sent story of the Lamb who came to die. The utmost stillness prevailed in the room; and, as she bent over the poor suffering girl, whose eyes were fixed on her in wondering astonishment, she gently and most touchingly told out the story of the cross, and God's compassionate, tender love for poor lost ones in the gift of His Son, Who came into this world in grace, to make good His glory, and Who when here displayed all the fulness of the heart of God, and died that we might live.

“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.”

It was balm in Gilead, there was a Physician there, there was healing for the soul from God Himself. Eagerly she listened with eyes riveted on the speaker, such love and such fulness and in the heart of God for such as her! Her soul

was broken and melted under its grace and sweetness, which there was no gainsaying. The love of God, His compassion, His mercy, His joy in receiving sinners,—all this was falling around her gently as the dew—making through grace its way into her soul.

Oh! love unspeakable that meets our every need, our deepest need, and in a way that brings glory to Himself, so that doubt, fear, and anxiety find no place, they are gone—lost in His love.

God is so great, and yet so tender to those who are *unworthy* of the least of His mercies, and yet even *this* is swallowed up in the immensity that embraces everything, and *hides us in itself*, so that we cannot describe it, though the heart feels it. The dying girl was under the power of it, and she seemed simply to receive it, as a little child, and as God's own gracious message to her. The anguish, the terror, which had been depicted on her countenance were gone, and her looks now spake the peace she felt. The stranger now rose to go, and as she said "good-bye," she knew that it was her first and last visit to her, whom in the ways of God, she had been so strangely brought across, and whose sorrowful state had so moved her inmost soul, and that she would never see her on earth

"I WILL HAVE MERCY."

13

again; but she left her in calm repose, and filled with that sweet peace which the world knows nothing of.

The tears and choking sobs of those around, which had been repressed while she was speaking, could no longer be restrained. They, too, had listened—and in their own tongue—to the tale of the grace of a *Saviour-God*, whose mercy endureth for ever. It was a new and strange sound to them, for they were steeped in the ignorance and darkness of the system of religion to which they belonged, which denies the freeness, fulness, and sufficiency of the work of Christ, as well as its present application to the soul. We could not doubt the reality of the work of grace in the heart of this young girl, weary of herself and of the world; and from one who had been present, and who called next day to see her, we learned that she had passed away the same evening peaceful, calm, and happy. No cloud seemed to have dimmed her soul, and those who had been around her dying bed expressed to him their wonder that she could thus leave this world, little understanding how bright the exchange was, from a world of sin and sorrow and death to the brightness of the presence of the Lord of glory.

M. V.

A Narrow Escape.

THE Manchester train was just about to leave the Crewe Station one evening in April 1892. I had taken my seat in a compartment of which I was the solitary occupant. The wave of the guard's flag had been answered by a shrill whistle from the engine, and the train was quietly and smoothly gliding out of the station with a gradually increasing speed, when to my surprise and horror the door suddenly burst open, and a man came scrambling and stumbling into the carriage. I made a dart towards him, and with a violent effort on his part, he was pulled out of his danger into a place of safety.

My unexpected visitor sank down on the seat opposite me panting and breathless, while I closed the door.

"That was a narrow escape," said I.

"Y-e-e-s," replied my friend, scarce able to get his breath.

"It wasn't worth the risk," I continued.

"No," said he, "and I am the last man that ought to have attempted it. A young man was as near as possible killed in the same way

on this very platform last week. In attempting to join the train whilst in motion, his foot slipped, he was caught between the step of the carriage and the platform, and was being twisted round and round as the train gradually increased in speed. I rushed to his assistance, and with an awful effort pulled him out, and flung him on his back on the platform, bruised, bleeding, and senseless. How I managed it, I don't know; I don't suppose I could do it again, but there, any way he was saved."

"What a mercy," I replied, "but it never does any good to be reckless."

"It never does any good to be reckless, sir, you're right, especially when we remember" (here he lowered his voice) "that it might be *heaven or hell.*"

"A serious alternative," said I, not a little surprised at the turn the conversation had taken. For, though it was really my desire to lead my fellow-passenger's thoughts on to this line of things, I scarcely expected so abrupt an allusion on his part; for in these days unfortunately the majority of people seem to have very little thought about the future. There *may be* a heaven some think, but the larger number are of opinion that there certainly is no hell. At any

rate they are content to take the chance, so effectually has Satan blinded their eyes to their soul's eternal interests, and silenced every mis-giving of conscience. But, dear reader, the blessed Saviour who came to lay down His life that you and I might have our sins forgiven and enter God's "eternal glory" (1 Peter v. 10), has declared that "*everlasting* punishment" is the sorrowful portion of the wicked, as surely as "*eternal* life" is the bright inheritance of the righteous (see Matt. xxv. 31-46).

"Yes," I continued, "you were very reckless just now. A very little more and you would have missed your footing altogether, and your lifeless body would have been lying crushed and mangled on the line. One moment of time would have decided the question eternally for your soul and landed you either in heaven or in hell." My friend seemed thoroughly to enter into the seriousness of the risk that he had just run, and to feel the importance of the issues that had been at stake.

"That young man that was so nearly killed the other day, is he still alive?" I asked.

"He is," replied my fellow-passenger, "and he owes his life to me."

"Then there are two things that young man

knows. First, he *knows* what it is to be *saved*; second, he *knows* what it is to have a *Saviour*. Salvation, so far as his bodily danger was concerned, is to him a certainty; he does not merely *hope to be saved*; no, he *knows* that he *is* saved, and moreover, he owes his salvation to you. May I ask, can you speak after this fashion as regards your soul? In other words, are *you* saved? and is Christ *your* Saviour?"

"I see your meaning, sir," said he, "but now you've touched on a subject that makes me very sore."

"Very sore!" I said with surprise, "it is a subject makes me very glad."

"Ah well," he continued, "I once was happy and enjoyed the Saviour's love. I had pious parents, and in my youth was taught the way of salvation, but as time went on, and I was thrown with the world, I neglected to read the Bible, and soon gave up prayer. In short," said he, "*I am a backslider.*"

"And you have found it to be 'an evil thing and bitter' to forsake the Lord?" I asked.

"Yes, a *bitter* thing," was the answer, spoken with emphasis, as the tears stood in his eyes.

"God has a special invitation to you, then. He says, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I

will heal your backslidings.' Acknowledge your sin, return to Him, He is the same, He changes not. The love of Jesus is as deep and real as in the day you first tasted of it. Ah, yes, as true and faithful as in the day He proved it by dying for you on the cross."

We arrived at the station where my friend had to alight, and with many thanks for our conversation, and a warm shake of the hands, we parted, probably never more to meet in this world.

Does a backslider read these pages? If so, open your Bible at the second chapter of the prophet Jeremiah.

"*I remember thee,*" said the Lord to His people of old. Though these words were addressed to "the house of Jacob" and the "families of the house of Israel," nevertheless the principle can be applied to the people of God at all times, and in every dispensation.

We may have forgotten Him, but "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals." Ah, those were happy days when the heart was first touched by the love of Jesus; all seemed bright and happy, and the soul was in constant sunshine, every day, and all the day.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

19

“When thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.”

Yes, Jesus, is the desire and object of the young convert's heart, and he is ready to give up everything to please and follow Him. Be it wilderness, or unsown desert, no matter where—

“Let Him take me where He willeth,
So as that we do not part.”

Such is the language of the heart when first converted.

“What iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me?” Thus He pleads who in days gone by had “brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits; through a land of drought and of the shadow of death; through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?” Yes, “I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof.”

Then why all this indifference of heart, and coldness of soul, and deadness of spirit?

“My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Reader, is it not true? The heart that has

once known Christ, and tasted of the living waters, can never be truly happy away from Him. "Know, therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God."

True, is it not? But perhaps you say, What must I do? I can never expect to be happy again.

"Let Him take me where He willeth, so as that we do not part."

"I am merciful, saith the Lord" (Jer. iii. 12).
 "Only acknowledge thine iniquity" (ver. 13).
 "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings" (ver. 22).

Bright, indeed, will it be for the nation of Israel when they take up the words, "Behold, we come unto Thee; for Thou art the Lord our God." And if this is true for Israel, is it any less true for the soul now, that in brokenness and confession returns to the Saviour,—

"Who whate'er our changes,
 For ever is the same"?

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1), and His love, who died to expiate our guilt, delights to stoop and wash our feet from all the defilement we may contract while travel-

ling through this sin-stained world, in order that we might have a part *with* Him.

Conversion can never be repeated: "He that is washed (or, bathed) needeth not save to wash his feet." But a true child of God, through a careless or worldly walk, may lose his *communion*, and "if I wash thee not," said Jesus to Peter, "thou hast no part WITH Me."

"My soul He doth restore,
Whene'er I go astray"

A. H. B.



WHAT we want is the character of a little child. What do I know? *Nothing*; but I believe and am *sure*, because God has told me, that I have eternal life. Does *God* say it? Yes! "This is the promise that He has promised us, even eternal life" (1 John ii. 25), and all who believe possess it. *He* says it, whose judgment is alone worth hearing; He who alone has a right to speak says it; and I bless Him that He is able to speak such *large* words about me. It is the simplicity of a child, believing just what God says, that is lacking; and that is the reason why Christians do not walk (as they ought) as children of the Father. How can they, if they do not believe that they are children!

G. V. W.

“Sudden Destruction.”

JULY 1892 will probably be chronicled in the almanacks as a month in which exceptionally appalling disasters occurred all over the world.

In the Pacific Ocean, within an hour's time, a large portion of the island of Sangir was submerged by volcanic eruption, over twelve thousand inhabitants perishing. “Sudden destruction” overtook them, and they could not escape.

In the Mauritius a terrific cyclone swept over the island, demolishing everything in its course. “Sudden destruction” came upon them, and they could not escape. In Newfoundland the whole town of St John's was destroyed by fire. And nearer home, at St Gervaise, the Bionnassy Glacier, detached from Mont Blanc, fell into the stream which issues from it, and the swollen waters rushed down the narrow gorge with resistless force, in ten minutes sweeping away the *Etablissement des Bains* with its sleeping inhabitants, and the village of Le Foyet lower down the valley! So runs the record of a single month.

“SUDDEN DESTRUCTION.”

Have these calamities no voice for us? Do they not say, as distinctly as if the words were uttered in our ears, “God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” (Psa. lxii.)? Do they not remind us that when men shall be saying, “Peace and safety,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, and they “shall not escape”? Do they not warn us of another and more appalling hour which is coming upon this world, when not merely a house, or a village, or a town will be swept away, but the whole world—that world which rejected God’s Son—will be the scene of unparalleled judgments; when the vials of His wrath will be poured out upon this scene over which His love has lingered so long?

Oh, reader! in view of that day of terror, we would urge you to “*flee* from the wrath to come.” Be warned, we entreat you, in time, and “escape for thy life!” A storm is coming upon this doomed world of which it little dreams. May you be sheltered before it bursts!

But there is no time to lose! Beware of making light of God’s offer of mercy, and saying, “Time enough yet.” You may be listening to it for the last time to-day. To-morrow people may be saying of you, “Poor thing, he—or she—

died last night." Then where will your soul be? The rich man died . . . and "in hell, he lifted up his eyes." The repentant thief died, and went to Paradise with Christ. Where will *you* be? It must be one place or the other.

A pathetic incident was recorded in the *Graphic* newspaper of a gentleman who escaped from the one block of buildings left standing at St Gervaise. Half stunned by the terrific noise of the roaring waters, crashing trees, and falling buildings, he made his way through the woods to the nearest village, from which he sent a telegram to his home—"Saved! saved! I cannot tell how, but saved! saved!" No other thought filled his mind, nor could he give expression to any other feeling, than his marvellous escape.

How well we can understand his feelings. But, oh, what we can *not* understand is the apathy of unsaved souls, living on the verge of a more fearful catastrophe! with death, or the Lord's coming menacing them every hour of the day! Death, which without a moment's warning, or time for preparation, may sweep them into a lost eternity! the Lord's coming for His people, which, finding them unprepared, will leave them like the foolish virgins shut out in the darkness, and storm, and horror of a scene bereft of

"SUDDEN DESTRUCTION."

25

Christ, bereft of Christians, bereft of the Spirit !
 Reader, may you be saved from this is our
 earnest prayer !

But if an anxious soul should inquire, "Where is safety to be found ?" we have good news for you. It is near at hand. You have no distance to travel. "The word is *nigh* thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach ; that if thou shalt *confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus*, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 8, 9). "A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place ; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. xxxii. 2). "A Man." "*The Man, Christ Jesus.*" God's beloved Son, who offers you salvation, eternal life, peace, safety in Himself. "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved."

And, ah, if you will not be warned by "the terror of the Lord," may you be won by His *love* ! The love of Him, who "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." A love that no suffering could stay, no wrath turn aside, no death stop from flowing down, deep

measureless, and free to us ! A love that endured the reviling of men, the agony of Gethsemane ; the darkness and desolation of Calvary, that you might be saved, and I.

Tell me, will not *such love* win your heart? Will you not from henceforth be content to let the world go by? To turn your back upon its unsatisfying scenes of pleasure, its music and dancing, its feasting and follies, from which He is shut out, and take sides with the despised and rejected "Man of Sorrows," who has promised, "If any man will confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32).

"Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come" (Isa. xxi. 11, 12).

"Come, for thy day, thy wasted day is closing,
With all its joy and sun ;
Bright loving hours have passed thee by unheeded,
Thy work on earth undone.

Unclasp, O man, the siren hand of pleasure,
Let the gay folly go !
A few brief years will bring the unwelcome ending ;
Then, whither dost thou go ?

Clasp a far truer hand, a kinder, stronger,
Of Him the Crucified ;
Let in a deeper love into thy spirit,
The love of Him who died !"

A. S. M.

“I CAN’T GET IT, AS I THOUGHT I SHOULD.” 27

“I can’t get it, as I thought I should.”

IT was the privilege of the writer, some years ago, to visit from time to time an aged Christian woman, of whom it might well be said that her light shone more and more unto the perfect day. In speaking one day of some of her neighbours in the little hamlet where she had spent most of her life, she related the following circumstance :—

A certain Mrs D—— came one day into her cottage, as she had doubtless often done before. She was a woman who had lived all her life without God. This day, in the course of their conversation, looking up to the ceiling she said, confidently and carelessly, “I can get good when I like to.” A few short weeks passed, and the Christian woman stood by the bedside of her dying neighbour, who on seeing her uttered these despairing words, “I can’t get it, as I thought I should.”

Oh, how *many* are counting on finding Christ *when* their time of need comes, and until then are preferring anything and everything to Him. To such *He* crieth, “*How long*, ye simple ones, will ye

love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning? . . . *Turn you* at my reproof . . . : Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded . . . ; When *your fear* cometh as desolation; and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; . . . for that they did not *choose* the fear of the Lord."

These are solemn words, written by the One to whom "judgment is His strange work." May the reader take warning by this true incident, and "seek the Lord while He *may* be found, call upon Him while He *is* near!" G. G.



Messages from God.—VII.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your **sins be as scarlet**, they shall be **white as snow**; though they be **red like crimson**, they shall be **as wool**. If ye be **willing** and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye **refuse and rebel**, ye shall be **devoured** with the sword: for the **mouth of the Lord hath spoken it**" (ISA. i. 18-20).

“The Paradise of God.”

I FELT often little able to face the fierce blasts from the sea, which I had to encounter in getting to and from the town, which was exposed on all sides, and it would have needed one with more strength than I was possessed of to stand these heavy gales during a severe winter. Permission was kindly granted me to pass through a neighbour's ground, and of this I gladly availed myself, so as to save distance and avoid exposure. This led me past the house of a widow, who was a Christian, and I often used to look in on her when going that way.

One day when there, and while we were quietly talking together over the Word of God, the door was suddenly thrown open, and a woman, pale and trembling, and evidently fleeing in terror from some one, rushed in.

She was small in figure, and very fragile-looking, in a neat black dress and simple cap; evidently one of gentle and delicate nature and sensitive mind, which I took in at a glance, as I rose quickly to go to her, but my presence seemed only to increase her distress. Seeing

that the kind arms of the one I was visiting were quickly thrown around her, and that she was seeking to soothe her and to comfort her, I quietly withdrew, knowing she was now safe from whatever disturbance or danger she had been in, and not liking to intrude at such a moment, when the presence of a stranger would only keep up her agitation and be a cause of further pain.

I pondered, as I went along, what could have produced such terror in one so quiet and gentle-looking, and what could have made her thus flee to a neighbour's house for refuge. It was very sorrowful afterwards to learn that it was the unkind treatment of her husband that was the cause, and that what I had witnessed was of no infrequent occurrence. It appeared that he was well known to be a headstrong and violent man, and a terror to many. All this made the more impression upon me, as it was he who had given me the "right of way," a kindness for which I had been very grateful.

How very much I felt for the suffering wife, and for the family who were sharers in all this trial and sorrow; and I looked very earnestly to the Lord, that He in grace would reach the case of this man, so hopeless to all human thought,

THE PARADISE OF GOD.

and for which there was no remedy but in Himself.

Oh! how blessed it is to know a Saviour's love and a Saviour's work, which meets every need of sinful man, and to be hidden in Him—

“Where the water and the blood,
From thy riven side which flowed,
Are of sin the *double* cure,
Cleansing from its *guilt* and *power*.”

I still went occasionally that way, for I longed much to be able to speak to him of Christ; and though I sometimes saw him, I felt as if I could not—my lips seemed sealed. Whether the shadow of the terror he produced was over me or not, I could hardly say, but words failed me every time I passed him; and I could only cry to the Lord to have mercy on his soul, and to save him from hell and from himself.

One day I saw him kneeling at a border of flowers, working amongst them. As I came near to him, he said, looking up, “I have got a wonderful flower here; it is an extraordinary flower,” and he held up a piece of it for me to look at. Thanking him, I examined it with him, speaking to him of the interest I saw he took in his flowers, and then, summing up courage and wishing to seize the opportunity given I said,—

“ I will tell you my desire for you,—it is that *you* may be an everlasting flower to bloom for ever in the paradise of God.”

I trembled as I uttered these words, not knowing what the effect of them might be, or what they might not produce in him. Resting on one knee, he stared up at me, and I felt for the moment as if anything might happen, while I stood unable to move or to speak. We looked at each other thus, in silence, for some time. By degrees I recovered myself, and was able to speak to him quietly of Christ, the Lamb of God, who died for sinners; and of the love of God, which was such that, when man by disobedience and guilt cast out God, and lost an earthly paradise, He, in matchless love to His ruined creature, opened to him His own dwelling-place in heaven. He would take man *there*, fitted to be there, through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, who on the cross wrought out a complete redemption for guilty sinners. Such was *he*—such were *all* before God—“ All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way;” but every one who received Christ was eternally saved, and would dwell for ever in the paradise of God.

He did not move from his position, but had

looked at me steadily while I was speaking, nor did he utter a word as I left him. As I silently moved away, I thanked the Lord for enabling me to speak of His love and grace to this unhappy man. This was the beginning of other such conversations as we happened to meet, and I rejoiced to be able to tell him of the grace of God which comes down to the lowest, and meets us where we are and as we are.

How truly we can say that grace adapts itself to every state and condition of man. It met the blaspheming persecutor on his way to Damascus. He might have expected the glory which surrounded him to bring down judgment upon him, as "the chief of sinners;" but it was the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ*, and it spoke only of mercy and forgiveness. The same grace meets us now, guilty as we are and with no fear of God before our eyes, and points us to Jesus the Lamb of God, dying on the cross for our sins, that we may learn *there* that they are put away before God for ever.

When I left the place soon afterwards, I sent him some gospel books and tracts, that he might have them by him, and I trusted that he would read them now.

About a couple of years afterwards, I was

again in the same place, and calling on my friend from whom I had first heard about him, I asked,

“What of your landlord now?”

“Oh!” she said, “he is gone. He died about a year ago, and his was a wonderful conversion, for he became a totally changed man. He was gentle and kind to all, and the wonder of all,—the entire opposite of what he had been, in his language and ways.” How it came about she did not know, but he was, she said, a true believer in the Lord Jesus.

During the illness of which he died, he was remarkable for his uncomplaining patience in suffering, and his tenderness to those around him, and he seemed to be trying to make up to those dear to him for what he had been before. The lion had become the lamb, and he who had caused many tears, now knew God, as the one who wipes away tears, and his gentleness showed that he had been in contact with Him who is compassionate and tender.

He passed away in perfect peace, calmly resting in his Saviour’s love.

With what subdued feelings I heard all this, and more details than I can now repeat! I thanked Him who is the hearer and the answerer

of prayer, who had saved this poor sinner, and clothed him with a beauty not his own.

“ Our beauty this, our glorious dress,
Jesus, the Lord, our righteousness.”

Reader, have you ever thought of what it will be to dwell in the paradise of God, where all is love and light and joy, and to be with Him who is the centre of all its blessedness, where *He* fills all, and where those redeemed by the blood of Christ shall have pleasures for evermore?

“ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away ” (Rev. xxi. 4.)

Have you ever thought of what it will be to be outside all this blessedness, and in hell for ever? Heaven or hell must be the eternal destiny of every one. Oh ! consider it seriously, and refuse not God’s gracious offer of salvation through the blood of His Son, that *you* may dwell for ever in heaven above.

“ We sing of the realms of the blest :
That country so bright and so fair—
The glorious mansions of rest—
But what must it be to be there ? ”

M. V.

“Bad, but not Bad Enough.”

PEOPLE, for the most part, will admit that they are sinners. They will readily enough own that they have done what they ought not to have done, and confess that they have left undone what they ought to have done, but they are nevertheless not quite prepared to accept the solemn truth that they are utterly lost, ruined, and undone. And in saying this, we are not thinking only of those who merely utter words with the lips, unaccompanied by sincerity of heart, but of those who really and truly recognize the fact that they are sinners.

We are persuaded that one reason why many souls remain for so long apparently most eager to possess salvation, but unable to obtain it, is simply this, *that they will not go down low enough to get it.* There is but one spot where a Saviour-God can meet lost sinners, and that is in the dust before Him, owning that they are utterly lost, and good for nothing. In short, multitudes will admit that they are bad, but do not realize that they are bad enough for God to save them.

“BAD BUT NOT BAD ENOUGH.”

37

Some years ago the Lord was graciously pleased to visit the little town of M—— with a season of great blessing in the gospel. Night after night for weeks large numbers gathered under the sound of the soul-quicken- ing, heart-emancipating, peace - giving message. Many were awakened to their lost condition, and through faith in the person and work of the Son of God, passed into peace, joy, and liberty. “There was great joy in that city.”

One case, however, presented peculiar and sorrowful interest. It was that of a woman who scarcely ever missed a meeting. There she used to sit, attracted by the grace of God, powerfully wrought upon by the Word of God, and many a time melted to tears at the story of the death of Jesus. Many and many a time did we speak to her personally, as she used to linger behind at the close of the service, but all seemed in vain. Awakened and concerned she appeared to be, but there she stuck, and not one step in advance did she seem able to make.

At length one Sunday night, weeping bitterly, she burst forth with a sort of complaint against God. “I cannot understand it,” she cried. “Others go to your services, and come away happy and rejoicing, and yet they do not appear

to pass through half the exercise of soul that I do. They seem to get the blessing so quickly and so easily, and yet I do not, and it seems as if I cannot. Oh! why does God keep me waiting, when I so long to get it?"

"My dear friend," said I, "God does not keep you waiting. 'Knock, and it shall be opened unto you; seek, and ye shall find.' He never keeps any one waiting. You are keeping Him waiting, depend upon it. I do not exactly know how, but I am sure it is you that are keeping Him waiting, and not He that is keeping you waiting."

"Well," she replied, "I don't know how it is; all I know is that I am not saved, and I wish I were."

"Does God *want* to save you?"

"Certainly; He would not send the gospel to me if He didn't."

"Is God *able* to save you?"

"I am sure He is," she answered.

"Do you *want* to be saved?"

"God knows I do," was her reply.

"Do you *need* to be saved?"

"Of course I do," said she.

"Then how is it you are not?"

"I don't know; I only wish I were," was her apparently sincere reply.

“BAD, BUT NOT BAD ENOUGH.”

39

“You know that poor man L——” (a poor murderer then lying in jail, condemned to be executed), “do you think he needs to be saved?” said I.

“Indeed he does,” was her prompt reply, rather surprised at the allusion.

“And do you need to be saved just as much as he does?”

“Oh, no,” said she, pulling herself up.

“Now the secret is out; you are bad, but not bad enough. You don’t know that you are lost.”

Beloved reader, have you yet found out that you are LOST? Until you take *that* ground you will never know what salvation is. “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke xix. 10).

Like Zacchæus of old, “make haste, and come down,”—come down into the dust before God; confess, not only that you are a sinner, but that you are a *lost sinner*. Then believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be SAVED.

A. H. B.

CHRIST was not crucified up in heaven where nobody could know it.

J. N. D.

“Through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

“**T**HAT’S not all, give me the book, give me the book,” was the eager interruption to my quotation of part of the first verse of the fifth chapter of Romans.

It came from a dying woman. Her bright but sunken eyes, flushed cheeks, and parched lips, told how fiercely the disease, which has been called England’s scourge, was consuming her life away.

Though dying she was young, and though young she was a widow. Her husband had succumbed to the same disease, but a few weeks previously, almost before he had reached the prime of manhood.

At a previous visit she had expressed alarm at her condition, saying, “Oh! my sin, my sin, what would become of me if I were to die now.” This time she had greeted me with—“I have something to tell you,” but a violent fit of coughing prevented her from proceeding. Between the paroxysms, however, she had gasped out “peace”; and, grasping somewhat of the situation, I had recurred to the wondrous assurance

“THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.” 41

of peace with God found in the Scripture referred to, and had repeated the words, “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” There I had paused when she thus suddenly broke in, “That’s not all, give me the book, give me the book.”

The book was her late husband’s Bible ; and, hastily turning over the leaves till she came to the fifth chapter of Romans, she found there the verse which had been deeply underscored by him, especially the last clause of it. Deeper had been the impress on his heart of these precious words. And now, his deeply scored lines had been as finger-posts to guide her to the abounding consolation of this message of the Saviour-God to the sinner who accredits His goodness. Triumphantly she exclaimed, “Through Jesus Christ our Lord, that’s it.” “Through Jesus Christ our Lord,” she repeated again and again with increasing emphasis, her soul manifesting its rest and delight in Him. Blessedly had she found that it was not a mere doctrine, but a Person who saves, and gives eternal life and peace through believing.

Has my reader passed unnoticed this verse in the Book of books, and does he now wonder at the gracious words? Wonder not, yea, wonder

more and more, but the key to them surpasses in wonder. See what is written in the previous verse of this same wondrous Person—"He was delivered for our offences, He was raised again for our justification."

Peace with rebels, justification for offenders, could only be procured at an infinite cost, "not with corruptible things such as silver and gold." Peace must be "made" by "the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). Sin must be "put away" by the "sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26). An awful cry rang out from the darkness of Calvary nearly nineteen hundred years ago, unparalleled for the depth of anguish and the mighty issues it involved. Too solemn to quote lightly, it is recorded for us, and for ever, in God's imperishable Word (Matt. xxvii. 46; Ps. xxii. 1). Ponder it with deepest reverence, and you will understand how the words—"Through Jesus Christ our Lord" could so entrance the hearts of those two dear ones in their last days.

He who knew no sin was made sin for us (2 Cor. v. 21); bare our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24); suffered for sins, the Just One for us the unjust ones (1 Peter iii. 18).

Grace, infinite grace, truly that bringeth salvation to all (Titus ii. 11); but it reigns through

“THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.” 43

righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. v. 21).

On the other hand, God who is light is also love. He who demands holily, loves freely and sent His Son, the propitiation for our sins (1 John iv. 10). But Jesus, who finished the work given Him to do, as perfectly met the desires of God's infinite love as He satisfied the demands of His infinite justice. And all the resources of that infinite love can now be brought to the deep, deep needs of the sinner. Mystery of grace! God is just in justifying the sinner who believes in Jesus (Rom. iii. 26, and iv. 8), and His heart is satisfied in bestowing peace, acceptance in the Beloved, and fulness of blessing in Him (Eph. i. 3-6).

Reader, sinner though you be, such grace is for you. He offers it. Our fervent desire is that you should appropriate it. It is so simple. The work is done, believe on Him who did it. Scripture ever presents this blessed Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the object for faith, the way of salvation. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever *believeth in Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The simple answer to the question, “What must I do to be saved?” is,

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house” (Acts xvi. 31). The woman in Matthew ix. said, “If I may but touch His garment I shall be whole,” and it was so. We entreat you thus to believe in Him. Place yourself amongst the “whosoever” of John iii. 15 and 16, and you will be transferred into the “we” and “our” of this verse in the Romans: justified, having peace with God, and Jesus as your Lord.

It was well for this young woman she touched with her faith such a Saviour, and confessed such a Lord, for soon she was beyond the sphere of the “word of reconciliation” where “peace” is “preached.”

Bear with us then, if we ask, what if you were in her position? Your soul conscious of its near approach to eternity; “things present” having no longer power to distract, nor Satan’s skill to delude; the enchanting vista of a future in this scene foreclosed; and the mind involuntarily set free to concentrate itself with fearful energy on having to meet God unreconciled. The darkness of the future throwing back the light of an awakened conscience on your past life—its flaws, its failures, its slips, its sins—while the requirements of His holy law have

"DIANA OR CHRIST."

45

not been fulfilled. On the edge of eternity! must you pass over in opposition, and stamp your enmity with an eternal seal, against a God of all grace? against a Saviour who died for you? Oh, awake at the thought! Flee to the Mediator! Confide your case to Him without delay! "Now is the accepted time." Life is uncertain, you cannot boast even of to-morrow. We plead with you to be reconciled to God, while it is called to-day; yet think not it is we who are pleading, we are but constrained by Another. 'Tis He Himself that beseeches by us (2 Cor. v. 20). Give heed to His beseechings, and surrender to Jesus Christ *your* Lord.

H.

 ◆◆◆◆◆

 "Diana or Christ."

IT is a picture—a beautiful, true picture, not only of what happened in the past, but of what is going on around us every day—the choice between Christ and the world, God and mammon, earth and heaven.

A young Grecian maiden is seen in the midst of an assembly largely, if not wholly, composed of pagan votaries—dearest friends or direst foes.

Every eye is fixed on her as she advances towards an image of the goddess Diana, having an altar smoking in front of it. Those around the maiden are evidently urging her to offer her modicum of incense, and the fragrant casket is held out in readiness—"Only one grain," they seem to say, "and you are saved!" Ah, no! she can *endure* "as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27). Her eyes look at nothing around her, they are fixed on a heavenly scene—*by faith she sees Jesus*, who was the Man of Sorrows, here crucified for her sins, now crowned with glory and honour at God's right hand in heaven (Heb. i. 2). Could she deny him? Could she do homage to a silver idol when her Lord and Master would be repudiated thereby? To offer one grain of incense to a false god would be to forget that "to us there is but one God, the Father" (1 Cor. viii. 6), and would be saving herself, perhaps from prison, perhaps from martyrdom, at the expense of the One who died for her. Acts xix. shows what treatment the Ephesians would have bestowed on one who turned her back on the goddess worshipped by the world.

There is a Latin proverb which says, "The descent to the nether regions is easy." Once start on a downward road, and it is difficult to

stop. One grain of incense offered to that which is opposed to God, one denial of Jesus, one parley with the devil, the livery of the world put on just for once, and oh ! how hardly we regain what we have lost, and how easy to continue the same downhill course !

Pilate's choice was a fatal one ; he preferred friendship with Herod, and contenting the Jews, to delivering "that just One." With Felix and Festus it was the same ; they did "the Jews a pleasure," and they left Paul in chains (Acts xxiv. 27, xxv. 9). It will be solemn by-and-bye when God makes these men to come and bow at the feet of that Jesus whom they despised in His own Person, or in that of His followers, and to own that He is Lord (Phil. ii. 10 ; Rev. iii. 9).

John closes his first epistle with the remarkable words, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Why should he speak so to Christians ? The knowledge of the true God is indeed meant to keep us from idols, but there must be more than this—it must be knowledge that we walk in the *power* of the Spirit of God, though John, says that one born of God "*keepeth* himself, and that Wicked One toucheth him not" (v. 18). Satan has no power over one who walks in the Spirit ; and only thus have those who have suffered

death for Christ's sake been enabled to resist the devil's wiles, the solicitations of friends, and the varied and agonising sufferings they have endured in keeping themselves from idols.

An idol is not necessarily of wood and stone ; it is anything which usurps the place of Christ in the heart, it may be money or pleasure, or a loved friend, or even a fine art. Let us beware then of all that displeases Christ ; we are not in danger at present of being called upon to bow down at a heathen festival, but we are in danger of doing homage in one form or another to the god of this world, and of forgetting, all too easily, that " if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof ; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever " (1 John ii. 15-17).

" For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world : and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? " (1 John v. 45.)

H. L. H.

“I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED.” 49

“I know whom I have believed;
or, “It’s certainty people want.”

“**I**F you could say in the pulpit, what you have just said to me, you would have every one running after you.” These words were spoken in a sad, earnest tone, by a gentleman well on in years, to one who had been speaking to him of a living Christ, and faith in Him. His companion looked up quickly, asking, “Why?”

“Because it’s *certainty* people want, it’s *certainty*.”

Alas! he knew no certainty, and had spoken in real anguish of soul. To him, death was a “leap in the dark”; the future, “the great unknown.” He had sought by wisdom to find out God, not knowing, “It is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent;” again, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that *believe*” (I Cor. i. 19, 21). God reveals Himself to the man who trembles at His word (Isa. lxvi. 2).

Reader, in whom, on what, is your soul resting

for time, and eternity? Can you say, "*I know whom I have believed?*" Divine knowledge! Blessed certainty! Is it yours? Say, is it yours? In this shifting, ever-changing world, beyond the din and strife of tongues asserting, "Life is enigmatical; impossible to know what comes after us; we must do the best we can, and take our chance with the rest!" have you found an "anchor" for your soul, both "sure and steadfast"? or are you like one I met to-day, as driftwood on the sea, tossed hither and thither by each succeeding wave of "advanced thought,"—so called "advanced thought!" that takes from man all he needs, saps the foundations of faith, and gives in their place the miserable advice, "We must do the best we can, and take our chance with the rest."

"*I know whom I have believed.*" With what calmness, strength, and brightness, these words ring out their certain sound, amid the increasing infidelity and darkness of this nineteenth century. It is everything to be able to say, "*I know.*" Even in things of this life "knowledge is power"; how much more so, when it is knowledge of the life beyond. Let us finish the verse—"And am *persuaded* He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. i. 12).

“I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED.” 51

This is faith's language. A Person is three times referred to. Do you know Him? Paul did. Knowledge of this Person had produced faith in Him, and he—Paul—had committed his all to Him, “against that day.” A *future*; as yet an untrodden future, but not an unknown one. “I know.” How individual! He who once blasphemed the name of “Jesus of Nazareth” now owns Him as His Lord, and speaks of himself as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ;” how willingly such!

What had produced this total change? “*A light from heaven.*” No earthly light could have pierced the darkness in which he was walking; so great was his blindness, he did not even know or feel it. “A light from heaven” and “a voice” transformed him in an instant. “Who art thou, Lord?” proclaims the change. “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” What grace and truth shine out in this answer. “Jesus,” announcing the Saviour; “whom thou persecutest,” convicting the sinner. “Lord, what wilt *thou* have me to do?” reveals the completeness of a divine work in the soul, a full surrender. God grant that every reader of these pages may see a light from heaven, and “hear the voice of Him that spoke,” and not only “spoke,” but

that "*speaketh*" to-day. Yes, to-day. "*To-day* if ye will hear His voice."

Beloved reader, flee to Him,—to Him, of whom it is written, "A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest" (Isa. xxxii. 2). News has reached us of fearful storms, and devastating fires, which have been taking place in different parts of the world, leaving sorrow, desolation, and death in their wake; but all these put together are small compared to the storm of judgment that is about to burst over the entire earth. The awful description of those scalded to death on board the steamer on Lake Geneva, beseeching the doctors to kill them at once, and put them out of their agony, or throw them, there and then, into the lake, called to my mind the passage in Revelation, "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it" (Rev. ix. 6). Oh! what a wail of agony and despair will go forth from all who have refused Him that "*speaketh*." This "*man*." This "*covert from the tempest*."

Yes. He, and He alone, will be a "covert from the tempest" in that day. And He only is a "hiding-place" to-day.

"There is no refuge for thy soul but He;
Wilt thou reject Him and a wanderer be?"

L.

No More Remembrance of Sins.

“Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

—HEB. x. 17.

WHO are the persons about whom this wonderful statement is made, and written in the word of eternal truth? Will my reader be at any loss to say of whom it is written, and about whom it is blessedly true? Blessed be God, there are thousands we know to whom these words refer, and about whom they were spoken.

Let us thank the Lord for it, that there is a class of persons now on the earth, engaged in every kind of toil from day to day, who come within the range of this precious word. It is true that sins and iniquities abound on every hand, yea, they not only abound, but their number is rapidly on the increase. Man is waxing worse and worse. Advantages and opportunities for good are numerous; Bibles and societies are increased greatly, and many other efforts are put forth with much vigour, but still the flood of sin is on the rise. On the right hand, on the left hand, almost wherever the eye of man—who knows God—turns, sin is rampant.

And how can it be otherwise while man is seeking to be his own saviour. I consider that man, by his vain attempts to better his condition as to the question of sin, is only putting off further and further the salvation of his own soul, and not only so, but he is rejecting the Saviour that God Himself has provided.

Man, unconcerned and quiet about his soul, and about eternity, as though he had no soul, is a very common thing. Yea, we see man trifling with his immortal soul as though it was of no value whatever. What a painful state to be in! Can you, reader, say that such a case is not yours? Can you say that your sins and iniquities will be remembered no more? I am not now asking you about some other person or persons, but I am simply asking *you* a proper, reasonable, and kindly meant question. Can you say, or do you believe, that God will remember your sins and iniquities *no more*? I do not press you for an audible reply, or a hasty one, but I do beg you to make a truthful one. It must be either the one or the other. If you *have* believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are now sheltered by His blood, then I can tell you, on the authority of God's Word, that your sins will be remembered no more; because the blood

of Christ cleanseth from ALL sin, therefore it can cleanse you. And to know that our sins and iniquities are all gone, washed away by the blood of Christ, is far, far better than a thousand worlds with all their riches and honours.

But, perhaps, my friend, you are not able—because it is not true—to say that “*my* sins and iniquities are all gone!” Indeed, then, your case is a deeply solemn one, solemn beyond all computation. If they are NOT gone, they are all, every one, still upon you ; and if you keep them upon you, by refusing Christ as your Saviour, then your case will be a very sad one ! And let me press this point a little more upon your conscience, not to do you the least unkindness, or to give you one needless pain, but that which will be for you soul’s good. Sins and iniquities are not to be trifled with ; God does not deal with them as though He considered them of small importance. God cannot love *sin*, but He can and does love the poor sinner, and He Himself has provided a real Saviour for *the* sinner ; any sinner—the worst of sinners—He can save. Tell me, reader, what could be needed more than this to save lost sinners. All power dwells in God !

What I mean by a lost sinner, is a man that

is not saved, and such an one, God's word says, *is lost*. I am well aware that there is another sense in which the word *lost* may be used, viz., that man who dies in his sins without a Saviour is lost, and nothing can save him then; but, blessed be God, this is not the way in which the word *lost* can be applied to you—at least, not yet. These lines tell you of a Saviour, and of a salvation by this Saviour. Certainly the man that has died without a Saviour is lost, and lost for ever. Yes, my reader, and let me tell you that his sins and iniquities will be remembered, and he will eternally feel the pangs of rejecting and refusing Christ.

Can your tongue, or mine describe what such a soul will have to endure throughout eternity?

What is your state, reader? Are you saved or lost?

H. H. S.

Messages from God.—VIII.

“I have a message from God unto thee,” said Eluid unto Eglon, king of Moab, as, at his ease, “he was sitting in a summer parlour which he had made for himself.” That message was DEATH, by the thrust of “a dagger that had two edges.” The word of God, “sharper than any two edged sword,” says to the careless sinner that reads this—“The wages of sin is death.”

"Whiter than Snow."

S NOW is very white ; perhaps the purest, the most spotless, thing we know in nature. But there is something *whiter* than it. What can that be? No one could have supposed what it is if God had not told us. It is the sinner who is washed in the blood of Jesus. How blessed ! " Purge me with hyssop," said David, " and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be *whiter than snow.*" The hyssop, doubtless, refers to the bunch of hyssop that was often used for sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice, and certainly pointed to the all-cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus. That blood takes sin so completely away from the sight of God, that it leaves the one who is washed, as *every believer* in Jesus is, whiter than snow.

Hence, in one of Israel's worst days of sin and failure, the inspired prophet exclaimed to the sinful people—"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. i. 18). And the voice of God in the New Testament is, that "the blood of Jesus Christ

His Son cleanseth us from *all sin*" (1 John i. 7); that He who is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself *purged our sins*, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3).

The sins being purged, the sinner is thus cleansed, spotless and unblamable in God's sight. It is the person, *the believer himself*, that thus stands justified before God. "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33). He says so. He tells us also that the ground on which He pronounces present justification is the blood of Christ: "Being *now* justified by His blood." And the person justified is he who *believes*. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). And lastly, that the character of the justification is to account the sinner that believes righteous in His sight. Marvellous grace! But so it is, and so it has ever been; for "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." "And to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith is counted for righteousness*" (Rom. iv. 3, 5).

This is not the righteousness of the law, but, as we are told in Romans iii., "the righteousness

of God"; and it is this which God has blessed us with in Christ—"Even *the righteousness of God*, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and *upon all them that believe.*" This is not man's work, but God's work; it is not through our doings, keeping commands, ordinances, or anything else, but what God has done for all that believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Hence it is written, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who *of God* is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). Surely such persons as God accounts righteous in His sight, as standing before Him in all the acceptability of Christ, and as made the righteousness of God in Him, have such a spotlessness and purity, that of them it can be said: They have been washed, and are made "whiter than snow."

We are informed, that when John Bunyan was one day walking in a field, under great distress of soul, with an unusual sense of his own vile-ness, he says, that he heard, or thought he heard, a voice saying to him, "Your righteousness is in heaven." He went to his home, and turned to his Bible, and though he could not find the exact words, he found the blessed truth, that Christ in heaven is the righteousness of every

one that believeth. Oh! the heart-cheering blessedness of those two lines of divine truth, running all through Scripture,—the judgment by God of sins and of sinful self in the cross of Christ; and the gift of life, righteousness, and acceptance in Christ at God's right hand.

“What is the foulest thing on earth?

Bethink thee now, and tell:

It is a soul by sin defiled,

'Tis only fit for hell;

It is the loathsome earthly den

Where evil spirits dwell.

And what's the purest thing on earth?

Come, tell me if thou know:

'Tis that same soul by Jesus cleansed,

Washed whiter far than snow;

There's nought more pure above the sky,

And nought else pure below.

God's eye of flame, that searches all,

And finds e'en heaven unclean,

Rests on that soul in full delight,

For not a spot is seen:

Cleansed every whit in Jesus' blood,

Whate'er its guilt has been.

He sees no sin, but sees the BLOOD

That covers *all* the sin;

'Tis Christ upon the soul without,

'Tis Christ He sees within:

"THE PRECIOUS BLOOD."

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To judge it foul, were just to judge
God's Christ Himself unclean !

Thou Lamb of God ! Thy wondrous grace
This great redemption wrought ;
Not only snatched from yawning hell,
But to God's bosom brought,
And raised the ruined wrecks of sin
Above created thought."

H. H. S.

"The Precious Blood."

ONLY last week I was sitting by the bedside of an old lady whom we had heard was very ill. Not that she was thought dangerously so, and her daughter told me cheerily how she looked forward to having her mother downstairs once more. But the old lady shook her head saying, "Never again, I shall soon be in heaven."

Unaccustomed to meet with such assurance I asked her, "But tell me, Mrs C——, on what you are resting to take you to heaven?" Brightly came forth her answer, "I've trusted to His precious blood for years."

Again I inquired, "Then you do not reckon

on your own good works taking you there?" To this she replied, as she laid her hand on mine, "My dear, I haven't *one* to bring Him." Precious testimony, indeed, from a soul that was really "justified by *faith*." Conscious of having nothing good in herself, she reposed her soul's salvation on the precious blood of Christ as the only thing that could save her, and this child-like trust gave her peace and confidence in view of death itself.

She had been in the habit of attending meetings, where it was the custom for members to relate the varied experience of their conversion, and when her turn came to speak she gave forth her simple confession in these few words, "My Saviour turned His face to me, and I turned my face to my Saviour."

May I add, for the encouragement of other Christian parents, what was a real cheer to me? When I asked Mrs C—— how long she had known the Lord, she replied that she could scarcely tell. She had had, she said, a pious God-fearing father, and though sixty-eight years of age, she could recall the early days of her childhood; while fresh in her recollection were the prayers of her father for her in her infancy, which had been the means, as she believed, of her conversion.

E. R. M.

“WHY?” OR, “IT WAS FOR ME.”

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“Why?” or, “It was for Me.”

I WAS recently asked to go and see a poor bedridden man, who was thought to be nearing his end. I found him in a terrible state of bodily suffering; one leg had been amputated, and the other was slowly rotting away. He knew his time was short, and he told me he was doing his utmost to trust in the Lord Jesus. He said he believed in Him, and that he was sure He ought to be believed in by every one, but that his difficulty was that he did not and could not feel that he trusted Him sufficiently. I spoke to him of the Lord's suffering on the cross, of His infinite love and grace, of His sacrifice of Himself, until the poor dear man wept; still he repeated again and again, “Ah! I must trust Him more. I want to put all my trust in Him. I don't trust Him enough yet to be quite safe.”

Seeing he was trying to rest on his own faith in Christ, rather than on Christ Himself, I said to him:

“Do you know why our Lord was forsaken when on the cross?”

“Oh!” said he, “He was not really forsaken;

C 2

He only thought He was ; He could never have been forsaken, I am sure of that."

I read him Mark xv. 34, and part of Psalm xxii., and asked him if it was not a real forsaking.

"Yes," he replied, after thinking some moments, "I now see it was. Those verses have always been a difficulty to me. I knew He had done nothing to be forsaken of God for ; and the only explanation I could find was, that He only thought Himself forsaken, and was not really so. Still this never satisfied me. I cannot make it out. Can you tell me why He was forsaken on the cross?"

Feeling this was a question to be answered by God, and by God alone, and that he must really go through it with God, I replied :

"You know Jesus was the Holy One of God—that He knew no sin—that before He was born, the Holy Spirit spoke of Him as 'that holy thing which should be born' of the Virgin—that His whole life down here was not only spotless, but perfectly acceptable to God in every detail—that the voice from heaven said of Him : 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'—and yet He cried on the cross : 'My God, my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?'"

The poor dear man's attention was absorbed.

“WHY?” OR, “IT WAS FOR ME.” 65

“Tell me,” he said, “Oh, do tell me why? I cannot make it out—it is beyond me altogether.”

It was now late, about 9 P.M., and so, after a few words of prayer to the Lord to show him, I left him, begging him to ask God simply to show him why His beloved Son was forsaken on the cross; and, at the same time, as he could find no cause in Him, to see if there was any cause to be found elsewhere.

The next morning when I went to see him again, I found him calm, and yet filled with wondrous joy.

“Well, C——,” I said, “have you found it out yet?” He did not need telling what the “it” referred to.

“Oh! yes,” he said with tears, “I have indeed. The Lord showed it all to me in the night. I could not sleep. I was in no pain, but yet I felt a sort of pain in me until He showed it all to me. I felt I *must* know why, and I prayed to Him to tell me, and He did. It was for ME—for ME! How wonderful it is! Too wonderful almost to speak of—and when I see Him, I shall see Him who was forsaken for ME! What a sight it will be! And it will last for ever too!”

“And what about all your trust now?” I asked.

“Oh! don't speak of it,” he said, covering his face with his hands. “Now, when I think of Him, and look at Him, I cannot bear to think about myself and my trust. I can never, no never, trust Him enough; and as to loving Him, well! I don't like to call what I feel about Him ‘love,’ for His love is so wonderful, so blessed, so everlasting!”

“Then there is nothing left to try for now,” I said.

“Try!” he exclaimed. “No; nothing! I can't try to love Him now; I can only rest in His love. And, oh! what rest it is! His wonderful, blessed, unchanging love; and I don't deserve the least bit of it. What time and joy I've lost in trying to deserve it! I see it all now; I was trying to deserve His love, and so I was trying to trust Him. But now, blessed be His name, I can rest in His love—rest there for ever and for ever, in His love! I can think of nothing else now, but Him and His love.”

A few weeks later, this dear man, a pauper, in receipt of parish relief, passed peacefully away from the scene of his sufferings and poverty, to be with Him who had so loved him as to give Himself for him. His joy, his peace, remained

“WHY?” OR, “IT WAS FOR ME.” 67

ever the same,—the calm, holy joy and peace of the blessed, undeserved, unwavering love of Jesus for him, a poor, vile, hell-deserving sinner! A pauper in receipt of parish relief, and yet the possessor of the only true riches!—richer than the wealthiest or most powerful sovereign, who has not for himself the simple answer to that wondrous “Why?”

Reader, can you answer for yourself as to why that Blessed One was forsaken? God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for sinners, and God always stands by what He has done. He has glorified “that same Jesus” at His own right hand in heaven; and God is about to bring Him again, and to manifest Him in glory in the very place where He was rejected, despised, spat upon, and crucified by man, and where, in the greatness of His love and His mercy toward man, God forsook Him on the cross.

“Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.”

Dear reader, when you see Him, will it be to gaze upon the One who was forsaken for you, or will it be with wailing and sorrow? God says: “*Every eye shall* Him,”—the lost as well as the saved,—those for whom He was forsaken, as well

as those who pierced Him, and those who are now indifferent to Him. May God in His mercy give you no rest until you too can say, with rich though poor, happy though despised, joyful though suffering C——, “For me—it was for me!”

P. A. H.



“Things which God hath Prepared.”

HAVE you ever thought what you would feel if cast alone on a desert island? There might be beautiful scenery and perfect weather, harmless animals and exquisite birds, food of every kind in abundance—but you would be *alone*!

When God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, it was in a scene of unexampled perfection. Sight and sense were fully satisfied, but he was *alone*, and God’s verdict was—“It is not good that the man should be *alone*.” We know the sequel.

Has any one been alone in the world since? *Only One*. Jesus cried on the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” He came into the world a lonely, heavenly stranger:

“THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED.” 69

He said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone” (John xii. 24) He must die before He can become in resurrection the head of a new race, and prepare a new and living way into God’s presence. When God hid His face from His Son during the three hours of darkness, it was because He was bearing sin, the sins of others—He was alone that we might never be alone.

“Alone He bare the cross,
 Alone its grief sustained ;
 His was the shame and loss,
 And He the victory gained ;
 The mighty work was all His own,
 Though we shall share His glorious throne.”

And why did He bear our sins in His own body on the tree? Reader, ponder it well—*He wanted companions in glory!* Will you be one of them? He must needs taste death to “bring *many* sons unto glory” (Heb. ii. 10). And what did He say before He left His disciples? “I go to prepare a place for you” (John xiv. 2). He went to prepare heaven by His presence, to receive those for whom He shed His blood: Jesus does not want to be alone in heaven. There are some who know this—do you? And who can say, “They desire a better country,

that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. xi. 16).

But—and it is very solemn—there is *another* who also desires companions in his everlasting abode—*another*, for whom God has prepared a place, who does not wish to be alone in it! "Tophet is ordained of old: yea, for the king it is prepared" (Isa. xxx. 33). "Everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). *God* prepared hell for the reception of such as these, together with Antichrist and the beast (Rev. xix.); *Satan* wishes to have many others there besides—is he succeeding in alluring *you* thither?

The Lord Jesus has prepared a place in His Father's house for those whom He deigns to call His friends, His brethren; He wants companions in heaven—will *you* be there?

"For us the Lord intends
A bright abode on high,
The place where sorrow ends,
And nought is known but joy."

"What do you understand by 'in My Father's house are *many mansions*'?" asked one.

"Plenty of room," was the reply. Yes, reader, *plenty of room in heaven*, and One waiting there who will receive you *unto Himself!*

“THINGS WHICH GOD HATH PREPARED.” 71

“Many mansions” in the Father’s house : how blessed ! But what is said of that other place ? “He hath made it deep and large ; the pile thereof is fire and much wood : the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it” (Isa. xxx. 33). Do not shut your eyes, and say it is not true ; say rather, *God* has written these solemn words ; believe them, and “flee from the wrath to come.” Hell was never prepared for you, but for those who are the deceivers of souls ; yet there *are* some besides to whom that place will be awarded, and we must not deny it.

Eternal bliss, on the contrary, *is* prepared for *man*. “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. xxv. 34). “It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father” (xx. 23). Will you not trust the love of the Father’s heart, that planned all this, and sent His Son to die for sinners, and the Saviour who wants others besides Himself to share the joys of His Father’s house, who has prepared a special place for us there ?

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Cor. ii. 9).

H. L. H.

The Forgiveness of Sins ; or, "I wish I knew that."

IT was five o'clock, on a cold, dark, November day. Lights had just been lit, here and there, in a large ward of an hospital. A huge fire of logs was burning at one end of the ward, around which had gathered a number of women ; some of whom were talking rather loudly, and in no pleasing tones ; others sat listlessly watching the flames and blue smoke curling up the wide chimney, apparently indifferent to the subject of this heated discussion.

Long rows of beds stood out from the walls on either side, and across the far end were several more. Some of these were empty that evening, the patients being better had been allowed to get up, and were amongst the number gathered round the fire. Many were very ill, and one poor woman lay dying. It was to this latter case my visit that day was specially directed.

I had seen her several times before, and had grown much interested in her. From the first,

though very silent, it could be seen by the anxious, searching look on the face, that she was not at peace with God. In spite of her silence I could see she liked me to speak, and read to her from my Testament. It soothed her, and her interest deepened. At last, one day she exclaimed, "We are told 'Thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the utmost farthing.'" I told her that *Jesus* had "paid it *all*," and pressed the value of His precious blood that cleanseth from all sin.

On this occasion one or two of the other patients were standing near, and cried out, "Do penance! do penance!" "Thou shalt not come out thence till thou hast paid the utmost farthing." Very angry these poor, dear women were at being told, that all their best acts were in the sight of a holy God "as filthy rags." Read Isaiah lxiv. 6. It is well for both reader and writer to pause, and consider that this is the verdict of the God "*with whom we have to do.*"

From that day visiting there became very painful. Two, and sometimes three and four, of the women would follow me about, and had it not been for the kind, warm heart of the head-nurse, a tall, slight, dark-haired and dark-

eyed Irishwoman, who in spite of belonging to the same "religion," as they did, always befriended me, I should have been stopped many a time. Whenever the voices grew unusually loud, and excited, this nurse would interfere. On this November afternoon, on entering the ward with a friend (who is now with the Lord), we found the special object of our visit was lying in an unconscious state, so passing on we took different sides, stopping to have a word and give a book to any who would accept one.

More than an hour had passed, when my friend came up saying, "She is conscious now, and has asked for you." As we walked down to the end where the dying woman lay, the scene struck me as unspeakably sad; the many sick, pale faces, rendered more so by the half-light that was casting deep shadows here and there; the furtive, suspicious looks thrown upon us by many; the utter unrest, and absence of the knowledge of a Saviour's love, and presence, made a life-long impression on me. It was so desolate! Oh! reader, there is no love like the Saviour's love. He gave His precious life for us when we were yet in our sins. When there was nothing in us to love, "Christ died for the

ungodly.” His love let in, lights up the darkest scene.

On reaching the bedside of this poor woman, she stretched out her hand saying, “Tell me of your religion! tell me of your religion! I want my children brought up in your religion.”

“Faith in Christ is my religion,” I replied, sitting down beside her as I spoke, and taking out my Testament, I turned to the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, thirty-eighth verse, and read, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that *through this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”

By this time several, who had been talking round the fire, surrounded the bed, and one of them putting her hand on my shoulder tried to drag me away, only taking it off, by the dying woman saying, “Let her alone! she is telling me of Jesus.” I tried to speak again, but was completely stopped by loud, angry voices crying out, “She is telling you lies.”

I rose, and walked over to the fire, where I stood in silence beside those women who were sitting there. After a few minutes, I said to them, “I was reading these words, ‘*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that*

through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins.*'”

Here those who had interrupted me came round me again. I told them of a free pardon through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. A voice exclaimed, “*I wish I knew that.*” I turned at once saying, “You might know it.” The speaker was already moving rapidly away, but not before I recognised in her, my friend, the head-nurse of the ward. The voices grew angry again, and I left, never more to meet one of them—at least, not on earth. I may in heaven!

Before bidding farewell to this ward I should like to tell of a bright contrast to this dark picture. Sometime previously I was passing through it, when I was attracted by a young fair face with a deep flush upon it. It was easy to see this young woman was in consumption, and that her days on earth were numbered. Going up to the bed, and, putting out my hand, I asked her if she loved Jesus.

“Yes, I do,” she answered, “and I have prayed for you from the first day I saw you come in.”

Very precious was her answer to me; not only did she know the Saviour, but alone in that

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ward, without a father or mother (as I learned later on), the Saviour's love satisfied her, her heart was free from itself to pray for another! Reader, is yours? Do you know this blessed Saviour? If not—

“What will you do without Him
 When death is drawing near?
 Without His love—the only love
 That casts out every fear;
 When the shadow-valley opens,
 Unlighted and unknown,
 And the terrors of its darkness
 Must all be passed alone!”

A few weeks later two men entered that ward with a stretcher, and I saw them carry out the body of this young Christian girl, followed by her sister, but little older, and the only relative in, to them, a foreign land. It was a touching sight! It is at such times, that the heart that has Christ proves the strength and comfort of that “love” which “nothing” can separate us from. May it be your eternal portion, reader!

“No separation! life nor death,
 Things present nor to come,
 Can part thee from His precious care,
 Or rob thee of thy home.”

L.

The One True Ground of Faith.

SOME two years ago, I was sent for to visit a dying man. Death, as it were, had knocked at the door, and sent in a message that he would be there himself shortly.

I went. The poor man was sensible that he had but a short time to live. I said to him, "Are you happy?" "Yes," he replied, "I am." "What is the ground of your happiness?" I asked. "I have led a good life, gone to church, and paid all my debts." "My friend," I said, "I would not be in your shoes for all the world."

He was greatly surprised, and startled at my plain, faithful words; and I added, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; but, according to your own account, you are not a *sinner*, but a *righteous* person, therefore Jesus Christ is not for you. 'He came not to save the *righteous*, but *sinners*.'"

The words touched him, and evidently his conscience was reached; and I added, "But if you take your place as a poor *lost sinner*, there is hope for you by trusting in Him, who 'once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.'" With these words I

left him. I called the next day, and found that God had indeed blessed His own word. Again I said to him, "Are you happy now?" With simplicity and directness he replied, "Yes, yes." "On what ground?" I asked. "Not on my own works, but on Christ," was his answer.

He died in a few hours, and just thirty-six hours after I first saw him. Dear reader, are you happy, are you resting on that one true ground of faith—Christ and His finished work?

T. A.



The House of Bread.

SOME of our readers may never have heard of A HOUSE OF BREAD. There is one spoken of in Scripture, and we want to call their attention to it. The meaning of the word BETHLEHEM, is "*house of bread.*" Now Bethlehem is a well-known name to every reader of the Bible. It was the birth-place of David, the second king of Israel; and of One greater than David,—our blessed Lord Himself. Let us turn to 1 Sam. xvi., where we first read of David.

When the Lord had finally rejected Saul from being king over Israel, He sent Samuel to the house of Jesse, the BETHLEHEMITE; "for I have provided Me a king among his sons." In Acts xiii. 22, David is thus described: "a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will." How precious a type of the Son of God, who came to do His Father's will! (*see* Heb. x. 7, 9.) We know what the will of the Father led Him to do, for God in saving man must sacrifice His only-begotten Son; no blood but His could have atoned for sin. Thus we see that the *will* of God was the *good* of man; and in David's case, we see that the will of Jehovah was the welfare of His people Israel. He chose the almost-forgotten youngest, in preference to the seven elder sons of Jesse, though one of these at least (Eliab) was a much more kingly-looking person than the youthful shepherd.

For the moment Samuel thought that Eliab must surely be the Lord's anointed; but God, who seeth not as man seeth, looked at David's heart, and saw there, as the fruit of His own grace in him, qualities which fitted him for the post he was to fill. David had been "faithful over a few things," and he was to be made "ruler over many things;" he had cared for

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his father's sheep, even to the risking of his own life to save them from the lion and the bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35).

Here, again, he was a type of Christ, that Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep. The shepherd boy was appointed of God to feed and to rule over Israel (1 Chron. xi. 2 and Psa. lxxviii. 70, 72). In both these passages the word in the original can be translated either *feed* or *rule*, and we see in the last verse of Psalm lxxviii. how David fulfilled his trust. Well might Bethlehem, as the birth-place of such a king, of the One, above all, who will "satisfy the poor with bread" (Psa. cxxxii. 15), be called a "house of bread" for the Israelites. They were indeed like unto sheep, needing a shepherd's care and guidance. And such, as to our souls, we all are. Do all our readers believe and feel this?

If we look at Isaiah liii. 6, we see that "*All* we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." Now sheep are well-known to be wanderers, and it is said that when a sheep once goes astray it never finds its own way back to the fold. Do we not therefore need a Shepherd, to care for and guide us?—nay, more, we need One to lay down His life

for us. Let us turn once more to Bethlehem, and see how it is for *us*, too, a "house of bread."

Nearly two thousand years ago, while some poor shepherds were watching over their flocks by night, an angel appeared to them. At the same time the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the heavenly light was too much for their human vision,—they were sore afraid! But there was no need for fear. The angel was bringing them the most glorious tidings to which their ears could listen, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ THE LORD. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." These words were no sooner spoken than an angelic chorus rang out from a multitude of the heavenly host. Heaven could not keep silence at the news. They praised God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good pleasure (of God) in men" (Luke ii. 8-13).

"Cold on His cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies His head with the beasts of the stall;
Angels adore Him, in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch, and Saviour of all."

(See Hebrews i. 6.)

Their angelic visitors having departed, the

shepherds are now once more alone. Do they coldly say, "Well, this is wonderful news; when we have leisure we must go to Bethlehem, and see if it is true"? Oh, no! full of holy joy, they *came with haste* "to see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." These simple shepherds were men of faith; they just believed what God had told them, and did not reason about it. We do not read of their questioning that the lowly infant in the manger was God manifest in the flesh. They might not indeed understand the mystery, —for it *is* a mystery, as we find in 1 Tim. iii. 16,—but they *believed* it, and rejoiced. And, eager to share their joy with others, they "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child."

Soon afterwards, another man of faith is found rejoicing over the infant Saviour. The aged Simeon, who had long looked for His coming, is privileged to hold in his arms the blessed Babe, in whom the eye of faith saw the SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD! Soon, too, wise men of the east take a long journey to see, while yet in His infancy, Him that was born King of the Jews; and when they saw Him, they *worshipped*. By faith they recognised Him who was—

“ True God in Bethlehem’s crib—
On Calvary’s cross true God.”

He it is who says of Himself, “ The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. . . . I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst ” (John vi. 33-35).

Dear reader, do you know what soul-hunger is? It arises from the sense of our need as sinners, and nothing but “ the bread that cometh down from heaven ” can satisfy *such* hunger. Come, then, to *this* “ house of bread ! ” Come to Him, who never sent one soul empty away ! Feast upon “ the true bread from heaven. ” Feed upon Him, who says, “ I am the bread of life ; ” and who proclaims in the hearing of every poor needy sinner, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath EVERLASTING LIFE ” (John vi. 41). M.

GOD does not come and tell us that He expects something from man ; He tells that which will trouble us a great deal more—that man has failed in meeting His requirements.—J. N. D.

"A Rotten Rogue."

NOTHING is more striking than the way man resents the exposure of his real state before God, and how, even when sunk in sin, and afar from God, man still holds to some fancied good in himself, and makes excuses for the sins he has committed, and which his natural conscience makes him aware of. Grace, in its blessed divine fulness and reality, its length and depth, is unknown, and man is unreal with God,—holding back from His presence, and thinking to console himself with the thought, that if he is bad there are numbers surrounding him in this world who, in his opinion, are as bad, nay, worse than he is himself. But what consolation, what possible comfort, can it be to a soul in eternal torment to look round upon the crowd of poor lost souls around him, and to find them enduring the same eternal misery as himself? Ah! Satan is indeed a deceiver, and the heart and soul of man are his chiefest toys, until he has them with himself in the lake of fire to scoff and to jeer at throughout an awful eternity! He will suggest, nay, he will press anything and

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everything upon the soul to trust in, except Christ and His finished work; and even when our Lord and His work are known, the enemy will do his utmost to introduce something besides, in order to mar the value of His blessed finished work, and the worth of His glorious Person.

A short time since, far away in the country, we stopped to speak to an old man breaking stones by the road side. After a few remarks, we asked him if he was going to heaven or to hell when he died.

He replied, as usual, "To heaven I hope."

"And what cause have you for such a hope?"

"Why, 'cos God's merciful," he replied.

"Have you committed any sins?"

"Well," said he, "I suppose I've made mistakes in my time, same as most other folk."

"Have you ever got drunk?" we asked, his face telling its own history.

"No, not as I knows on; maybe I've took a drop too much, by mistake like, in the hayfield; but I never did it meaning like."

"Oh! then you never got drunk except by mistake! Have you ever told any lies?"

"Yes," he replied, "I suppose I have, like the rest of 'em."

“And were they mistakes?”

“Well, no, I suppose they wasn’t,” he admitted.

“Then how are you going to get rid of them?”

“Oh, I means to pray when I dies, and then He’ll forgive me.”

“How old are you?” we asked.

“Seventy-four, come Christmas.”

“And have you ever prayed to God yet?”

“No, I can’t mind as I have,” he said.

“And you think that your prayers will take you to heaven when you die?”

“Yes, I do ; I means to pray sometime.”

“Now, looking back, over the past seventy years of your life,—a good long time, mind,—do you really believe the prayer of a rotten old rogue like you will take you to heaven? You have neglected God all these years, and do you think your prayers will save you whenever you choose to make them?”

The poor old man turned in a moment, and angrily said, “I may be a rogue, but I bain’t a rotten one.” He could pray when he pleased, he said, and he meant to, before his time came, &c., &c. We spoke to him of Christ and His love, of His one offering for sin, of His precious blood without shedding of which is no remission, of the sacrifice of Himself for sinners,—but

nothing seemed to reach him; rogue he might be, but not a rotten one. Mistakes he had made when tempted and led away by others, but sins he thought very lightly of. He stuck to it, his prayers would save him when he might choose to make them, because God was merciful. At length he asked us if we were sure of heaven; and on our saying: "Yes, perfectly sure," he said, "You bain't rotten then, I suppose." We told him that indeed we were not only rogues, but downright rotten ones too, deserving nothing but the wrath of God and eternal punishment, and yet sure of the sovereign love of Him who gave His only begotten Son to die for sinners—vile, hopeless, helpless, hell-deserving sinners. He only shook his head, and repeated, "We must pray. I means to."

May the Lord in His mercy use the word then spoken to him, and awaken, and save him, ere it be too late.

But how many, alas! are in just the same state as this poor, old stonebreaker—their hearts well-nigh as hard as the stones he was working at! Living in a professedly Christian land, calling themselves Christians, and yet in ignorance, almost heathen ignorance, of the grace of God that brings salvation! Here was an old

man of seventy-four, calling his sins mistakes, and excusing himself for them by saying he was no worse than others, and sopping conscience with the promise to pray, when it might please him to do so—sometime before he should die!

Man shrinks from the exposure God has made of him, and whilst owning, when driven into a corner, that he is a sinner, he thinks that after all there is something in him that is capable of better things, when he chooses to do them; just as if his own will to make a change, if he were capable of making it, could avail to blot out the heavy score against him of past sins. Satan buoys him up with this, and only when too late does he leave him to the misery, and the awful reality, of an unchangeable eternity under the well-merited wrath and condemnation of a God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. To God, sin is sin—He never reckons it mere mistake—and, because it is ever sin before Him, God offers His love, His grace, His mercy, wholly undeserved, to the very vilest sinner, through the finished work of His beloved Son.

Man may pride himself upon being real to his fellow-man, but no man dares to be real before God—real, down to the bottom of his heart, until he knows what the grace of God to him is,

and that God is for him in spite of himself and his sins. Then, and only then, is he real, and open, and free with God, making no excuses for himself, but owning and confessing all to Him, and depending upon Him to save him for the sake and the glory of His beloved Son. Reader, is it so with you through His grace?

P. A. H.



A Direct Answer to Prayer.

“The way of transgressors is hard.”

“It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”

“The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”

X — was an unconverted man. Of such it is written, “Having no hope, and without God in the world.” His young wife died, and he was left with one sweet, baby boy. Some elderly Christian ladies living near were touched at the sight of that poor motherless infant, and God drew out their hearts to desire the salvation of the bereaved father, who since his loss, sad to say, had plainly turned to the way of transgressors,—drinking, and many others of the pleasures of sin, he was known to indulge in, and to these

he added a certain small persecution of God's children.

These two Christian ladies received a most unexpected threatening letter from this lawyer, and a second not long after on account of a supposed annoyance to a friend of his.

God cannot let pass unheeded what touches *His children*. These very ladies made an appeal to the court of Heaven, the throne of grace,—that grace that reigns through righteousness,—and markedly received their answer as regards that very man. All that could be was yielded, for it is written, “As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men;” and the matter was dropped by the lawyer and his friend.

Some time after these ladies heard the poor lawyer had been brought home in a carriage in a dying condition. One of them told me she had hardly ever seen him pass, with his black bag in his hand, without lifting her heart to God for his soul's salvation. Thus *God* kept him before the eyes and hearts of His children, that they might appeal continuously to the court of Heaven for mercy for him, to that God who is rich in mercy.

On hearing of his illness, they went and asked the lawyer's friend (a Christian), “Was it true?”

“ Yes.”

“ Have you spoken to him about his soul, and pointed him to Christ ? ”

She had not, and replied, “ You do it.”

“ Willingly ; but we should not be admitted probably, whereas you, on the footing of a friend, and having been with his wife when she died, might be.”

This friend promised to go on the morrow. She went, but was refused admittance by his sister, the doctor having forbidden *any visitors* to see him.

Now these Christian ladies had *no door* open to them for that soul, save the ear of God through prayer, and for three weeks exactly they prayed together *daily* for that dying man. The answer came, and it was as with Daniel (chapter x. 12), “ From the first day . . . thy words were heard.” . . . At the end of the three weeks a young Christian came unexpectedly before them, and in conversation stated she was nurse to the lawyer, and had been there just three weeks.

“ Have you been able to speak to him ? ”

“ Oh, yes ; he has told me the whole story of his wicked life. He has asked me to read the Bible to him, and to pray for him ; and for the

first few days his constant cry was, ‘Will God receive me, such a sinner as I have been?’”

Gladly she told him the gospel of God’s grace and love to the sinner, and often repeated that verse, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,” which he seemed to cling to as an escape from the *horror* of his life of sin so freshly before him, and, moreover, had it pinned up at the foot of his bed that he might read it constantly.

Frequently he had his little boy of five on his bed to talk to him, and used to say, “Oh, read your Bible, M—— darling; love your Bible; don’t grow up a wicked man like poor father;” and the dear child at once worked a perforated card with that text, “God is love.”

At first he used to make the most frightful grimaces at the nurse whenever she came near him. He now told her the devil made him do it in order to frighten her away. One day, just at this time, a Christian gentleman called, wishing to see him, and minister the consolations of the Gospel to his distressed soul. His sister said it was impossible to admit a stranger, the doctor would not permit it. So this Christian returned home, and at once wrote a letter, simply and fully telling the Gospel, and gave it to the nurse,

who took it to his sister. On reading it she was much moved, and gave permission that it should be read to him, which was done in the quiet night time; and God blessed that letter (amongst other things) to bring peace to his soul. He had it read to him again and again.

This nurse was by his own wish the *night* nurse; and when the others were gone, he used to say, "Now *you know* what I want—get the Bible—get the Bible; now is our time, now we can be happy and quiet."

After seeing the nurse, those ladies sent messages of love to him that they were all praying for him. It struck him, especially the very lady who had received the threatening letter from him. "Can it be possible that that lady sent such a message to *me!*" Ah! divine grace had made him a *new* man.

Near the end absolution was offered him, and the sacrament, which he refused, and afterwards said to the nurse, "You don't think that could do me any good?"

"Certainly not, it is *only* 'the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all sin.*' You know that?"

"Yes, I know it, and I believe it."

His last night this nurse was with him; she

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knew he was *just* going home to the Lord, and she was feeding him still with God’s precious Word. At length to one verse repeated, there was no answer; she stooped close to his ear, and repeated slowly, “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” He opened his eyes and looked up, then drew down her face and pressed his lips against it in answer. The next moment his spirit was gone to his Saviour.

C. P.

“I’m only waiting day by day
to go to be with Him.”

THE above words were used by an old man, to whom I had given a gospel booklet the other morning, whilst passing through the village of I——. He was sitting on the top of some stone steps leading into his house; and upon my seeing him a few days after, and asking him if he had read the book, he told me he had, and remarked, “It is the truth.” So I asked him if he was resting his soul upon the precious blood of Christ. He replied immediately, “Yes, sir; and not only on the blood, but resting in Him who shed it.”

Upon my alluding to his age, he replied, "Yes, sir, I'm only waiting day by day to go to be with Him."

Passing a further remark as to death, he replied, "I am a conqueror" (meaning through what Christ had done for him).

I repeated, "More than conquerors, through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 37); to which he gladly assented, quoting a verse of that beautiful hymn—

"Death and judgment are behind us,
Grace and glory are before,
All their billows rolled o'er Jesus,
There they spent their utmost power."

"Yes, sir," he said, "the apostle puts it beautifully when he says, 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast'" (1 Cor. v. 7, 8); and he repeated the last words: "'Keep the feast,' because He was sacrificed for us."

It was indeed a happy sight to witness the joy of the dear old man, and in speaking of his Saviour he said,

"Thou bless'd Rock of ages,
I'm hiding in Thee."

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“That’s where I am, sir, hiding in Him.”

I soon had to say good-bye, and he then remarked, “We may never see each other again, sir, but we shall meet in heaven.”

And now, dear reader, can you say, in the language of this old man, “I’m resting on the blood, and in Him who shed it”?

If not, you cannot sing the verse of the hymn above; and, instead of “death and judgment” being behind you, they are staring you in the face, and even now “the wrath of God abideth upon you” (John iii. 36), and if called to pass into His presence, it would be to find yourself eternally lost. What an awful prospect!

But look at John iii. 16, what a blessed verse: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” How many thousands have rested their souls upon God’s own blessed testimony, and can now say with the apostle Paul, “The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me;” and, like this old man, “I’m only waiting day by day to go to be with Him.”

May this be your portion, dear reader!

A. H. N.

“Mr —, is your soul saved?”

THE person thus addressed was a man of about sixty years of age, who had lived an utterly wicked life, and for many years in the grossest sin. His wife had for years been praying for his conversion, but only saw him going on from bad to worse, hardened to a terrible degree, in his evil course.

This was the first time that Mr C—, a servant of the Lord, had had the opportunity of speaking to —, as on every previous occasion of his calling at the house he had invariably slipped out of the way. This time, however, Mr C— had entered the room, where he was sitting smoking his pipe, unexpectedly, and on his attempting to leave Mr C— begged of him to remain and to continue his pipe, saying that he would have a talk with his wife. Very reluctantly — remained.

In the course of conversation with his wife, Mr C— remarked that *to be saved* there must be a *living* faith in the Son of God,—only by faith in the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus

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Christ could any soul be saved from hell. Observing that —— was listening, as if he were interested, Mr C—— suddenly turned to him, and put the question already given above ; upon which he rose, saying, “I don’t speak of such things,” and left the room.

“I shall catch it when you are gone,” said his wife.

“Then we will pray that you may not catch it,” answered Mr C——.

They knelt down, and asked the gracious Lord that *now* His grace might be displayed in the deliverance of the captive from the power of Satan, and that he who had been all his life a slave to sin might be brought nigh to God by the precious blood of Jesus!

Mr C—— took leave of Mrs ——, believing that God had a purpose of tender mercy, which He would *now* manifest, towards her husband, and that the conversation which had so unexpectedly taken place in ——’s presence would be to the glory of His great name.

Three days afterwards, Mrs —— called on Mr C——, at her husband’s request, to tell him that he was anxious to see him, and to *hear again* what he had said on his last visit!

Mr C—— was unable to go that day, but he

promised to call on the morrow, which he did, when he was received by ——, who held out his hand, and said, "Sir, I am glad to see you; I shall never again want to avoid you when you come; will you be so kind as to repeat what you said to my wife the last time you were here?"

The subject of that conversation was resumed, and followed by prayer for his conversion. —— did not move; he had not knelt to pray for years; he sat silent and thoughtful.

In the course of a few days, Mr C—— called again. He found —— anxious to be saved. Being well aware of the character of the life he had led, Mr C—— said to him: "You profess to want to be saved, but I must tell you that you cannot be saved unless you *confess* your sins and *forsake* them; for the Word of God says, 'He that *confesseth* and *forsaketh* his sin shall obtain mercy.'"

Broken down under a sense of his guilt as a sinner in the presence of God, —— spoke of his past career with shame and sorrow; then he fell on his knees, and, with tears streaming down his face, confessed to God his evil life, his sins. He took the sinner's place in condemning himself, and prayed for pardon and mercy. Truly there

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was joy in heaven and on earth at that moment. (See Luke xv.)

——— was by no means an uneducated man, he was well acquainted, too, with the letter of the Scriptures, concerning which on a subsequent occasion Mr C—— remarked, that no *head* knowledge of the Word of God would avail him, unless he were “born again,” and had a living faith in the truth of the Bible.

——— owned this to be true, expressed much concern that he might have this true faith, and asked, with the simplicity of a child, “What am I to do? How am I to get this true knowledge, this *saving* faith?”

Mr C—— quoted to him, “If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke xi. 13.)

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke xi. 9.)

Then, kneeling down, they asked for this gift of God; and “God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” heard the cry of that new-born soul.

It could now be truly said of this man, once the most desperately wicked in E——, “Behold, he prayeth!”

It was remarkable how simply he received the Word of God, and how rapidly he grew in the knowledge of the grace and love of God revealed in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not very long after this, —— developed a serious disease. On Mr C—— going to see him, and inquiring about his health, he learned that the physician he had consulted pronounced him to be suffering from cancer, and that it must ultimately be fatal. Much affected on hearing this, Mr C—— asked, “How about your *soul*? Is your *soul* safe?” With a face full of joyful animation, he answered: “*Yes, thank God. I am pardoned. I am trusting in Christ alone. I believe only in Him, and in His finished work, for the salvation of my soul. His blood has cleansed all my sins away.*”

Later on, he expressed a great desire to partake of the Lord’s Supper,—“*not,*” he said, “as a passport to heaven,” but in remembrance of the great love of the Lord Jesus in dying *for Him*. On the evening of the Lord’s Day, about ten days before he was taken home, Mr C——, dear ——, and his wife thus remembered the blessed

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Lord in His death; the wife's heart full to overflowing for this answer to years of prayer and waiting, and believing in God's faithfulness to His Word. “And to think,” she said, “that we should be permitted to take the Lord's Supper together! . . .”

The disease made rapid progress, and soon — was gently put to sleep, to awake on the resurrection morning, with those who, through faith in the Son of God, have been washed from their sins in His precious blood,—to WHOM will be glory for ever and ever.

J. E.



“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.”

SOME years ago, in a *salon* in Paris, a large and for the most part gay assemblage of people were gathered. Their host was of high rank and great wealth. He once had been as gay as any of the guests of that evening. God met him in a remarkable way. God spoke to him, made him to feel his *need* of the God who had created him,—created

him for Himself too, and nothing short of Himself. The result was that a number of invitations had been sent out to a fashionable circle of acquaintances to come that evening to his *salon*. To an "At home"? No. To a dance? No. None of these; but to hear of an "*object to live for*."

How often one hears of such phrases as the following:—"No *object* in life"; "An *aimless* existence." Do you know anything of this, dear reader? Is your existence an aimless one? or have you found an object to live for? An object who has met the *need* of your immortal soul for time and eternity? An object that will last? That even death cannot separate you from? Nothing less will do, will it?

There were many in that well-lit drawing-room who listened with deep attention that night to one who spoke of Him who had created them *for Himself* (see Col. i. 16); who left the glory, and came down into this world of sin and sorrow and death; and here, yes, in this world, lived a life of untiring service to God and for man; and at the close of that perfect life died, "even the death of *the cross*" (Philip. ii. 8). Having first created man for Himself, He, the Creator, entered this world and "*bought*" them,—bought them by His

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own blood. Thus doubly were they His,—by right of creation, and by right of purchase. For whom were they living? For whom are *you* living, reader? For what are you spending your strength? “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he *also reap.*” They might deny Him, “the Lord that *bought* them” (2 Peter ii. 1),—mark it does not say *redeemed* or saved them,—but nevertheless they were His. They were not their own.

This was strange language to many in that company, accustomed to think of *their* strength, *their* talents, *their* wealth, in fact themselves as their own property, to spend and use as they chose; and most listened in rapt attention to the heart-stirring words addressed to them, beseeching them to turn “to God,”—“to live for God.”

A young man once wrote to a friend of his these words: “To *live for God* is the noblest object a man can live for.” Be it *yours*, beloved reader. “*Choose* ye this day whom *ye* will serve: if God be God, follow Him; if Baal, follow him.” Make your choice. Time will soon have run its course. The sand-glass of your life will soon be empty, and *eternity* have been entered on. Where will you spend it? *With whom?* You

will spend it with the one you have chosen and served in this life. You will spend it either in glory with Jesus, or in the lake of fire, "prepared (not for man, but) for the devil and his angels." Again, *with whom?*

"Yet there is room! the Lamb's bright hall of song,
With its fair glory, beckons *thee* along.

Room, room, still room!

Oh, enter, enter *now*.

Ere night the gate may close, and seal thy doom;
Then the last low, long cry, "No room, no room!"

No room! no room!

Oh, woful cry! "*No room!*"

L.



"Wilt thou be made whole?"

THIS question was put by the Lord Jesus to an impotent (that is a helpless) man, who for thirty-eight years had been unable to do the very smallest thing towards his own recovery.

Jesus did not ask the question to taunt the man with impossible hopes. The poor paralytic seemed to think He meant, "Are you really in earnest about getting well? If so, why do you

“WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?” 107

not profit by your opportunities?” And the poor man hastened to explain how it was that he had never been able to obtain healing. He had no one to do it for him, and was unable to help himself.

Is this your case, dear reader? Have you been trying for long, long years to get rid of the disease of sin? Then, to you Jesus is saying this very day—this very moment—“Wilt thou be made whole?”

Think what it means! Do you really, with all your heart, desire to be set free from sin? For that is what true repentance means,—turning with shame, sorrow, and horror from that disease of the soul which paralyses all your efforts to be better.

A lady was speaking some time ago to one whom she longed to lead to the feet of Jesus. “You would like to be a Christian?” she said. “What is it that is hindering you from giving yourself to the Lord *now*?” “It seems to me,” was the reply, “that it *must* be something more difficult than just saying, ‘Yes.’” She meant saying “Yes” with the heart to that question, “Wilt thou be made whole?” She was like Naaman the Syrian, who would not simply wash in Jordan to be cleansed from his leprosy. If

the prophet had bade him "do some great thing," would he not have done it?

Now, think for one moment. When a rope is thrown to a drowning man, does he stop, and say, "It must be something more difficult than just catching hold"? Of course he does not; he is in such desperation, that he would clutch at a straw to save himself, without thinking whether it was an easy or a difficult matter.

So, when we find people hesitating about accepting God's free offer of pardon and cleansing through Christ's atoning blood, we may be pretty sure it is because they *do not realize* their own need and helplessness. As long as a struggling swimmer thinks he can do something to help himself, the rope is not used by him. But when he feels his strength failing, he is only too glad to grasp it. And having grasped it, whatever doubts he might have had before, he knows and feels *now* that it will bring him safe to shore, and he just holds on.

Naaman's servants were able to persuade him to obey the prophet's voice, and dip seven times in Jordan. Why was this? Because, first, He knew he was a leper; second, He did not want to be a leper a moment longer if he could help it.

“I HAD RATHER BE DAMNED.”

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We talk sometimes about a man being a moral leper. But none of us has the right to say that of any other man, because in our natural state we are *all* moral lepers together. “It is in the family,” as we sometimes say of other diseases, though it comes *out* more strongly in some than in others. Oh! that God would open the eyes of every one who reads this paper to see, and feel their deep need of cleansing. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,” says the apostle John. May you be willing to let Him cleanse you; may *you* with heart and soul say, “*Yes*” to His question, “Wilt thou be made whole?”

S. P. S.

“I had rather be damned.”

A GODLY physician, now with the Lord, seeing that a gentleman he was attending was nearing his end, spoke to him about his soul, and put the gospel before him, saying that the only way of salvation, according to God’s Word, was by “faith in a crucified Saviour.”

“Do you mean then to say,” replied the

gentleman, "that the *only* way to be saved, is by believing in that man who was crucified eighteen hundred years ago?"

"That is the *only* way," was the answer. "Then," said the gentleman, "if that is the *only* way, I would rather be damned;" and in this state very shortly after he died.

This solemn incident, which we know to be true, gives a sad and painful witness to the repugnance of the natural heart to Christ and the grace of God. Like the Jews, who, rather than have Jesus as *Saviour*, crucified Him, and clung to their rites and ceremonies, with Sabbath keeping and vain attempts to keep the ten commandments, so this poor sinner preferred to trust to his own religious efforts, and his own way of salvation, rather than accept "God's salvation" through "faith in a crucified Saviour."

Dear reader, what are you doing? You admit you are not saved yet, while maintaining at the same time that you want to be; and when you read this sad incident, you perhaps exclaim, "What a dreadful thing to say!" Adding, "I would not like to die as that gentleman died." And yet if you did die as you are, you would die as he died, and also be "damned"; not because you *expressed* yourself as he did, but because what is

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III

in your heart, was *in his heart*, all the difference being that in his case it *came out* in the hearing of a fellow-creature in these terrible words.

When the blessed Lord sent out the gospel, as we read in the end of Mark, He sent it out in these terms: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that *believeth not* shall be DAMNED.”

People are not damned because they say and do bad things, but because, having said and done them, they will not *believe* the gospel which points them to a “crucified Saviour” as God’s “only way of salvation.”

If indifferent to your soul’s salvation, or if not indifferent you are thinking you can save yourself by anything you can do, or any sacraments you may take your part in, you are really saying in your *heart*, little as you may think it, “I had rather be damned!” And damned you will certainly be if you go on as you are, for God has said, and His word cannot be broken, “He that *believeth not* shall be *damned*.”

“Have I *nothing* then to do but to simply believe the gospel?” you exclaim. “Nothing—nothing whatever, but to simply *believe*.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,”

said Paul to the sin-stricken Phillipian jailer ; and so we say to you, "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved." If not, the *unspoken*, though unsuspected, utterance of *your* heart,—“I had rather be damned,”—will most certainly come true.

Oh! we beseech you, let not the enemy of souls keep you one minute longer in the darkness and *foolishness* of *unbelief*, for, “The preaching of the cross,” says the apostle, “is to them that *perish* foolishness ; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

The Lord Jesus said to those, who thought that others had been punished because they were specially great sinners, and not moral and religious like they thought themselves to be: “I tell you, Nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish ;” and He says to *you*, and to all, “*Repent* and *believe* the gospel.”

The *only* way out of hell and its eternal damnation, and the only way into heaven and its eternal salvation, is by the doorway of the cross, that is, “through faith in a crucified Saviour.” Jesus has said, as signifying what *character* of death He *must* die in order to save sinners: “I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, (*i.e.*, crucified) draw all unto Me.”

C. W.

"GOD RECEIVES SINNERS."

113

"Through Jesus Christ God receives Sinners."

DEEPLY interesting and instructive is it to note the different ways by which souls, in whom God's Spirit is working, are led into peace and blessing. After being first awakened and groping about in the darkness, or at best the twilight, of human thoughts and ways, they all sooner or later, though by different roads, arrive at the same gate. They reach the one and only door into blessing, drawn by God's Spirit to Him who says, "I am *the door*: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John x. 9).

Luther, after being awakened to a sense of sin by a terrific thunderstorm, and after long groping about in the idolatrous darkness of the Roman Catholic Church, under whose instruction he was painfully and wearily creeping up Pilate's stairs in Rome to obtain absolution, and thus pardon and peace with God, heard suddenly a voice like thunder in his soul that said, "The just shall live by faith." His painful journey was ended, and unexpectedly he

XXIX.

found himself at "The door of faith," which God has opened to *all* poor sinners who know and feel their need.

Of another well-known servant of God, who was early brought to feel his need of something for his soul more than the world and its pleasures could supply, we have lately read, that in "his hunger for God," and with a feeling akin to despair, it occurred to him, that perhaps, "if he could but have the precepts of the Saviour continually before his eye, it would be a help to his obedience and a means of salvation." With this intention he got two New Testaments, and cut out from them all the commands and counsels he found, and, pasting them on a board, placed it over his mantelpiece. But he found, alas! that to be reminded of precepts was not to keep them, to know the will of God was not to do it, and to be acquainted with the right way was not to walk in it. Indeed he had set himself a far harder and more hopeless task than even poor Luther, long before him, had done, when he set himself to work at ascending Pilate's stairs in the hope of finding peace and salvation at the top.

Things seemed to grow darker, and all efforts but helped to make matters more hopeless. One day a friend said to him, "If you want to find

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the knowledge of God, study the Epistle to the Romans ; it is there the plan of salvation is made known." Acting at once on this suggestion, he thought he would copy out the whole epistle, that he might better master the subject, and become more fully acquainted with the apostle's reasoning. He commenced his task of copying the epistle into a book, and got as far as the eighth chapter ; and coming to the eighth verse, he wrote, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

These words arrested him, and he said to himself, "What is the use, then, of all my efforts? If a sinner cannot please God, how can I do anything to gain acceptance with Him?" Then suddenly, as with a sunbeam, the thought flashed across his mind : "No, I cannot please God, but Jesus Christ can. He is the way, He is the Perfect One, and this is what is meant by those words at the end of every prayer, 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord.'" "Yes," said he to himself, "God receives sinners for *His sake*, and He will receive me."

Like Luther's "The just shall live by faith," which came as a divine revelation to his soul, delivering him from the burden of his sins, so to him came, as a divine revelation, the blessed

truth, "Through Jesus Christ God receives sinners." On this his soul rested in undisturbed peace, and this he proclaimed to others until the Lord took him to Himself.

Dear reader, have *you* yet come to the one only door of access to God? Have you yet come to Jesus and laid your burden down at His feet, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree"? If you have not yet done this, Come to Jesus just *now*, and just as *you are*, with all your burden of sin and unrest, and He will receive you, for He says, "He that cometh unto Me I will in *nowise* cast out." Stop ascending, *in your way*, "Pilate's stairs," simply believe in Jesus and His finished work, and Luther's peace and joy will at once be yours. But perhaps you do not understand what we mean by "Pilate's stairs."

In the city of Rome there is a long and steep flight of steps, down which, according to the legend of the Church of Rome, our blessed Lord, bearing His cross, descended from Pilate's judgment hall on His way to Calvary. It forms part of what is called the "Via Dolorosa," or Sorrowful Way, and one of the Popes of Rome, as an inducement to pilgrims to come to Rome, promised absolution, or pardon of sins, to any

who, as a pious work, ascended these steps on their knees.

If you are attempting to gain access to God and pardon for your sins by anything you can *do*, you are in *principle* ascending "Pilate's stairs," so we say again to you, "Stop ascending, in *your way*, 'Pilate's stairs.'"

Hear again what you have just now read about another, and what all must hear and learn if ever they are to find salvation and peace with God: "Through Jesus Christ God receives sinners."

"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," Jesus Himself says. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we *must* be saved," says the apostle Peter in the fourth of Acts, adding in his epistle, "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

How plainly and simply this shows us that it is by His work for sinners on the cross that He has opened the way for us, as *unjust ones*, into God's presence, and into all the blessings of pardon, peace, and salvation that are found inside that one and only door, to which all God's way in grace leads souls.

Christ, says the apostle Paul, "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Cease then, once and for ever, from all your own efforts; simply believe in Jesus, and learn for yourself that "through Jesus Christ God receives *sinners*." C. W.



The Rent Veil.

AT the crucifixion of Jesus the veil was rent, and the holiest opened; what God was within the veil then shone out in all its fulness. When grace reveals this to me, I get confidence. I see God holy and expecting holiness—true; but the peace of God is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows all the evil of our hearts. Nothing can be worse than the rejection of Jesus—man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love, to the full. The wretched soldier who (in the cowardly impotence of the consciousness that he could with impunity insult the meek and lowly Jesus) pierced His

side with a spear, let out in that disgraceful act the water and the blood which was able to cleanse even such as he. Here God's heart was revealed, what He is to the sinner; and this is our salvation.

Death and judgment teach me redemption. God judged sin indeed in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. *It must be punished*: Jesus bore the blow—this rent the veil, and showed out what God really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of God puts away the sin which His holiness judged.

The perfect certainty of God's love, and the perfect cleansing of the conscience, is that which the defiled and trembling sinner needs.

“By the grace of God” Jesus has “tasted death.” Death, the wages of sin, is seen in the cross of Jesus as the consequence of “the grace of God.” “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” Were any one to demand of me a proof of God's love, I could not give more than God has done, in that “He spared not His own Son:” none other could be so great. But then it might be asked, May not my sin affect it? No, God knew all your sin, and He has provided for it all: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from ALL sin.”

J. N. D.

“He sought to see Jesus, who
He was.”

LUKE xix. 3.

E — was a bright merry girl, of about fifteen, fond of music, in which she excelled; and in schoolroom days looking forward to the time when she would be more free to enjoy the gaieties of the world. The fourth in age of a large family, her chief companion was a sister a little younger than herself, who shared her studies, her recreations, and her projects for the future.

But had E — any thoughts beyond this life? Yes—she had heard of heaven and hell; and hoped, if she tried to be good, that she might gain heaven, God in His mercy passing over her deficiencies. E —’s family were Unitarians; and while shielded from much of the evil of the world, and seeing much that was outwardly fair in her earthly home, she did not know that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” nor that she needed a Divine Saviour, whose precious blood alone could cleanse her guilty conscience, and

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fit her for the presence of God. But God had graciously purposed to bless this dark family, and in His providence led them to a place where there was no public teaching such as they were wont to hear; their Unitarian minister furnishing them with a letter of introduction to a Christian lady, who had herself once held the same soul-destroying doctrines, but who had, by the grace of God, been brought out of darkness into His marvellous light. Here was a praying friend, who, while at first shrinking from the work assigned to her, ceased not to earnestly seek the good of her new acquaintances, specially devoting herself to the dear invalid mother; and though some of her words were made light of amongst the younger members of the family, they could not but value her kindness.

They had not been very long in their new home, when an earnest evangelist visited the place; and E—— was so attracted by his preaching on the Sunday morning, that she obtained leave, with her companion sister, to hear him again in the evening. But the testimony of this faithful preacher was so plainly directed against the creed of her parents, that the young people were subsequently hindered from attending his ministry.

The Lord, however, did not cease to follow after E——. One night she had a dream that the day of judgment was come, and that the first charge brought against her was that of deceit; and she thought, if this were the first, what would the rest be?

Before E—— completed her sixteenth year, her young companion, being in delicate health, left home for change of air. Early one summer morning the sisters parted, little thinking it was for the last time. It may be that after this separation much passed in the secret of E——'s soul, that was unknown to others; be this as it may, it is the testimony of an elder sister about this time, that whilst she herself was on a Sunday afternoon and evening writing letters or amusing herself, E—— was poring over her Bible, and she filled sheets with carefully copied verses of Scripture, evidently desiring to find out who Jesus really was. Like one of old, she "sought to see Jesus, who He was."

The youngest of the family being taken ill with scarlet fever, E—— said she felt as if there would be one death. *Her* turn came to be laid low; but she apparently recovered, and wrote this to her absent companion, who in the meantime had, with her eldest sister, been visit-

“HE SOUGHT TO SEE JESUS, WHO HE WAS.” 123

ing one relative after another. In the house of one of these she met with a book containing Christian truth, and her conscience was touched; but she loved the things of this world, and turned away from her convictions.

A sharper stroke was needed to awaken her from the sleep of death. The news of E——’s recovery was shortly followed by a letter announcing that she had died suddenly. This was the call for the absent sisters to return home; but many miles of sea and land had to be traversed, and ere they arrived the remains of the beloved E—— had been carried to the grave.

Ah! might it not be that the Lord had taken the only one in whom there was any movement of heart towards Himself? (1 Kings xiv. 13.) And surely we can add that He did it in love to draw others of that sorrowing family to the Saviour. Yes,—it was thus that He wrought in His patient grace.

Not long after, their praying friend brought an honoured servant of Christ to visit them; and that day the eldest daughter was brought to bow in her heart for the first time to the Name of Jesus, and has, after a long life of service to her Lord, departed to be with Him, “who,” according to the words from her dying lips,

“loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20). Others were also awakened about the same time; and within a year of E——’s death, her stricken companion was eagerly drinking in the blessed truths of the Gospel from the lips of the same evangelist, now residing in the place, whose ministry they had formerly been forbidden to hear.

It may be added that another servant of Christ had visited the family, and prayed that every soul in the house might be converted; which prayer was answered for all, including a visitor beneath the roof at the time. The Christian lady who had watched for their souls has long since gone to her rest, but she lived to rejoice in the fruit of her labour of love.

More than fifty years have passed away since the parting of those two young sisters; and the one who still remains to thank the God of all grace for that early sorrow, looks forward with joy to meeting ere long the companion of her childhood and youth; and as one after another of this large family has been added to the number of those who “believe on the Name of the Son of God,” some of whom have already gone to be with their Saviour, it may indeed be hoped that *all* will meet,

“BLESSED JESUS! PRECIOUS BLOOD!” 125

“ . . . No wanderer lost,
A family in heaven ! ”

“ Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen ”
(Rev. i. 5, 6). ANON.



“Blessed Jesus! Precious Blood!”



COMING home with a brother in the Lord one Lord's Day morning from a meeting we had been attending together, a house was pointed out to me, where there was a young woman dying, and not saved. I was asked to visit her, and in the afternoon, after a little secret prayer, I went. I found, lying upon her bed, a very interesting young woman, about twenty-two years of age, evidently in the last stage of consumption, and with not many days more to live in this world. I sat in silence for a moment, and then said to her, “Are you happy?” She replied, “I am waiting for the angels to come and take me to heaven.” “But,” I said, “what about your sins? Do you know that you cannot enter heaven with all your sins upon you? No angel

can take you there, unless all your sins are clean washed away.”

She seemed very much alarmed, and her conscience was awakened. “But,” I added, “the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, can wash them all away.”

She eagerly answered, “Is that true?” I replied, “It is God’s word, and I will read it to you from His own Word.”

I read to her from 1 John i.: “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,” and “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “Read it again,” she exclaimed, “and read it *slowly*.”

I read it again slowly, and God’s Spirit applied it at once to her conscience and heart, and she, in a low voice, murmured, “Blessed Jesus! precious blood!”

I said no more, as I saw she was very exhausted; but, as I left the room, I again heard those never to be forgotten words: “Blessed Jesus! precious blood!”

I called two days after, but she was gone; and her mother told me, that almost the only words she heard from her lips, after I had left until she died, were: “Blessed Jesus! precious blood!”

T. A.

An Afternoon in a Factory.

IN a large paper factory in Kent, a number of men, women, and boys are working for many hours during each day. It is a veritable beehive of activity.

On a lovely day in September, I entered a long, lofty, spacious apartment in this factory, called "the rag room." Considering the number of "hands" the silence was remarkable, perhaps because the "*hands*" were hard at work, pressing these rags through large machines, which rapidly reduced them to shreds, whilst their other fellow-workers were sitting or standing at long tables "sorting." Many of them were young and bright, while others were more or less advanced in years, looking toil-worn and joyless.

As I walked up the room, giving Gospel-books on the right hand and on the left, I was greeted with many a smile of welcome, and, "It's kind of you to think of us women!" while one said to me, "You passed me by the last time!"

"It was not intentionally; did you get no magazine then?"

"No, but a friend lent me hers."

“I am glad of that,” I answered; “here is a book for you to-day.”

At the far end of this room sat an elderly woman, bending low over her work, to whom I offered a book. “I cannot see to read,” she said, “but I should like one. I have cataract on my eyes; I have been to a London hospital, and the doctors said, when it is quite dark I am to go to them again; but they *cannot take the gift of faith* from me.”

The light of earth was growing dim to this dear old woman, but by the God-given gift of faith she endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Reader, can you? or are you, too, like others among these busy-workers, hard and indifferent to the Gospel-message, and would, like them, refuse it with “*I don't want one*,” or, “Oh! it's *a tract*; I thought it was a treat!”

“It is better than a ‘treat,’” I said, and very unwillingly the little book, telling of a Saviour's priceless love, was taken.

Well, dear reader, there will be no “tracts” offered in hell. Not one message of a Saviour's pardon and blood-bought peace will ever be sounded forth *there*:—

“*Now breaks upon my vision
Another scene—unblest,—*”

AN AFTERNOON IN A FACTORY.

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A sinner unforgiven,
 Who seeks in vain for rest.

 I would not have the glory,
 Though pressed in Jesu's name ;
 And as "an oft-told story"
 Treated His cross and shame.
 I would not have salvation,
 Though offered full and free ;
Eternal condemnation
 Must now my portion be."

Beloved reader, obey the Gospel-call before it is *for ever* too late. Come to the Saviour,—come *now!* The *present* moment is yours, *yours*, do not lose it!

Sitting on a low step, in what looked like a passage-room, were two factory girls, engaged in some earnest conversation that September afternoon. They rose as I entered, conducted thither by one of their young companions, and eagerly took the books which were offered, with the remark, "Here is something good for you to read."

So genuinely happy was the face of the youngest of these two girls, and so true the "Thank you," that I stopped and asked, "Do *you* know the Saviour?" Very warmly and frankly she answered, "Yes, I do."

“And how long have you known Him?”
With equal candour she replied, “Four years.”

“It is good to hear so sure a ring,” I said; and turning to her friend, asked, “Can you say the same?”

“Sometimes I think I can, and sometimes I am not sure.”

“Because you are looking *within* for peace. You will *never* find it there,” I said, adding, “My *peace* never varies.” An astonished and earnest look came into her face as she listened in silence, and I went on to tell her that the ground of a sinner’s peace lies outside of himself altogether, saying, “The *blood* of Jesus is the sinner’s *only* title to heaven, and our *sins* are our only title or claim to that blood.”

Dear soul, whoever you are, who are seeking for peace, seek it where alone it can be found, *in the cross of Christ*. Praise Him, and go free!

“I hear the words of love,
I gaze upon *the blood*,
I see the mighty sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

’Tis everlasting peace!
Sure as Jehovah’s name,
’Tis stable as His stedfast throne,
For evermore the same.”

L.

“IT’S ALL SETTLED, THERE’S NOTHING TO DO.” 131

“It’s all settled, and there’s nothing
to do.”

FOR many years Mrs B—— had been known as a Christian, as one who had proved the truth of the Word of God that salvation was not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy ; who had believed that Jesus had borne her sins in His own body on the tree, and that He was now living at God’s right hand in glory without them, and therefore that she was free, and could sing—

“ He bore on the tree.
The sentence for me.”

And now both the surety and sinner are free. Time had passed on, and as Mrs B—— got into years, as each winter came round and the weather was severe, Mrs B—— had sharp attacks of bronchitis, which left her in a very weak state of health.

Taking a chill one day in November, she was soon laid on a bed of sickness, and, rapidly getting worse, it was seen that she had not many days to live ; but before passing into a

semi-conscious state, she gave to those around her the testimony as to what she was resting on, by saying, "It's all settled, and there's nothing to do." A few days later, and those who were waiting upon her seeing that death was near, called in her husband and other relatives to witness her last moments. The husband, a real believer in the Lord Jesus, kneeling down by the bedside, quoted a verse of a hymn that had been very precious to Mrs B—— :

"Jesus, my heart's dear refuge,
 Jesus hath died for me ;
 Firm on the Rock of Ages
 Ever my trust shall be."

But the dear sufferer was too far gone to make any response, and in a few moments had breathed her last.

Dear reader, eternity is a reality, and although you may put off the thought of it, rest assured you will have to face it sooner or later in all its solemnity. Are you under the shelter of the blood of the Lamb, or are you careless and indifferent as to the question of your soul's salvation ?

God, in the riches of His grace, has devised the means whereby you may not be expelled

“IT’S ALL SETTLED, THERE’S NOTHING TO DO.” 133

from His holy presence, in the cross of His beloved Son ; and the sinner who meets that holy God trusting in the blood of Jesus is eternally justified (read Rom. iii. 25, 26). “Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (*i.e.* a mercy-seat, or place, where God can meet the sinner) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness . . . that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

Blessed truth, dear reader! “It’s all settled, and there’s nothing to do.” The work has all been done by the Lord Jesus Christ, and—

“The sinner who believes is free,
Can say, ‘The Saviour died for me ;’
Can point to the atoning blood,
And say, ‘This made my peace with God.’”

“I haven’t settled peace,” said a young man to a servant of Christ some time ago.

“And why is that?” replied the preacher. “It is because you have not believed God ; you have not ‘set to your seal that God is true,’ and accepted the message that He ‘made peace through the blood of His cross’” (Col. i. 20).

“It’s all settled, and there’s nothing to do!”

May the dying testimony of Mrs B—— prove an echo of mercy to many readers of this magazine!

S. E. B.

“Where will you spend Eternity?”

THESE words might be seen written up lately on the wall in a prominent place in one of our great cities; the writer, no doubt, desiring to bring before passers-by the urgent, all-important, question contained in them. It is well to be warned in time even as to the concerns of this life. What should we think of a merchant whose whole means of subsistence depended on his business, and who, when informed of some great change about to take place in the commercial world which might ruin him or reduce him to poverty, treated the whole matter with calm indifference? But we see it proved around us every day, that the things of time press heavier on men than the great realities of eternity.

We can easily picture the case of a business man spending sleepless nights in concern about his affairs; but the *soul*, that must live on and on through the never-ending ages of eternity, how few pause to give five minutes' real thought to the great question, “Where am I going to spend eternity?”

“The things which are seen are temporal.”

“WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?” 135

All the objects our eyes rest upon from day to day—the lands we live upon, the things in nature we admire, the houses we inhabit, all these things—shall pass away, for “the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up:” but the things that are not seen, the same scripture of truth declares, are *eternal*.

It is *now*, in this world, that the great question of eternity must be settled for every one. The moment a person crosses the river of death, his state is fixed, and fixed for ever. The whole question must be settled here, either to be saved, or lost, for eternity!

Thank God, that question may be decided this very moment, as you read this paper; for the Gospel of the grace of God declares how God, in the infinite love of His heart to a poor lost world, has made provision to meet the sinner, just where he is and just as he is, guilty, lost, and vile! “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” This was the express object of His coming,—not to call the righteous, but sinners; and now that the work is *finished* at the cross, and the Saviour, who died as the sinner’s substitute, has been raised up from among the dead in proof that the work is *done*, the streams of salvation are flowing freely through the

righteous channel which the precious blood of Christ has opened up!

You can have eternal salvation now, if you simply believe on Him as your own personal Saviour; but should you reject Him, you will die in your sins, and you will have to mourn throughout the gloom of a lost eternity that you missed your opportunity, or allowed Satan to cheat you out of your soul's salvation by some poor passing trifle of this passing world.

No words can adequately convey, no figures can truly express, what *eternity* is,—duration running on and on! no end, even in the most distant future! May God, in His mercy, press upon you *now* the great question, “Where will *you* spend *your* eternity?”

F. G. B.



“Them few 'ere Muddling Words.”

—————
G ——— **L** ——— was one of those disagreeable characters that everyone shunned. Surly and ill-tempered to those around him, his mates all avoided him. His home, quite bare and poverty-stricken, as

“THEM FEW 'ERE MUDDLING WORDS.” 137

the result of his drunken career, was a piteous sight ; and his children, half-starved and ill-clad, fled with terror from the presence of their father.

But, with all that, he was quite indifferent as to his soul's welfare, nor would he ever trouble himself to settle that important question : Eternity ! where ?

But after a while he became ill, very ill, until it was apparent even to himself that he was not long for this world. Then, gradually, uneasy feelings crept over him ; feelings of uncertainty would cross his mind as to whether after all he was in the right path. And then he would argue to himself, that it was impossible for any one in this life to know for certain, or feel quite sure, their sins were forgiven.

So, month after month rolled by, before he would be content to listen to what God's plan of salvation is,—which is entirely dependent on the work of some one else, and not on *our* doings, even on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One day a gentleman visited poor G——, finding him in a state of fearful darkness as to what the Gospel of God is. Had he not been taught from his youth, in his so-called worship, that it could only be through good works of his own that he must hope to merit heaven ? But this

was poor comfort to him now as he lay prostrate on his dying bed. What good works had he strength for then ?

But God had His eye on that man for blessing. Bending over him, the gentleman told him slowly the tale of the dying thief. He showed him how that poor dying sinner, powerless to do one single action, uttered just one cry of faith to that blessed Saviour, hanging on the cross beside him, and he *was saved*: " Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom," and at once he received the gracious answer, " To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." G—— listened attentively, and it seemed as though the light penetrated his soul, dispelling the darkness he was in, as for the first time he saw the simplicity of the whole thing, saying, " It do seem strange that them few 'ere muddling words should have done it." His soul had laid hold of Christ as his Saviour it was plain, and this was his way of expressing his faith in Him.

Shortly before he died, he turned to his wife, saying, " Don't cry for me now. I used to think when I was at plough as how I could see straight ahead, but now I can see straight into heaven itself."

God has made the way of salvation so plain,

ECHOES OF MERCY FROM NEW ZEALAND. 139

that a way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

Only one look at the brazen serpent, and the dying Israelite lived ; only one touch of His garment, and the poor woman was healed ; only one word, and the defiled leper was cleansed ; only one cry of faith, and the dying thief was saved ; and for you, to-day, poor sinner, the way is just as plain,—

“ There is life in a look at the crucified One,
 There is life at this moment for thee !
 Then *look*, sinner, look unto Him, and be saved,
 And know thyself spotless as He.”

E. R. M.

Echoes of Mercy from New Zealand.

ALL readers of *Echoes of Mercy* will, we are sure, have their hearts gladdened and refreshed while reading the following extract from a letter recently received from a distant land.

“ Such a wave of blessing I have rarely been privileged to see in so short a time as at Christchurch. About three weeks ago I had four meetings there in a large public hall. The interest was so great that I decided to return

there from Dunedin ; so on Sunday I concluded another ten days' mission there.

"It will never be forgotten by very many in Christchurch. Every night several cases of conversion. At the close of each service we had most remarkable inquiry meetings, and many of the saints were stirred up to help to point anxious souls to Christ. It was a sight to see here and there a stricken soul kneeling in tears, and a Christian, Bible in hand, kneeling beside them, pointing them to Christ.

"Last Sunday was a crowning day, both afternoon and evening. The hall was packed to its fullest ; platform, gallery, passages, and out into the streets.

"At the close, I asked all who had been converted during the week to stand, and many all over the hall responded. Then all the Christians rose, and sang twice, 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,' &c. It would have thrilled you to have heard the burst of praise.

"There has been no excitement, but calm and serious declaration of man's lost condition, and the redemption which is in Christ Jesus and His blood.

A. H. B.

"WELLINGTON, *Feb.* 7, 1893."

“OH THAT I WERE A CHRISTIAN!”

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“Oh that I were a Christian!”

I HAD heard that Miss B—— was ill, so I went one day for the purpose of inquiring how she was, and found her with her sister and another young woman sitting together in their parlour. They seemed glad to see me, and I was pleased to find that the illness was nothing more than a cold, and that she was nearly recovered. She then introduced me to her friend, of whom I had heard before as one who had attended some of our services for the preaching of the Gospel.

After some preliminary conversation, I remarked that it was a happy thing to “have boldness in the day of judgment,”—to look forward to that day without a doubt or fear, in the consciousness that there was not a cloud between oneself and God!

Miss O—— remarked that, “Very few Christians could say that.”

“One who cannot say so is, I fear, not *established* in the *grace* of God,” said I; “for a Christian ought to have neither doubts nor fears. Because, as 1 John iv. 17 says, ‘Herein is love with us (*marg.*)

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made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is so are we in this world.' We are as Christ is, before God, and hence we can approach Him without a doubt and without a fear."

"Oh, but it must be a person who leads a very holy life to be able to say that," she replied.

"Well," I said, "it is quite true that God expects every Christian to lead a very holy life; for He says (1 John ii. 6), 'He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.' But you have no *power* to lead a holy life until you are first conscious that your soul is saved."

"Well, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I *hope* I shall be saved."

"If you really believe *with the heart* on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are entitled not merely to *hope* that you are saved, but to be *assured* of it. For God says, 'He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life' (John iii. 36), and if you have everlasting life you *are* saved."

"But," she said, "does not the Word of God say that faith without works is dead, being alone?"

"Yes, unquestionably it does; but we must remember that the Scripture speaks of *two kinds*

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of justification—*before God* by faith, and *before man* by works. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans treats of the former; James in his Epistle of the latter. If you remember, James takes up the instance of Abraham, saying, ‘Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?’ Now if you turn to Genesis you will find that this took place in the 22nd chapter, whereas he was pronounced righteous before God in the 15th. ‘Look now,’ says God, ‘toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.’ And again, the Epistle to the Romans makes this more plain, for it says, ‘If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; *but not before God*. For what saith the scripture? Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.’ He simply believed *what God said*, and he was accounted righteous.”

“Well, but,” she said, “must I not feel the witness within myself that I am saved?”

“Certainly it is a blessed thing when ‘the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.’ But we must not begin at

the wrong end. *God's order* is this. God sends us a message of peace; we hear it, we receive it, and then the Holy Ghost takes up His abode in us, witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. My joy and peace is the consequence or effect produced on me by the Holy Ghost, which I received on believing the Gospel. Let me take a simple illustration. I receive a telegram that a near relative is dead. I read the telegram. I ascertain the sender's name. I believe the news it contains, and unfeigned sorrow is the result. The feeling of sorrow does not precede my belief in the intelligence, but is the consequence of it. So with God's message. We should look for no inward consciousness, unless we first have believed that we *have* everlasting life through faith in the Lord Jesus."

"I do not yet see it," she said; "but if there is one thing that I earnestly desire, it is that I may become a Christian."

"Well," said I, "I rejoice to hear you say so; but I must at the same time say that I fear it is your own fault that you are not happy in Christ. Cornelius (Acts x.) was, like you, hoping and praying, and God sent him a message by Peter, to say that the Jews had slain Jesus, whom He had anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power;

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but that He had raised Him up, and that now, ‘Whosoever believeth in Him should receive the remission of sins.’ Cornelius believed, obtained the remission of sins on believing, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Why should not you believe, and know that your sins are remitted, and be sealed of the Holy Ghost?”

“I do believe with my whole heart on Jesus,” was her answer.

“I am sure you do,” said I. “Why not then believe the simple Word of God, which tells you that your sins are forgiven?”

“Well,” she said, “I know my sins are *not* forgiven, and that I’m not saved.”

“I fear, then, I must charge you with doubting the testimony of God in His Word.”

“Oh,” she said, “I dare not do that.”

“But,” said I, “allow me to assure you that that is the very thing you are doing. You *say* you believe in Jesus, and God says to all that believe on His Son Jesus Christ that they have ‘everlasting life,’ and ‘are justified from all things’ (John iii. 36 ; Acts xiii. 39), and yet you say you are neither forgiven nor saved, when God says you are.”

“Well, then,” she said, “if I am saved I may go and do just what I like.”

“No,” said I, “God will not *let* you do that. The moment you believe you have everlasting *life*, and have the gift of *the Holy Ghost*; and this life has new tastes and new desires, exactly the opposite of those you had when in your natural condition, because it is a new life. And more than this, although the flesh will still lust, God gives you the Holy Ghost, that you may not do the things you would. The apostle Paul tells us, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye may not do the things that ye would” (Gal. v. 17, &c.), so that he can say (Rom. vi. 14), ‘Sin shall *not* have dominion over you.’”

“Oh, but,” she said, “do we not see those who profess and call themselves Christians every day doing things that we know to be contrary to the Word of God?”

“I fear all are not Christians who profess to be so,” I replied, “and even amongst those who really are Christ’s, oftentimes failure appears. Both Moses and Paul spake unadvisedly with their lips, and their failures should therefore be a warning to all of us to walk humbly before God, and never to take the eye off Christ; by continual occupation with Whom, conformity to

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His likeness is alone to be arrived at” (2 Cor. iii. 18).

She said no more then, so at last I asked, “And don’t you think, Miss O——, that it is indeed true that those who simply believe on the Lord Jesus, as you say you do, *are* entitled to know, and to know it,—not because they feel it, but because God says so,—that they *have* everlasting life, or, in other words, that they *are saved*?” (1 John v. 13.)

“Well,” she said, after a long pause, “I *do* think so.”

Thus we parted. And now I have written this down in the hope that it may meet the need of some poor soul, *unlike* Abraham of old, who, “being not weak in faith, considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: who staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” *Unlike* him, it may be that many have been looking for an inward testimony that they are saved, when they ought in simple faith to have taken God at His word, and have thus known that they were saved because He says it.

* * *

XXX. 2

Christ Died for Us.

A FEW days ago a thrilling incident happened at one of the large sea-side places on the east coast, in which a promising young life, just budding into manhood, was lost in a brave attempt to rescue the life of a little child.

Two children were playing together on a breakwater on the sea-shore, when one of them accidentally fell into the water below. She would soon have been drowned, had not her cries of distress arrested the attention of a gentleman walking on the parade above. The child was a perfect stranger to him, and had therefore no claim upon his kindness, but he saw her dangerous situation, and, quickly divesting himself of coat and vest, he nobly plunged into the water to save her. The child was saved; but he who thus courageously risked his own life in the endeavour to rescue an unknown little one, perished in the attempt.

Whether he was prepared for the sudden summons into eternity or not, I cannot tell; but on reading the harrowing details in the paper, it did so vividly recall to mind the far greater love

of Him who gave up His life, at a far greater cost, for those who not only had no claim upon Him, but who spurn the blessing to-day as He offers it. "Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were *yet sinners* Christ died for us."

Oh, the matchless grace of Him who, seeing our utter distress, and need of a Saviour, could lay His glory by, and go to the cross for us His enemies! It was *our need* that brought the Son of God down from heaven's highest glory; and, in order that we might live, it must needs be that He should die! Little did His enemies realise how true was their cruel taunt, as they derided Him at the cross, saying, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." It was indeed a fact, for if the sinner was to be saved, the sinner's Saviour must die.

Have our hearts ever responded to that love? It was difficult to express gratitude to the poor young man when life was gone, but a wreath of lovely flowers was sent for his grave as "a token of grateful thanks from the parents of the child that he saved." And will they not ever cherish the memory of that brave fellow, and delight to speak of his noble action?

And shall our hearts remain silent to such love as we have received? Love that swerved at nothing, that was not stopped by death itself, even the death of the cross? Nay, it was in death that it achieved its greatest triumph, for on the ground of it He can love, and impart eternal life to all who believe on Him. "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

"Worthy the Lamb that died, we cry,
For He was *slain for us.*"

R. M. E.

"I see now, I see Jesus in the
Glory."

HE was frequently standing at his door as I passed the row of cottages near which we had come to live for a few summer months, and I sometimes met him, too, in the country lanes, where he used to wander about, groping his way with his stick. The intent and weary look on his face made him an object of deep interest and compassion. He seemed to be about fifty years of age, and was completely blind; not a ray of light was

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visible to his darkened eyes, the sight of which he had lost years before.

There is always something that appeals to the heart in seeing any one blind, and thus shut out from the sight of all that lies around them. As our eyes look with pleasure on the varied beauties of creation, and on the animated forms and ever-varying expressions of loved ones about us, and as we take in naturally and without an effort all the busy scenes of life, we little think what it would be to be deprived of them, knowing they are all around us—hearing, yet seeing them not.

In his case it felt the more sorrowful, as there were none of those resources for the employment of the blind in the little village in which he lived, and which are to be found in larger towns, to engage and occupy him, and to take him out of himself, as we say,—though nothing can ever really do so, save knowing the supreme object of God’s delight, the Lord Jesus Christ. When I first spoke to him, and told him that I was living at present quite close to him, the strange voice surprised him a little ; but neither then nor afterwards, in any passing salutations or remarks, did he seem to take any interest, and further conversation always felt difficult.

He seemed in a sort of dull, hopeless condition, reserved and silent.

My heart was longing that his eyes might be opened on Jesus, the living Saviour on the throne of God. It felt so sad to look at him, and to think that he had nothing for time, and knew nothing of the joys of heaven, of which Christ is the centre and the glory,—that all should be darkness for him here, in heaven, and for eternity. I often afterwards spoke to him of the Lord Jesus, who had in grace come into this world to open the eyes of the blind ; and of His death on the cross, that lost and guilty sinners, blind to their state and need, might have their eyes opened to know Him as their Saviour, and enjoy now, by faith, all the blessings of His finished work.

He soon began to come regularly to the Gospel preachings which were held at the time in the village, and where, night after night, the Gospel of the grace of God was fully and freely proclaimed, and his intent and eager expression, as he sat bending forward with both hands resting on his stick, told how in earnest he had become ; but when spoken to, all still seemed a blank, and he said but little.

Weeks passed thus, and when out one day I

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saw him coming along, feeling his way as usual with his stick. As soon as we met, he stood quite still, and said,—

“ I see now, *I see Jesus* in the glory, and I do not mind now being blind, and that I can see nothing down here!” The changed expression on his face told of something different and new; the sightless eyes looked upward, and the swelling tears told of a softened and satisfied soul. There was now the link with the living Saviour; the eye of faith was opened,—Jesus the object of faith was before him. He had simply believed the story of the grace of God. He knew Jesus as his Saviour,—the One who had died for him, and who bore his sins in His own body on the tree, and was now in the glory!

This was light, and light indeed, not to the eye of sense, but to the eye of faith, a light never to be lost, but to be seen and enjoyed through all the brightness of the eternal ages.

What an object for the eye to be opened on! What an exchange, from the darkness of earth to the light of heaven! From a life objectless and lonely, to know the Saviour and His love, and to live rejoicing in Him. Oh! may every one whose eyes read these words have them opened *to see Jesus*, and be turned from darkness

to light,—able through grace to say, “We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour.”

The question was once asked, “When you think of eternity, what do you see?”

Slowly and thoughtfully the answer came: “Nothing but darkness, darkness, darkness. What do *you* see?”

“Nothing but light, light, light! for I see Jesus.”

Eternity must either be spent in outer *darkness*, where “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” or in the joy and blessedness of the presence of God, where all is *light*. This world, with all its attractions, as well as its disappointments, will soon have run its course, and man’s history on it be closed for ever. God now, in the riches of His grace and love, is calling sinners out of it, and out of darkness into His marvellous light. Oh! listen to His voice, believe His Word, for your present blessing and happiness, and everlasting joy.

“Oh! the glory of the grace
 Shineth in the Saviour’s face.
 Telling sinners from above,
 God is light, and God is love.’

M. V.

An Officer's Story.

“ I T was in the autumn of 1881, in Afghanistan, during the war, I was struck down with a deadly fever, and reduced so low that the doctors one day gave me up. That very night I had a dream. I dreamed that I with many others were dead, and lay stretched in our coffins, all of which seemed to be moving, until each one was brought to a stand before a throne, upon which sat our Judge. Of course I knew my doom. I had always led an utterly careless, godless life—a life given up to pleasure. My Bible was never opened, and not even had formal prayers been offered at the throne of grace. Sunday was like any other day; and, in fact, I lived only for time. When I approached the throne my coffin came to a standstill, and I saw the figure of one, whom I knew had been praying for me for years, entreating the “Father” to have mercy upon me, and give me *one more chance*. The prayer was answered, and my coffin seemed to glide back.

“The following morning the doctor told me I was much better, and that they would send me down country as soon as possible. I have only

a partial recollection of the journey, as I was so ill that a doctor accompanied me the whole way, and I was carried on board at K——. I kept the remembrance of God's mercy, and made many good resolutions for the future. On arrival at B——, where my family were, I attended the ministry of T. G——, and from him learned many Gospel truths ; but I never took my stand as a Christian, nor gave up the world. Shortly after, by God's grace, I went to a Gospel temperance meeting, and I there felt a power in my heart never known before. The love of Jesus, His atonement, my own ingratitude, all came like a flood before me and overwhelmed my soul. On my return home that night, I knelt down and confessed my sins, and accepted Jesus as my Saviour. Since then, I can say, He has been my known Saviour, and through many trials and dangers He has brought me. His Holy Word has been my only guide through His Holy Spirit, and my prayer is that I may grow more and more in grace and the knowledge of Him, as each year passes."

The above little story reached me some three years ago from the pen of the writer of it; and I pass it on, in the prayerful hope that through it the Lord may touch the heart and conscience

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of many a reader of *Echoes of Mercy*. Is it not an “Echo of Mercy”? Surely it is God’s mercy—undeserved favour to a sinner; *saved* by grace, and *kept* by the power of God! Dear reader, are you *saved* by the grace of God, and *kept* by His Almighty power through faith? Remember, you can no more keep yourself, than you can save yourself. The God who saves, is the God who *keeps*.

“O Lamb of God, still keep me
Close to Thy piercèd side ;
'Tis only there in safety
And peace I can abide.
With foes and snares around me,
And lusts and fears within,
The grace that sought and found me
Alone can keep me clean.”

L.

“God laid my Sins on Jesus at
Calvary.”

A GIRL, about sixteen years of age, slowly dying of consumption, was visited by a home missionary. She lay in bed, and had in her hand a well-known hymn commencing with, “I lay my sins on Jesus,”

which she constantly quoted in reply to her visitor's remarks; but yet she had not settled peace.

At last the missionary said, "I see what is hindering you from the enjoyment of peace; It is that hymn."

She said, in astonishment, "That hymn preventing me being at peace with God!"

"Yes," said the missionary, "you say you lay your sins on Jesus; now, you cannot lay your sins on Jesus, but God laid your sins on Jesus at the cross; what you have to do now, is to believe it."

A happy smile at once passed over her countenance. "Mother," she cried, and her mother came upstairs. "Mother, what a mistake I have been making, in trying to lay my sins on Jesus. God laid my sins on Jesus at Calvary, and what I have to do now is to believe it."

She had peace from that moment.

Dear reader, is it so with you? Are you striving to make your peace with God, or are you resting by faith on the Word of God, which tells us, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord *hath* laid upon Him the iniquity of us

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all.” In the name of Christ is declared unto you the remission of sins, and “by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

May the Lord give you to know this peace, by resting in simple faith on His testimony to the finished work of His Son on the cross, so that you may be saved from a deathbed of despair, like the following :—

A fine young man lay on his bed in a hospital ward, where he had undergone two operations for the relief of his disease, but instead of the hoped-for recovery, death was rapidly approaching. He had been brought up in infidel principles by an infidel father, who stood by his bedside. He had heard the Gospel during his residence in hospital, but, though affected by it, he had never given any proof of having received it. The cold death drops stood on his trembling brow, whilst, in the agony of his soul, his gaze was directed straight upwards with intense earnestness, as though he would penetrate the darkness which intervened between him and his eternal fate, and learn beforehand the dread secrets of the prison-house into which he was about to enter. Then a wail of despair broke from his lips, and echoed through the ward in which he lay, that made the other inmates

turn away and hide their faces in their bed-clothes, as though the scene were too painful for them to witness, while his father said to me, "It makes my blood run cold to hear him."

He was removed to another room, but the same intensely anxious gaze continued, and the loud wailings of hopeless despair were repeated for some hours, until death closed the scene; a terrible scene, vividly foreshadowing that outer darkness, where there shall "be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," produced by the agony of being lost for ever, intensified by, and the recollection of, the once heard but despised Gospel.

But perhaps you may reply, "I am not an infidel, and I have a good hope." Then take care it is not a false hope, such as the one I will now tell you about.

A young woman, in the last stage of consumption, came to consult me one morning, and seeing the seriousness of her condition, after I had rendered her the necessary professional attention, I said to her, "I trust you have a good hope for the future?" She replied confidently, "Oh yes, I have a good hope." Upon another occasion when she called, desiring to know what foundation she had for such a "hope," I asked her, "When were you converted." "Converted!"

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she replied ; “ I never was converted ; I never needed to be converted ; I was baptized ; I went to Sunday school ; I was confirmed, and I have lived a good life.”

And so she died, not hopeless and wailing in despair, like the other, but equally lost, we fear, deceived by Satan, trusting to religious ordinances and privileges, and her own good deeds and feelings, instead of in Christ and His precious blood.

In what respect does such a hope make its poor deceived possessor better off than the poor undeceived infidel with his despair ? It is not that one is better or worse than the other, but both are alike Christless.

May the Lord, dear reader, save you from such a *false* “ good hope,” and give you to trust in the precious blood of Christ alone for pardon, peace, and acceptance with God now, enabling *you* to say in simple faith, “ God laid my sins on Jesus at Calvary,” and by-and-by to mingle with others your notes of praise to the Lamb slain once : “ Who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in His own blood, and makes us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

W. O

Christ is Coming!

SINNER, Christ is coming! "Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him." "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?"

He may come *at any moment!* Having made purgation for sin, He is now on His Father's throne, and is saying to you, "I am the way, . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Yet it is He who gave the warning, "BE YE ALSO READY; for in such an hour *as ye think not* the Son of man cometh;" and we are told that "THE LORD HIMSELF shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Oh what a moment will that be for redeemed sinners! what a shout of victory will ring from that glorious throng! What adoring gratitude and boundless joy will fill every heart, as

beholding the face of their beloved Redeemer, they listen to His voice of welcome, tenderness, and love! "The ungodly and sinner" will not appear in that happy company. Only those who are cleansed from all sin by the precious blood of Jesus will compose that assembly on the bright resurrection morning,—“the dead in Christ, . . . then we which are alive and remain.”

“THEY THAT WERE READY went in.” But if, at the time of that momentous event, you are still “in your sins,” you will be

“Left behind for judgment, *like chaff* upon the floor,
Because you would not enter at mercy's open door.”

Like the five foolish virgins in Matt. xxv., you will pray, “Lord, Lord, open unto us,” only to hear from within the closed door the reply, “I KNOW NOT WHENCE YOU ARE.”

Surely “*the ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away* ;” they “shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.” “The way of transgressors is hard.” “The way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Suddenly! “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye!*” the Lord will come to raise His dead saints and change His living ones (1 Cor. xv.), and to take them all away from this evil world,

which is rapidly ripening for judgment. "He will gather the wheat into His garner," but for those "who believed not the truth that they might be saved" the day of salvation will be over for ever. Oh, think of it! alive in the body, the day of mercy past, and nothing ahead but a *sure* and *certain* prospect of "eternal judgment"! Terrible indeed will be the storm which shall sweep away the "refuge of lies," for "*when* they shall say peace and safety, *then* sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." "*He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*"

Oh, waste no time in vain excuses or regrets, for there is none to lose; but haste, *this very* moment, and "escape for thy life"! "Look not behind thee!" Make no delay! Before the Lord Jesus leaves His Father's throne! before the Master of the house rise and shut to the door! before they that are ready go in to the supper, and the door be shut! come, oh, come **AT ONCE**, *as a lost sinner to the Saviour!* Accept, with all your heart, that faithful saying, which is worthy of *all* acceptance, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Rest your soul on His word, who says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that *heareth* My word, and

believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH EVER-LASTING LIFE, . . . *shall not* come into judgment, but *is passed* from death unto life."

N. L. N.

On Seeking Christ.

WE tell people sometimes to seek Christ, and rightly so in one sense ; it is quite true that "he that seeketh findeth," but Jesus did not say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," until He had first come Himself to "seek and to save."

Because the sinner could not go to heaven to seek Christ, Christ came to earth to seek the sinner. He did not say to the poor leper, "Come up to heaven, and be thou clean," but He came down to the leper in all his need to make him clean. Had any other laid his hand upon the leper he would have become unclean. Christ alone could touch the power of evil and have no contamination.

"Come unto Me." Rest is not to be found here, any more than it was by Noah's dove amidst the deluge. I have tried the world all through, and it is a sea of evil without a shore. J. N. D.

A Good Motto for every Workman.

IT was my privilege some few years ago to be present at an interview between an aged and honoured servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and an ardent evangelist from America who was then earnestly and successfully preaching the Gospel in Scotland. For the sake of all our fellow-labourers in the great harvest-field, who may chance to read these lines, I would recall the closing sentences of that interesting hour.

Just before taking leave of this aged saint of God, and after expressing the pleasure he had experienced in making his acquaintance, a request was made by the evangelist in somewhat like the following words:—"We have met, sir, for the first time, and possibly for the last. You have been labouring in the vineyard for very many years, and are nearing the end of your pilgrimage and service. You have had far greater experience than I have, who am but starting in the work. You are leaving the field, and I am entering it,—may I ask you to give me *a motto* that may be helpful to me in my work,

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should the Lord see fit to prolong my time of service here?"

A motto! Some might have upbraided him for his low spirituality in desiring a motto from man, when he already possessed the Word of God. But never shall I forget the gracious and heartfelt answer that came from the old man's lips, nor the unction and power with which the words were uttered:—"First, seek to produce in the consciences of all your hearers a deep sense of, and hatred for, sin; and then, secondly, when they have believed the Gospel, seek to produce in the hearts of all who believe a real and true love for the Person of their Saviour."

May all who, in any measure, have been allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, deeply ponder these weighty words.

A thorough conscience-work is deeply needed in these days of levity and indifference. Never let us diminish the gravity of sin in our efforts to make the Gospel simple; let us ever insist upon the necessity of deep and real repentance towards God. And then let us ever cultivate, both in ourselves as well as in every young convert, a sincere affection for the Person of Christ, an affection that manifests itself in a ready and unconstrained obedience. "If ye love Me, keep

My commandments." Doing His will, no matter what it costs, is the PROOF of our affection for Him, even as love to His Person is the motive-power and spring of all obedience. "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

The Lord refuses the professed allegiance of a disobedient heart.

A. H. B.

Messages from God.

Anxious Sinner! Troubled Soul! Here is a message from the heart of God for you, and which He Himself speaks with His own lips. Turn your eye to Him, and with the ear of faith listen to Him. He has seen your tears. He has heard your groans and sighs. He knows all that is passing and has passed in your heart. He has numbered all your sins: Christ has suffered for them on the Cross, and He announces to you, that which will stand written on the page of eternity, when even heaven and earth have passed away into eternal oblivion: "THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN THEE. . . . THY FAITH HATH SAVED THEE: GO IN PEACE."

C. W.

The Ground of Rest; or, "He loved me all the time, and I never know'd it."

THERE is nothing more wonderful, and yet at the same time more simple, than the true ground of rest. Man knows himself to be a sinner, and when troubled about his sins, he makes up his mind to do better. He tries, and may be he tries persistently, but again and again he fails, and every failure throws him back upon himself; and though it may urge him to still further effort, yet he is ever more and more conscious of the hopelessness of success, and he gradually sinks back into despair and misery. We are speaking of course, of one who is in earnest, and who, with conscience aroused, really seeks what is right in the sight of God—one who has a sense of God, and of his own responsibility towards Him, and who really desires, in some measure at least, to answer to His demands. In his own soul and conscience he knows them to be right, and thus he makes efforts to amend his ways, in hope of meeting those demands in some degree at least.

An instance of this came before us very strik-

ingly some time since. One, in whose company we were travelling, appeared greatly depressed, and finally, after trying in vain to control himself, the tears ran down his face. We spoke to him, and asked him what was the matter.

He replied, "I do try—I tries again and again, but it ain't no use."

"No use—what?" we asked.

"Why, I don't get no better; I just gets worse and worse the more I tries."

"Well," we said, "had you not better give up trying?"

"Oh! no," he said, "that'll never do; I should be gone altogether then, if I gave up like that. I must try, no matter how much I fails." Then turning to us he said, "You seems happy enough; I suppose you're always trying, and not failing as I be. Ain't that what makes you so happy?"

"No, indeed, it is not."

"What is it then?" he asked.

"Why, I know God loves me, in spite of everything in me and about me. He loves me, and I know it," we replied.

"Ah," he said, "no one can know that for certain. I never could, I'm too bad for that. You don't know all I've done, and how bad I be.

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Are you going to heaven when you die, d'ye think?"

"Yes, most assuredly, thank God, in His grace and love."

"But what does God love you for?" he asked. "You must have done something good, different to most of us, for God to love ye, and for you to be so sure."

"Listen to His word," we said, and opening the gospel of Luke at chapter xv., we read it slowly to him. He became silent and thoughtful. We read it over to him four times, and then spoke a few words about the way God has proved His love in giving His Son to die for sinners—the vilest and most hell-deserving of sinners. We showed him that Jesus is the Shepherd, who seeks "until He finds" the lost sheep; that the lost sheep does not seek the Shepherd; the poor sheep is utterly, hopelessly, helplessly lost, and that all depends upon the energy and perseverance of the One who seeks it, the blessed Lord Jesus Himself, the Shepherd who seeks "until He finds" what He seeks.

At length he said, "Don't 'ee say no more; let me think about it a bit," and he turned his back towards us. Thus we travelled for nearly an hour. Suddenly he turned round, his coun-

tenance altogether changed, although tears poured down his cheeks, and said, with a look one can never forget, "And He loved me all the time, and I never know'd it!" The light of Divine, supreme love, had broken in upon his soul, and he found rest—rest from his own fruitless efforts, in the finished work of Him who had done all for him.

"Ah! there ain't none like He! Why, He's better than all else beside," he exclaimed.

After some little time, he said, "But how about my not sinning again? I'm sure to, the first chance. I must make up my mind not to, I s'pose; but I've done that scores of times, and it warn't a bit o' good."

"Well," we said, "suppose you try another way now. You have always failed to keep yourself hitherto, let Him keep you. He can and He will. He died for you, and He lives to keep you. You are never out of His thoughts for a moment, not even when you are not thinking about Him. See where He puts the sheep, 'on His shoulders, rejoicing.' It is the Shepherd who rejoices, not the sheep. The joy is all on His side; no doubt the sheep was glad to be found, but all the chapter tells us of is the joy of the Shepherd who found His sheep, the joy of the

woman who found her lost piece of silver, and the joy of the father who welcomed back the prodigal in his rags, and who clothed him in the best robe."

He drank all in with avidity, and went on his way rejoicing.

And now, dear reader, let me ask, How is it with you? Are you resting in the love of Him who died for sinners, who laid down His life for the lost and ruined, helpless, vile, hell-deserving sinners? His own sweet words of love, when here as Man, the despised, rejected Man, were, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," and the apostle Paul tells us, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "God commends His own love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v.).

The time is short, you cannot count upon a single day before you, nay, not upon a single hour. His word is, "*Now* is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." But perhaps, alas! you do not think about your sins, or trouble about yourself at all; still you will have to stand before Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and whose word says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after that* the judgment." Let not Satan beguile you into

further carelessness and indifference. Think of the love, the infinite love, of Jesus, the Holy blessed One, who came down from that glory on high to die for such as you! Can you scorn that love? Can you do without it? Ah! let conscience speak—you know you cannot. The bitterest pang in that eternal torment, into which you will fall if you die in your sins, will be the sense of the love you have heard of, and read of, but to which you have been indifferent, and which you have really despised. The Lord grant you may not learn this too late. Again we repeat those blessed words, "*Now* is the accepted time, behold *now* is the day of salvation." Terrible words, indeed, for you if you let the *now* slip by, and pass on into the TOO LATE.

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The Deep Craving of a Renewed Soul.

IN the midst of all the exercises of heart which belong to a renewed soul in the midst of its difficulties here below, there is a point which is the centre of all, a need to which an answer is craved alike by the

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heart and conscience,—*its relationship to God when it thinks of its sin before Him*. It has need of confidence for trials, of deliverance and help. It is cheered by promises, and bowed in heart and will as to the ways of God. *But it needs reconciliation with Himself above all, the unclouded light of His countenance*; as regards its own state, *forgiveness and the absence of guilt*. The entire removal of all guilt before God, and His complete forgiveness, is beautifully connected here (in Psalm xxxii.) with purifying the heart and inner man; the taking out guilt, and this in the confession of actual sins. But it begins, as it must, with God, and finds its satisfaction in *His thoughts* towards it. And this is right. Thus only can the heart be really purified, and sin have its true character, and God His right place, without which nothing is right.

Yet it is the *conscious state of forgiveness which first affects the soul* after conviction and distress for sin *has* been wrought, and the soul brought to confession. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven." He has sinned against God, transgressed; it is all perfectly forgiven. But it was sin before God and evil,—*a thing itself hateful in God's sight and in the*

soul's. It is expiated, covered ; propitiation has been made. The present state is then put absolutely. Jehovah imputed no iniquity to it ; and now the whole heart is open before God. There is no *guile* in it. Why should there be, when all is open with God, all cleared, and sin gone out of *His sight* ?

And, oh ! what a blessing it is to have the perfect light of God on an unsullied soul, not an innocent one. That is a far less thing, and, indeed, the inshining of perfect light would be inapplicable then ; but with the knowledge of good and evil, and knowing what light is (in contrast with darkness), and to have it shining upon one as white as snow, is infinitely blessed. How sweet it is “to be in the sunshine of God’s favour toward us !” The undeservedness of the favour, though it is not the brightest joy, gives great deepness to it, because it is God who forgives ; for so it must be in forgiveness when the soul is restored to Him. Then there is the consciousness of *sin being out of God’s sight*. This is very great blessing indeed, and the consciousness of it most sweet—the thought that not one sin appears in the sight of God. Hence there is no cloud, nothing to hide.

J. N. D.

Three Classes of Persons.

THREE classes of people are to be found in the latter part of Hebrews xii. The *indifferent* (vers. 16, 17); *lawkeepers* (vers. 18-21), and the *refusers* (ver. 25).

The indifferent are those who, like Esau, think any little bit of earthly gain or pleasure of the greatest importance, and the things upon which *God* sets the highest value are lightly esteemed by them. The natural man does not enjoy a conversation into which the name of Christ is brought; he would rather talk of his pleasures, his business, or even his troubles, than of anything connected with God and God's future *for* man. I overheard a young girl say to her companions a short time ago: "Oh yes, of course I should like to go to heaven by-and-by when I die, but I need not think about that yet; I want to enjoy living here first." But oh, remember a day will come when all indifference must have an end. Esau sought his lost blessing "*carefully* with tears"; no indifference then, but it was too late. The rich man of Luke xvi. had been indifferent to all but his own ease and comfort; but for him also the time came when

he was "tormented in this flame," and could "cry" and "pray" for "mercy," and for only a drop of water. "Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god" (Psa. xvi. 4). God is not indifferent to you. He has proved His love in sending His own Son down here to die, so that you might never reach that place of "torment." "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us" (Eph. ii. 4).

"We must employ all our efforts to keep God's holy law," said a man who came under the head of the second class of people mentioned here. Has it ever been found possible? No, "for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The law required obedience, and was a ministry of condemnation to those under it. The very mount whence it was given to Moses, would have caused death to whoever touched it. Sinful man (whose very *righteousnesses* are but filthy rags in God's sight, Isa. lxiv. 6) cannot keep it. "They that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more," was the effect of Mount Sinai. But God, in His infinite grace, came in when man had failed in his responsibility, and He now deals with us on the ground of our having no merit in ourselves, but

all coming to us in free *grace* from the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye are not under the law, but under *grace*" (Rom. vi. 14).

It is sad, when we have just spoken of God's grace, to think that there should be any who *refuse* it, and Him who sets it forth (ver. 25). Not long ago, a young man and his sister lay apparently dying in a hospital. The girl had believed on Him that justifieth the ungodly, and was in perfect peace and quietness throughout her long illness. She had often, since her conversion, spoken to her brother about his soul, but he loved the ways of sin, and only mocked at her, refusing to hear of the Lord Jesus. But the day came when, stricken down with typhoid fever, they were both carried to the hospital. There in a ward by himself, lay the young man, with the nurses gathered in horror around him, as he shrieked "Too late—too late—no hope," or sought to leap from the grasp of demons that were, he said, dragging him down into hell. "Much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish" (Acts xiii. 41).

May you be found amongst "them that believe to the saving of the soul."

L. C. W.

“A Time to Die.”

I MET a very aged-looking man in the village street one day, well dressed and of respectable appearance. His frame looked almost shrunk up from age; his face was small, withered, and wrinkled; his eyes dull; and his steps feeble and tottering.

He answered to the description which God has given us of age in Ecclesiastes xii., with its spent and enfeebled powers, where all that marks man in his strength, vigour, and natural force is broken up and brought low; and “Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity,” is the summing up and the record of what he is.

We seemed both naturally to stop as we met, and after a few remarks had passed, I said to him,—

“I don’t think I have seen you before; you seem to be very old, are you not?”

He told me his name and where he lived, and then said, “I am ninety-five.”

I had never before seen one so old, and was almost hushed in the thought of so great an age,

for "the multitude of years should teach wisdom." The thoughts of what so long a life must have included, and of what had taken place during it, passed rapidly through my mind,—above all, What had it been for God?

"Do you know God?" I inquired.

Tears came into the weary-looking eyes, and he answered that he had been for most of his life in a far-off land, where, I inferred, God had not been much thought about, and that he had at last returned to his native village.

"And you have lived nearly a century without God? Oh, how sad!"

I felt deeply for the aged man, and said further, "And will you live for ever without Him, who loved poor sinners so much that He sent His Son to die for them? He wants them to know Him, to trust Him, and He wishes them to be saved. He has been very patient with you; He has spared you till now through these long years, that you may still turn to Him. It is not too late."

I talked to him thus, and the old man wept, partly from feebleness, and because the mention of such things affected him. He knew that he was without God, and that he had spent a life of nearly a hundred years without Him. I told

him there was preaching in the schoolhouse, and asked him to come and hear God's message to him of mercy and salvation, through the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

Glad indeed I was to see him there at the next preaching, and sitting near the front, where I knew he would hear well, the voice of the preacher being distinct and loud. Earnestly he had been prayed for, and we looked for blessing to the old man. Yea! and God vouchsafed it; and in the last days of his long life, God, whom he had neglected and left unsought, met him in grace and in blessing; and, as before he had wept at the thought of having left Him out, "and gone *his own way*," amongst reckless men in a godless land, now he wept at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. He was penitent and subdued, and filled with the sense of the love and goodness of God, who had been *for him*, giving and forgiving, though he had turned his back upon Him. Now his delight was to listen to His precious Word that he might learn more of Him, and to attend the preachings, to which he had at last to be led, as his eyesight was rapidly failing.

One could look at the hoary head now, its way of unrighteousness past for ever,—“There is

none righteous, no not one,"—and see it as God now saw it, and think His own blessed thoughts about it. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in *the way of righteousness.*"

Soon he was to be with his Saviour above; a few more months, and the silver cord was loosed. He was happy to the last, and in his ninety-seventh year he passed from earth to heaven to join the ransomed throng around the throne of God.

Dear aged ones, we well know how few reach such an age, and you are very soon to pass from time to eternity. The tale of our years is soon told, and I would remind you of what God says of this span :—"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we flee away." I would ask you, Do *you* know God? Has your life of many years been spent with Him, or without Him? Oh! remember this, your days have well-nigh run their course, and to-morrow may never come to you. Every day you live is a notch marked in the calendar of your life, and brings the moment very near when you *must* stand before God. Are you prepared to meet Him, or is all uncertain to you? Let

me plead with you to be in earnest about your soul—your immortal soul. Let nothing hinder this. Whether you are religious or irreligious, good or bad, as men speak; however your life may have been spent, or whatever your former thoughts may be, turn to God *now*, and look to *Jesus alone* for salvation.

“I am trying to do my best,” was the reply I received from an old man not long ago, when speaking to him of a free salvation through the blood of Christ. These are words so often heard—“I am trying to do *my best*,” and they mean simply this,—some *merit* of our own as a ground of acceptance with God. It is abomination in His sight. Can “*the best*” of a sinful worm weigh in the balance with the sacrifice of Christ, which in its completeness is ever before the eye of God? “Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord.” There is no standing-ground before Him for any but that of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Trying to do “my best” leaves this entirely aside—*leaves Christ out*, and will end in a Christless grave and a Christless eternity.

“Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

“It is the blood that makes atonement for the

soul." It is the blood of Christ alone which cleanseth from all sin.

Thank God, you are not too old to be saved, but you *are* too old to delay for another moment ; for "thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," or how soon "man may go to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

We live in a world of death, and man has no power in the day of death ; all his boasted independence ends there. But there is another, and a brighter world, where death can never enter. The Lord Jesus has triumphed over death and the grave, and all those who believe in Him will be with Him in that glorious home for ever.

"What must I do to be saved?" do you ask?

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"All things are ready—come,
To-morrow may not be ;
O sinner, come ! the Saviour waits
This hour to welcome thee."

M. V.

“Lost! Lost! Lost!”

ONE very dark, cold, winter's night, F. W. was leaving the town of Y——, to go to his little home in a distant village, several miles away. Instead of going by the main road, he thought he would take a short cut across the marshes, as he had often done before,—but, alas! poor man, never to take it again.

A dreadful fog came on, and he soon got so bewildered that he lost the footpath, and you can imagine what a distressed state he got into, when he could not find it again; and there, on those dark, bitter cold, lonely marshes, he stood and shouted, “LOST! LOST! LOST!” hoping doubtless some one would hear him in the distant village, and come to his assistance.

Some one did hear him; a man was awoke by his wife telling him that some one was shouting in the distance, “*Lost! Lost! Lost!*” The man got up, but found it was too foggy and dark to venture across the marshes; he was afraid doubtless that he would be lost too,—so the poor

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lost man was left there to perish. His frozen body was picked up the next day,—he had passed from time into eternity.

Dear reader, are you ready to meet God should you be called to pass through death suddenly? Do you know what it is to feel yourself a poor, lost, guilty sinner? If so, I have good news for you,—Christ Jesus, “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke xix. 10).

Unlike the man afraid to venture out after the one that was perishing, the blessed Lord Jesus has come down from the highest heights of glory, into this cold, dark, sin-stricken world. He has gone down to Calvary’s depths of woe for you, poor sinner. You have only to believe on Him. “He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter iii. 9). He, the Lord of life and glory, is watching you reading these pages, watching to see if you will heed this, another warning, and accept this invitation to come to Him, and even while you read this He says, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst,” adding, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out,” and “Verily, verily, I say unto

you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 35, 37, 47).

Be careful, dear reader, how you treat this message; it may be the last one you may ever have. Time is short, and eternity is drawing near. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isa. lv. 6). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

A. E. J.



"He'd none to mak'."



AN old man, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, was engaged one day at the railway station at M—, in his master's service. A short time before, one of his sons, whom he believed to be a Christian, had been taken to the Lord; and now a friend, a Methodist preacher, came to condole with him upon his loss, saying, amongst other things, it was all well if he had made his peace with God.

My old friend replied in his homely speech, "He'd none to mak'."

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“What?” said the preacher.

“He'd none to mak'.”

“What do you say?” again asked the preacher.

“He'd none to mak',” was still the reply.

The question was repeated in various ways, but always received the same answer, “He'd none to mak',” until the preacher went away. But my friend observed where he went, and as soon as he was at liberty, followed him, and renewed the conversation, by asking, “What were you saying about my son?”

“Oh!” said the preacher, “I said it was all well, if he had made his peace with God.”

“And I say,” said the old man, “he'd none to mak'. What did Jesus Christ say upon the cross? ‘It is finished.’”

“Ah!” said the preacher, “you are right; he had none to make.”

Dear reader, have you learned this precious truth, “He (that is, Christ) has made peace by the blood of His cross;” when He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, when the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed; or are you striving in a useless effort to make your own peace with God?

W. D.

God Speaking.

IT was once remarked, by one who had been a great observer of human nature, that the man who could *listen* well would be a more general favourite than he who could speak well. It shows deference to others to hear with attention what they have to say, and we do not fail to claim it at the hands of our inferiors in age or position. But oh! marvel of marvels, God, the creator of the heavens and of the earth, speaks, and man heeds it not! He speaks in His Word; He speaks by His Spirit; He speaks through providential dealings; but the ear is deaf, the heart is closed, to the words of His love and mercy!

But stay! there is one willing to listen, for he says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (Psa. lxxxv. 8). And what a sweet message falls upon his attentive ear! A message most welcome to any poor heart who has learned how sin has alienated it from a holy God:—"He will speak peace."

Reader, have *you* peace? Do you feel that you would give anything you have in the world to obtain it? The Son of God has *made*

peace with God for you at the cost of His own life. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). "*He is our peace*" (Eph. ii. 14). He suffered the just penalty due for sin in His own body on the cross; and having finished the work which glorified God, and having opened the way of approach to Him, He comes forth in resurrection, speaking peace to every believing soul (John xx. 19).

The Word of God tells us, in Romans v. 1, *how* we get this peace, simply by believing. "Being justified by *faith*, we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." The absence of peace results from our uncertainty as to how we stand with God. We know we must meet Him sooner or later; we long to know how we can meet His holy claims, how we can turn away His wrath against rebellious and guilty creatures. God meets the repentant soul in grace with the assurance of peace, perfect peace. There is but to accept the terms He proposes. He is ready to pardon, and is the Justifier of all who believe that Jesus died for them. He preaches peace by Jesus Christ; as Peter says, "Preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts x. 36).

Oh, wondrous grace! would you add to your already grievous burden of sin the blackest sin

of all, that of refusing to listen to this message of peace? Will you refuse to accept Christ as *your* peace? If in simple faith, laying aside all your thoughts and questionings, you reply, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," He will speak peace to *you*, and will fill you with joy and peace in believing; and His own peace, "which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus." E. H.

A Warning.

ONE of our ocean steamships was crossing the Atlantic in a gale, which increased in violence to the danger of the ship. At the height of the storm, some twenty passengers were assembled in the saloon, engaged in a fashionable game of cards; shouts of laughter and merry jokes accompanied it, while our deck officers and men were straining every nerve to ensure the safety of those who were trifling away the hours which might have proved their last. As the wind slightly changed, or the ship her course, the waves began to break broadside on with the noise of

heavy guns. "Come in," answered the card-players, adding, "which of us is Jonah?"

"Come in!" Ah! thought some who sat apart feeling the peril, had the sea really come in, what would your fate, gay speakers, have been! It was the laughter of fools, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and "God was not in all their thoughts."

In Noah's day, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and *knew not*, until the flood came and took them all away (Matt. xxiv.).

The night before Sodom, with all its inhabitants, was overthrown, the men of the city were amusing themselves in sin (Gen. xix.).

Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine together, when a great wind smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon them and killed them (Job i.).

Belshazzar and his lords were carousing in Babylon, when in the *same hour* God's hand wrote their doom, which was executed that night (Dan. v.).

The judgment of great Babylon of the future will come in *one hour*, when nations are drinking her wine and kings of the earth are living deliciously, and merchants waxing rich through her (Rev. xviii.).

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then *sudden destruction* cometh upon them, *and they shall not escape*” (1 Thess. v. 3).

Worldling! be warned in time. What is the harm! do you say? and better to be merry than to mope! do you reply? Could Damocles be merry when he saw the sword suspended over him? If you knew that death had to be encountered in one hour, would you play cards? If you were forced to pass through a cholera-stricken town, would you make light of it? Test yourself thus: if you *believed* that judgment were coming on this world *to-day*, would you join in its laughter? Nay, you would rather enter into your chamber, shut your door, and seek mercy where alone it can be found. What is the cry that often involuntarily escapes the lips of men in moments of sudden peril? “God have mercy on me,” many a one has been heard to exclaim, showing that man has a conscience and knows that he cannot face God in his sins. Could *you*? “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isa. lv. 6, 7).

H. L. H.

“ Return.”

“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding. If thou wilt return, . . . saith the Lord, return unto Me.”—JER. iii. 22.

“The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, . . . and went out and wept bitterly.”—LUKE xxii.

“Led by the Spirit of God.”—ROM. viii. 14.

“ RETURN! Return!” beloved,
 Thy Father calls to thee;
 His voice is sadly sounding
 Afar o’er land and sea.

The world’s entrancing music
 May echo all around;
 But ears which *once have heard it*
 Will know the blessed sound!

“Return! Return!” beloved,
 The Saviour calls to thee;
 And where thy footsteps wander
 He follows patiently.
 His heart is yearning—yearning
 To tell thee out His love;
 To let you know its sweetness
 Down here, as up above.

“Return! Return!” beloved,
 The Spirit calls to thee ;
 Amid earth’s many voices
 He speaks untiringly.
 The world may speak of beauty,
 Of pleasure, and of love ;
 May dazzle with its brilliance,—
 He whispers, “Look above!”

“Return ! Return !” beloved,
 Its mirth will soon be o’er,
 And love but breaks its heart upon
 The fairest earthly shore.
 And still, with wistful yearning,
 Across the jasper sea
 The voice of God is calling,
 “Return ! Return ! to Me.”

A. S. M.



HOW can I know God’s heart? Is it by looking to my own heart? No, but by learning it in the gift of His Son. The God we have to say to is this God who has given His Son for sinners ; and if we do not know this, we do not know Him at all. “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?”

J. N. D.

“OH ! FOR SOME FOUNDATION.”

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“Oh ! for some foundation.”

“ I HAVE nothing to expect, sir, but condemnation ! Nothing to expect but condemnation ! ”

The speaker spoke with difficulty. He was a large man of massive features, just stricken down in death. His nurse sought, as quietly as possible, to alleviate his sufferings, which were very great.

“ Oh, don't talk of pain ! ” he cried bitterly ; “ it is the mind, woman, the mind ! ”

Slowly and deliberately he said :—

“ I knew it at the time—every time. I knew it. I knew that a penalty must follow sin. Yet I have done wrong, knowing that it was wrong ; first with a few qualms, then brushing aside conscience, and at last with the coolness of a fiend. Sir, not in one minute of my life have I lived for heaven, for God, for Christ ; no, not one minute.”

“ But Christ died for the *ungodly* and for *sinner*s,” was whispered in his ear.

“ Oh, yes, Christ died for sinners ; I know that. My intellect is clear, sir ; clearer than ever before, I tell you.” His voice became shrill and concentrated. “ I can see almost into eternity ;

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I can feel that unless Christ Himself is believed on, His death can do me no good."

Soon after, he said, "I have been following up the natural laws, and see an affinity between them and the great law of God's moral universe. Heaven is for the holy and believing; without, all are dogs and whoremongers. There is a distinction; it is all right, all right. God is just and holy."

After eleven o'clock, roused by the striking of the clock, he looked around. He caught the eye of his nurse, and of his Christian friend.

"It is awfully dark here," he whispered; "my feet stand on the slippery edge of a great gulf! OH, FOR SOME FOUNDATION!"

He stretched out his hand, as if feeling for a way.

"Christ," gently whispered his friend.

"Not for me!" he moaned, and pen cannot describe the immeasurable woe in that awful answer.

Can any one read this thrilling incident, and not be moved to the deepest depths of his moral being? Can a true believer in the Lord Jesus read it, and not with adoration, heartfelt and solemn, bless God that *his* feet stand firm upon the "Rock of Ages"? Can any mere *professor*

of Christianity read it, and not tremble, as his conscience whispers to him that his feet are but resting upon the quicksands of time, through which at any moment he may sink into eternity to meet an unknown God, and to stand before the judgment-seat with his sins all unforgiven? Can any sceptic read it, and not, in spite of himself, find his heart quail before the stupendous and awful realities of an eternity, for which, even with one true thought, he is unprepared, utterly without foundation of any kind—a wild, unreasoning “leap in the dark”?

The scaffoldings of human wisdom, whether religious or atheistic, are as airy nothings when the presence of God and of eternity are brought to bear upon them. The foundations of time, all secure and strong as they seem, while the pulse of life beats full and steady, avail nought in the dread hour of death. The frown of “the king of terrors,” well named for an unbelieving soul, abashes all false confidences then. When the dark billows of death, with their deepening and resistless tides, surge in upon the struggling soul, vainly does it endeavour to keep its foothold upon the shores of time. Vain is the strength of man, or the help of man, in that hour, *one foundation* alone stands firm then:

“ Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST ” (1 Cor. iii. 11).

The soul that has built on this foundation stands firm amid the crash of created things, and in the dissolution of soul and body. With peculiar force at such a moment does the WORD of the living and eternal God, “ still and small,” sound its comforting and assuring utterances in the believer’s ear, taking away all doubt and uncertainty.

Satan may do his utmost to harass and distress, speaking of sin, and judgment to come : “ The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin,” silences every such suggestion. The flood may rise, and the storm beat ever so vehemently upon the house, but founded upon the rock, it cannot be shaken, and the heart reposes in peaceful joy upon the word of Him who has said, “ Behold, I lay in Zion for a *foundation* a stone, a tried stone, a precious stone, A SURE FOUNDATION, and he that *believeth* on Him shall not be confounded.”

But He, who gives this solid ground for the foot of faith to rest upon, declares solemnly, as to all other foundations, “ I will lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet ; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,

and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place" (Isa. xxviii.).

Oh ! Christless soul, be warned ere it be too late. Turn now to Jesus, lest *thy* death-bed utterances be but the despairing cry, "Oh ! for some foundation." Lest after living, long knowing of, but rejecting Christ, you, too, may have to say, when He is presented to you at your *last* hour, "Not for me."

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass," said Jesus to His own ; and to those who believe on Him He still repeats, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life."

Yes, though "it is appointed unto men once to DIE, but after this the JUDGMENT," "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

God has anticipated for the believer the judgment day as to sin. Christ has been into that judgment, and has borne the wrath of God for all that are His. They have "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins ;" they are far removed from all danger and ruin ;

and are now in a risen Christ, the other side of death and judgment. They can peacefully exclaim, with the apostle, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and amid the storms of life, or in the hour of death, can sing:—

“ My hope is built on nothing less,
 Than Jesus Christ, God’s righteousness ;
 I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
 But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.
 On CHRIST, the solid Rock I stand :
 All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness seems to veil His face,
 I rest on His unchanging grace ;
 In every high and stormy gale,
 My anchor holds within the veil.
 On CHRIST, the solid Rock I stand,
 All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, His covenant, and blood,
 Support me in the ’whelming flood ;
 When all around on earth gives way,
 He then is all my hope and stay.
 On CHRIST, the solid Rock I stand,
 All other ground is sinking sand.”

C. W.

"Confess with thy Mouth."

ROMANS x. 9.

"**I**F I *were* saved I should never say so! I don't believe in so much talk! My aunt is always talking about religion, but she has a dreadful temper! And look at Mr —, he reads the newspaper when he ought to be attending to his customers, though he does think himself such a saint!"

These defiant words came from the lips of a young girl in answer to my pleading with her to make *sure* of salvation before it was *too late*. For the hectic flush on her cheek, and the constant cough, told plainly enough that death had marked her for his own.

Poor child, my heart yearned over her; but how she hated to be spoken to about her sinful heart or her loving Saviour. She was *so good* in her own eyes, or rather she tried to think she was, for, with all her apparent self-righteousness, it was very evident she was ill at ease. *Everybody* was wrong but herself! *She* had always attended church, she said; had been a communicant for years. Her mistress had valued her

much, and put perfect confidence in her. *She* was not a *sinner* like other people!

I saw her often, and tried to win her by little kindnesses to listen to the Word of God; but my visits were not welcome. She would not have the *truth* that showed her what she was, or the *grace* that would have saved her.

At this time it was needful for me to leave home for three weeks. I took leave of her, not knowing if I should see her again alive.

On my return I hastened to the house, and found she was worse, and was now confined to her bed. Her aunt, who opened the door to me, said, "She will be pleased to see you, miss." This sounded strange; she had never said so before.

I went upstairs, and as soon as I entered the room, she raised herself up from her pillow, and stretching out her arms to me, said, "Oh! I am so glad you are come. I want to tell you *I am saved!*"

"*Saved*, Sarah! why, you told me you would never say so."

"Ah! I didn't know anything about it then. But isn't it *wonderful* that Jesus should save such a *wicked sinner* as me?"

"Tell me how it all happened, Sarah."

"CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH."

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"Well, I have been very unhappy for a long time, only I would not tell you, and one Sunday, while you were away, I read a sermon. It was nothing new. I had heard the same thing many times before, but this time it flashed across me that I was hardening my heart against *God*, and that I should be lost. I woke up as from a dream to find I was going down to hell. I saw myself, as I really was, a *black, wicked sinner*. My false peace was gone; I was in despair. But God, who is rich in mercy, showed me that Jesus had died for *me*, and had 'borne my sins in His own body on the tree.' It broke my heart."

"Shall we thank Him together for His goodness to you?" I said.

"Oh! yes, do."

And kneeling by her bedside, we poured out praise and thanksgiving from full hearts. As I ceased, she broke out afresh, and with true spiritual yearning she pleaded for others, who, like herself once, were dark and hard, and cried to God that the one who had brought the message of peace and pardon to her soul, might take it to many more, and that it might turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

Dear reader, mark the change! Truly, "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

One can only say, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Psa. cxviii. 23).

Now let me tell you how the new life in this young girl showed itself in actions as well as in words.

The next time I saw her, she said, "There is one thing that troubles me. I have told the Lord about it, and He has forgiven me; but I cannot forgive myself."

"What is it?" I said.

"You know what a good mistress I had, and how she trusted me? Well, *I deceived her*. Oh! *I was a wicked girl*. Once I broke a favourite jug, and buried it, and when she asked me, I said I knew nothing about it. And she believed me; she never doubted my word. I cannot rest till I have told her. Do you think she would forgive me?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, Sarah; I am sure she would. Shall I write and ask her to come and see you?"

"If you would be so kind, I should be so thankful."

And I did, and I need not say how freely that forgiveness was granted by one who knew how God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven *her*.

Sarah lived a few weeks longer to testify to those around her "how great things the Lord had done for her;" and then peacefully and joyfully passed out of this world into the presence of Him "who loved her and gave Himself for her."

Happy girl! Through all eternity thou shalt never tire of praising Him for that love!

"Praise the Saviour, ye who know Him,
Who can tell how much we owe Him?
Gladly will we render to Him
All we have and are."

J. W. B.

Two Expectations.

IT is many years ago since the following incident was related to me by my Christian mother, who was present on the occasion here recorded. It was a death-bed scene, and one so deeply solemn, that I have never forgotten the recital of it.

A young woman lay dying. Her life had

been one of self-pleasing. Regardless of God's claims, repeatedly refusing His offers of mercy, she lived a life apart from God; and now (solemn thought) death found her without Him.

Another and last opportunity was still afforded her of turning to God. The Christian named above presented Christ to her, but she said, "It is *too late*;" and when told it was not too late to trust in the blood of Jesus, again said, "Oh! yes, it is; it is too late; I am *lost for ever*, I *know* it. You don't know what a wicked girl I am." In heart-rending tones, with terror depicted on her face, she cried out, "I *know where* I am going to; in my soul I *have been there already*, and I *expect* to go *there again*." Then, turning to her aunt, who stood near her, she bitterly reproached her, telling her she had never helped her to be better and turn to God, and she warned her, if she did not repent and turn from her wicked ways to God, she too would come to the same dreadful place.

Thus she passed from time into eternity to meet an unknown and untrusted God.

Mark well, dear reader, she did not say she had not *heard* of the grace of God, and of the atoning death of His Son, but she knew well that all His offers of mercy and His grace and

tenderness had been despised by herself, refused, yes, up to the very last. She turned, alas, even now, from the loving hands stretched out to save her, for had she even then come to Him, He would "in *nowise* have cast her out." She had been walking in the vanity of her own mind, and she died "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18). Did she reproach God? Ah! no, she only spoke bitterly of herself and of her aunt, but not of God; and think not that you, reader, will be able to heap up hard words against Him in the day of judgment; you will have nothing to say in the presence of your Judge. Listen to His word: "When the King came in to see the guests, He saw there a man that had not on a wedding garment; and He said, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? And he was *speechless*."

So will it be with you if you reject God's grace, and die without Christ, for "after death is the judgment." You will have heard the glad tidings of the Gospel for the *last time*; you will have heard the loving voice of some dear one pleading with you for the *last time*; you will have had the strivings of the Spirit with you for the *last time*; and you will have for your con-

stant companion your ever accusing, remorseful conscience. This may be *your* last opportunity of hearing the Gospel. Are you going to refuse the *last*? “Oh, turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?” The Lord Jesus is not only *able* but *willing* to save you.

Gladly do I turn from an expectation so terrible to one of a very different character. A young man, stricken down by sickness before he had reached the age of twenty-one years, came home to his parents' house to die. In vain were the doctors called in by those who loved him; it soon became evident that “the Lord had need of him.”

For a while he hoped to recover, and once only did he murmur, when he exclaimed, “Oh, mother! my prospects *were* so bright.” His mother replied, “They are brighter than ever, Willie, dear, for you are going to see the Lord, while we shall be left to mourn for you.” With a bright smile he threw his arms round her, saying, “Yes, and how I wish I could take you with me, for I expect to be with my Lord presently.”

He grew more feeble in body day by day, but his mind was clear and bright, constantly telling us he was going to be with the Lord Jesus

Christ, and that he was trusting *only* to His blood. It was a sorrowful yet happy privilege to wait upon him, so loving, so gentle to all. His brother, who held much precious conversation with him to within five minutes of his departure, said he would not have missed such sweet communion for a great deal. He was taken from us so gently, yet so swiftly, that it could indeed be said he never *tasted* death,—calmly speaking to us one moment, the next present with his Lord.

Many were the proofs we received of the bright testimony to Christ he had been in the midst of ungodly young men, and of his earnestness in bringing many to the Gospel preaching. In various ways he had sought to speak for his Lord and Master ; and now he has realised that bright expectation, and is in the presence of his Lord, where there will be,

“ No more going out for ever,
But one long eternal rest,
Flowing o'er him like a river,
Leaning on his Saviour's breast.”

Dear reader, which of these two expectations is yours? Perhaps you expect to live much longer, and you think there is plenty of time ; but death is in the world, and you *may* be the

very next. When the cold hand of death is laid upon you, and you cannot shake it off, how will it be with you? Which of these two expectations have you? Is your future to be with Christ, or without Christ? Make your choice at once.

Let me plead with you. *Do not* turn away. *Consider* the love of God: He gave His Son for *you*; He is not willing that you should perish; He is waiting with outstretched arms ready to save *all* who come unto Him by Christ Jesus. "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin." Oh! will you not choose this day whom ye will serve? You are still here. Be wise, to-morrow may be too late.

Remember, "the wicked shall be silent in darkness" (1 Sam. ii. 9); but "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men" (Psa. cvii.)

S. R. F.

WE are not in paradise. We have got out of it some way or other; and we are in a world which is under judgment, and where death is staring us in the face.—J. N. D.

A Search and its Consequences.

IT is a solemn thing, but, alas! sadly true, that many believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are not really depending upon Him, and trusting to His blessed *finished* work, and that alone, as the ground of their salvation and acceptance with God. Thus, when inquiry is made of them, they are found to be in doubt; peace in Him they know nothing of; indeed, they have no real rest in their souls.

A striking instance of this is the following, and it is one of many.

J—— N—— had been for many years in the employ of the —— Railway, and was looked upon as a steady, reliable man—one who could be trusted and relied upon by his employers. He was a constant attendant at Gospel preachings, and would spend the afternoon of a Lord's Day in going round to invite people to come and hear the Gospel. He was looked upon by his mates as "a good man," as they called it, and he would reprove them for using bad language, &c. And yet he had no rest in his soul, no real knowledge of Christ, and no joy.

His wife was a simple, earnest Christian, a

woman of prayer and faith, who had known the Lord, and trusted Him upwards of fifty years, at the time of which I speak. One day, when visiting her, she said, "Have you ever had a word with N——?" (her husband.) I replied, "I have always taken him to be a Christian. Is he not so?" "Indeed," she said, "he is far from right; he has a wonderful good opinion of himself, but he's really not saved yet. He is sure of nothing. Do 'ee speak to him, for the Lord's sake."

A few days later, meeting him alone, I said, "N——, are you saved?" He replied, "I hope so, I'm sure. I've been pretty reg'lar at the Gospel—at least of late years—and I know it's all true. I've asked a many to come and hear, who have got saved by it." "But you—what about yourself?" I asked. And he was silent; a vacant look came into his face; and the only reply he made was, "Well, I hope I be—least-aways I hope I shall be."

While telling him of the finished work of Christ on the cross, finished more than eighteen hundred years ago for the vilest of sinners, and of His being now at the right hand of God in heaven, and of His soon coming again to take His own to be with Himself for ever, he seemed

to have his thoughts elsewhere, and to take but little interest in what was said.

Some weeks after this, he walked away from a Gospel preaching with a dear Christian woman, who had known him for many years. She spoke to him very simply and plainly. On reaching her house, she said: "Oh! N——, you are not saved yet; you are not really trusting Jesus, and resting in Him. It may soon be too late; I may never again tell you of His love." And she sank down on the doorstep—dead: passed away to be with Him, of whose love her last words spoke. For some little time N—— seemed impressed, but still got no further; he was most regular at the preachings, but was no nearer certainty than before. He hoped to be saved, but, as with many others, it was a future, indefinite thing to him.

About eighteen months after this, he was taken with what proved to be his last illness. On going to see him, I found him seriously ill, and, as he himself said, "never likely to get no better."

"Well, N——," I said, "how is it with you now?"

"I don't know, sir; I ain't done amiss, as I can see."

“Did you never drink?” I asked, knowing he had done so many years before.

“Well, yes, I have,” he said, “but I broke myself off from it. I took the pledge, and I’ve kept it too. I ain’t drunk this many a year.”

“How old are you now?” I asked.

“Coming sixty-nine,” he said.

“Now, N——,” I said, “looking back over those sixty years, for how many of them has the Lord been good to you, and treated you well?”

“Oh! He’ve always been good to me, and treated me well; I know that well enough,” said he.

“And of those sixty-nine years—we will say for the last fifty years—how have you treated Him?” I asked.

“Sometimes better, sometimes worse,” he replied. “I don’t mean to say as I’ve always done right by Him, or as I ought to ha’ done; but I think I’ve done as often well as most. I ain’t been so bad as I might ha’ been, by a long ways. I know I’ve tried, and I don’t think He’ve got much to accuse me of.”

I overheard his dear old wife saying under her breath, “The Lord have mercy on him, poor soul; now he be a-deceiving hisself, to be sure. O Lord, do open his eyes to see.”

“Now, N——,” I said, “will you just look back over the past, during the night, and really think over it, and reckon up if you can the times of which you can say you have treated the Lord well—when you have really done right in such a way that He can approve of it and say it was well done? You will soon see Him face to face, and then you will know the real value of all your works. He means you to know the value of them now, and to have something better than them to trust to. It is worth knowing—worth all else besides. Just search and see.”

He promised rather reluctantly to do so, and I left him.

It was nearly a fortnight before I was able to go and see him again. On my entering the house his wife said to me, “I’m right glad you’ve come. N—— has been wanting to see you ever since yesterday morning. He says he has something to tell you, and he won’t tell me what it is; but he’s been mortal troubled yesterday and to-day.” As soon as I entered the room, N—— with great difficulty sat up, and exclaimed, “You mind telling me to search and reckon up, don’t ’ee, sir? Well, I’ve done it, and there ain’t one—not one.”

“Not one what?” I asked.

“Why, not one of all as I’ve ha’ done,” he replied.

“And what then,” I said ; “what have you got to depend upon now—what can you look back upon now?”

“Nothing,” he said, “just nothing, nothing at all, ’cept it is what He’ve ha’ done for me.”

“And is that enough?”

“Aye, plenty, plenty, and I’ve never deserved none of it.”

“But what has He done for you?” I inquired, wishing to get something definite from him.

“Why, He’ve ha’ loved me; He’ve ha’ died for me, He’ve ha’ kep’ me, and He’ve ha’ been good to me all through. It’s just been wonderful, wonderful, and I can’t say no more about it.” And then he and his old wife and myself praised God together for His goodness and mercy, His love and His grace.

About ten days afterwards he passed away, to be with the Lord—calmly, peacefully, and ever in the same spirit. His constant word was, up to the last, “Oh! He have ha’ been good—to be sure He have.”

And now, reader, let me ask you, on what are you resting? Can you look back over the past and find any satisfaction there? Anything upon

which you can rest, in what you have done? If so, let me entreat you to search and see, really to reckon up in His presence, alone with Him by whom "actions are weighed," and see what your best actions are worth. I need not ask you what your bad actions are worth; it is your fancied good ones that are the hindrance to rest and joy in Him.

Old N—— loved to hear the Gospel, and loved to bring people under the sound of it, but he rested, or rather tried to rest, on what he had done, as he thought, for Christ, and so long as he did this he knew neither assurance, rest, peace, nor joy. And so it is with us all. So long as we find any satisfaction in ourselves, or in anything which we have done, we cannot find our satisfaction and our joy in Him—we cannot praise and bless Him for it all. But when once we have, in His presence, searched and reckoned up, we find there is really nothing we can look upon with satisfaction, nothing upon which we can depend, and like Job we cry, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

It is the change, the fancied change one finds in one's self, that hinders the soul and obstructs

the way of peace. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," was the experience of him who knew what peace with God was, and who could say, not only, "I counted," but "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And the Lord Jesus Himself enjoined upon His apostles:—"Thus ye also, when ye have done all things that have been ordered you, say, We are unprofitable servants ;" and, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, when we think of Him, that blessed One who came down from that home of glory on high to seek and to save the lost, the vile, the ruined, and helpless sinners, who had nothing in themselves to attract His love, and yet for whom He died in His love.

Works, the works of man, flow not from such a source as His flowed from, they come from self and self-interest, His came from His heart of love in self-denying love to us, for, as has often been remarked, human love depends upon the object upon which it expends itself ; Divine love depends upon the source from which it comes—the heart of God Himself. "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."

P. A. H.

"Speedily!"

THAT was a solemn time before the Flood, while Noah was a "preacher of righteousness"! The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and God said that it should not continue—His Spirit should not always strive with man; yet would He leave him for a hundred and twenty years on the earth (Gen. vi.). During that time God made known to Noah what He was about to do, and commissioned him to build the ark. How surprised his neighbours must have been! How they may have laughed at Noah! Peter tells us that Noah was not silent during those years—he preached; besides which, his act of faith in obeying God proved that *he believed* Him, when He said the Flood was coming, and it "condemned the world," who did *not believe*. They would not believe, because it was against their reason or theory; and yet every night they were one day nearer their doom. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed *speedily*, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccles. viii. 11).

So it was in the days before the Flood ; so it is now. The world that *then* was was overflowed with water and perished (2 Pet. iii. 7) ; men are *willingly* ignorant that the world that *now* is, is “ reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” But God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, and judgment is His strange work ; hence the delay of which men avail themselves to scoff, and to cry, “ Where is the promise of His coming ? ” God says, “ Agree with thine adversary *quickly*, whiles thou art in the way with him ; *lest* ” . . . Because the sentence is not executed *speedily*, it is not to be inferred that it is forgotten.

One hundred and twenty long years ran their course, and, *one week* before the Flood came, God said, “ *Yet seven days* and I will cause it to rain.” Then the solemn morning arrived, when “ *the same day* were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened ” (Gen. vii.). Did they cry “ Peace and safety ” then ? And can you tell whether God in heaven has said, “ *Yet seven days* ” and *Jesus shall come* ? Can you say that He will *not* come to-day ? Those who scoffed at Noah knew not the day of the Flood, and the Bible says, “ Of

that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32).

Lot's children refused to credit the coming overthrow of Sodom, and were consumed with it. Will you choose a like fate? Think what it must be to Jesus, who sits at God's right hand, and who shed His blood for guilty sinners, to see you refusing the priceless blessing of salvation, and to know that soon judgment must overtake you! "The day of the Lord cometh . . . and He shall consume the sinners" (Isa. xiii. 9). When Jesus was on earth, it was to a poor sinful man that He said, "*Make haste* and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house" (Luke xix.). He had come to seek and to save that lost sinner; and "he *made haste* and came down and received Him joyfully." Will you not do likewise?

In the millennium, when the Lord Jesus shall reign over His earthly people, "the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go *speedily* to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also" (Zech. viii. 21). "And he that seeketh findeth" (Matt. vii. 8). May *you* prove it true.

H. L. H.

The Cross.

“**T**HERE is nothing like the cross. It is both the righteousness of God against sin, and the righteousness of God in pardoning sin. It is the end of the world of judgment, and the beginning of the world of life. It is the work that puts away sin, and yet it is the greatest sin that was ever committed.”

IT IS

The full manifestation of God's love.
 God's estimate of sin.
 The measure of man's guilt.
 The measure of man's need.
 The ground of acceptance and peace.
 The measure of my separation for my sins.
 The measure of my separation for myself.
 The measure of my separation for the world.
 The measure of my self-judgment.
 The measure of my acceptance with God.
 The title to everlasting glory.
 The basis of everlasting life.
 The endless theme of praise.

Grace.

THE Scripture definition of grace, and the uses made of it in Scripture, are of all importance to man, for it is the ground, the only ground, upon which God can act towards man otherwise than in judgment. Yet man's thoughts about, and his estimate of grace, are so low, so poor, so human, that he cannot of himself grasp or even conceive what Divine grace, God's grace, really is. He has, if under conviction of sin before God, and under the truth of the Gospel, a sense of grace, measured by the extent of his sin, and in this sense the lost, the vile, the utterly ruined know best, and best appreciate this grace. And yet with all this there is a fear of losing it, of forfeiting it, so to speak, which comes from a faulty apprehension of what Divine grace is.

How often, indeed, one hears people, sincere souls too, speak of "falling from grace," as if it was some quality in themselves—bestowed upon them by God, but still in themselves—from which they could fall away. Now falling from grace is never spoken of in this way in Scripture. It

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is never looked upon as something *in* us from which we could fall away, for the simple reason that we never had any grace in ourselves from which to fall (see Gal. v. 4). Falling from grace, in Scripture, is a turning away from God's grace, and a seeking to be justified by law. It says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace." Here then grace is distinctly put in contrast to law ; the grace of God in contrast to the law of God ; what God is for man in contrast with what man ought to be for God.

As an example of what grace is, the case of a criminal under sentence of death is often referred to, and it is said that the Queen, in her sovereign power, extends grace to him, and the capital sentence is remitted. But this, true though it be so far as sovereignty goes, fails altogether to convey the right and true sense to the soul of what God's grace is. When a man is found guilty and is condemned to death, the case must go first before the Home Secretary, and he has to find, if he can do so, extenuating circumstances on the ground of which Her Majesty may be advised to remit the extreme sentence. Now in the case of the sinner before God, there is no such inquiry made, for it is not possible for any

one, even the most clever and most highly educated, or most moral person, to find any extenuating circumstances whatever in the case of any sinner, let him be young or old, high or low, rich or poor. God has concluded all in one sentence, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Indeed, it is just because there are no extenuating circumstances to be found, no possible excuse to be made for man, that He who looked down from heaven upon men and said, "There is none righteous, no, not one," provided from Himself, from His own wonderful and blessed resources, the only remedy that could possibly avail for man—a sinner in his sins,—for whom no possible excuse could be made?

And what was that remedy? "He gave Himself for our sins." Here is grace indeed, but here is sovereignty too. Instead of a fruitless search after some extenuating circumstances, or some excuse in man, He meets man's case just as it is, just as He sees it to be, "He died the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." Scripture says (Rom. iii.), "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" and (Rom. x.), "There is no difference, . . . for the same Lord is rich towards

all that call upon Him." Some, it is true, may have gone more deeply into acts of sin than others, but the same act of grace meets, and indeed is needed, for a small sin, as people speak, as a great one. And, after all, when we find ourselves in the presence of God, we do not stop to consider the amount of our sins; our one object is, How is He who is holy, and of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, going to deal with us about them? Then we find, and, oh, how thankfully the soul owns it, that nothing but grace will suit us, and still further, that grace and sovereignty go together—are indeed inseparably linked together.

Grace is the act of sovereignty. And see how far it goes! Instead of merely remitting the extreme sentence, and inflicting a minor one, as the Queen would do on the ground of extenuating circumstances, by remitting the sentence of death and reducing the punishment to that of transportation for life, the sinner for whom Jesus died is set entirely, absolutely, eternally free. And set free by God too. God is for him; not because he is good, not because he repents and is sorry for his sins, but because he is vile, helpless, lost, ruined, and condemned, not one redeeming feature to be found, not one

single excuse possible for him, and he owns it before God, whose "goodness leads him to repentance," *i.e.*, to take God's side against himself, and own it is all true that God says about him, as in Romans iii. 10-19, he casts himself thus on God, and God meets him not according to his deservings, but according to the riches of His grace in Christ Jesus. "The grace of God brings salvation" to the lost. It is the Shepherd who seeks the sheep "until He find it," and who then rejoicing, lays it upon His shoulder and carries it home—all the way home; He does not put it down until it is safe at home. ~

Dear reader, do you know God thus? Do you know this grace—this act of sovereign power and favour—this Gospel of the grace of God? Glad tidings, indeed, for sinners. And God is no respecter of persons. "Ye are saved by grace, through faith; and this not of yourselves, it is God's gift: not of works, that no one might boast." What a blessing, what a mercy it is that there is no respect of persons with God! How could there be when all is of grace which no one deserves, or can deserve? It is this grace that sweeps away all distinction of persons, and which sweeps away all sense of deserving it on our part. And yet, alas! how many souls cling to some-

thing, a fancied something in themselves! The fact is they do not think themselves as bad as God says they are; they will own they are not good enough for heaven, but they do not think themselves bad enough for grace, and grace alone to meet them. They think their prayers, their tears, their sorrow over the past, are of some value in commending them to God, and thus they stand at a distance from the grace, and seek to merit that which in its very nature is unmeritable, the sovereign grace of the mighty God.

Reader, may you know this grace fully, and may He make you to be "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

P. A. H.

Is the World Getting Better?

THE conversation turned, at a public dinner table lately, on the progress and prosperity of certain nations, starting with the belief, expressed by one, that Protestant countries are the most civilised and prosperous, which is generally true. Then a gentleman said very markedly, "Well, for my own part, I believe that the world is growing

better every day." Another argued the reverse, alleging the increase of crime; but the first speaker maintained his opinion, quoting, among other proofs, the abolition of the slave trade and the temperance movement. At last a lady spoke: she was one who read the Word of God, and believed it to be the only lamp amidst the darkness of this world. "If you will allow me," she said, "to quote such an old-fashioned Book as the Bible, it settles the question for us; it says that 'in the last days perilous times shall come,' and speaks of evil men waxing 'worse and worse'" (2 Tim. iii. 1, 13). The Bible! All looked astonished to hear it mentioned in public. One sought to assert that those days are over already; but the conversation was soon changed, for now-a-days men do not like to own the paramount and unquestionable authority of God's blessed Word; it makes little of them and their "inherent goodness," which, as some one vainly said, must "sooner or later come to the surface."

But what does the Bible really teach about the world getting better? Precisely what the verses already quoted say, and they are enough, though Jude and Peter repeat the same truths; and Paul, in the same epistle, tells Timothy that

“the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.” He warns him, too, to “turn away” from men, of whose sins he gives a black list, and explains to him that his only safeguard is the Bible. One who is instructed in that is “furnished unto all good works.” Thus the Christian lady who spoke felt she knew more about God’s thoughts of the world than the clever men around her.

If this should fall into the hands of any one who thinks that the world is growing better, may he be warned in time; this is one of the devil’s devices to prevent our believing what God says. The world is really ripening for judgment, and this Satan does not want you to believe. “*If thou hadst known . . . the things which belong unto thy peace,*” said Jesus to guilty Jerusalem (Luke xix. 42). And is His attitude changed towards this guilty world? He wept over Jerusalem; He weeps over you. He is longsuffering and waiting to be gracious to all who will hear His voice; He still says, “Come unto Me.” Will you not turn from your sinful self and this condemned world to Him? In spite of all Satan may say, the world is hastening on to judgment, but He is seeking souls in it to fit them for glory. H. L. H.

"Thy heart is not Right."

"The Word of God is living and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."

X — left his country home, where he had been brought up in strict morality and the form of religion, and came up to London to earn his living. He was accustomed to read his daily chapter in the Bible, and would have thought it very wrong to give up praying, and was quite satisfied that he was all right; but his conscience had never yet been divinely awakened to the fear of God, or his heart awakened to the love and grace of God.

He was not sixteen, and now found himself without restraint in the midst of the attractions and temptations of London life,—“the pleasures of sin,” “the deceitfulness of sin.” Soon he yielded to the current of evil. What would that moral, upright father in the country home have thought if he had seen his boy entering on the path of moral ruin?

His profession of religion was fast becoming worthless in his eyes; but he still continued his

home habit of reading his chapter in the Bible. The eye of the living God was upon him in love ; the ear of the living God had heard the cry of that boy's mother for her child's salvation years ago, before she left this earth, and went to heaven. She was a true Christian. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Now God drew nigh to that dark soul to save him. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." His chapter for that day was Acts viii.; he read verse 21, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is *not right in the sight of God.*" God the Holy Ghost brought that word right home to his conscience, just as when God, by the prophet Nathan, said to David, "*Thou art the man.*" "*Thy heart is not right in the SIGHT of GOD.*" No, he knew it was not, and those words pursued him with the fear of God's righteous judgment. He sternly broke away from his outward course of sin and folly, and sought to be more religious than he had ever been, thinking by good conduct, repentance, prayers, and religion to win heaven and peace.

For two whole months this went on, but all in vain ; that living, powerful Word still pursued him. "*Thy heart is not right in the sight of God ;*" he was agonised almost to despair.

Now his chapter was Isaiah liii., and as he was reading verse 6, "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," the Spirit of God brought home that word to his troubled soul and conscience.

"That is true of me, he said,"—"gone astray," "turned to his own way," "and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." It brought peace to his soul, peace with God, for by faith he saw the blessed Saviour, his Substitute under that righteous judgment of God which he so feared. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God."

What a change! No longer looking into his own heart in the vain endeavour to set it right for God, and only seeing more and more deep-seated roots of evil there, the heart of *God*, the love of God, was made known. He had given His Son to die for him. His once terrified soul now tasted *Divine love*. He had peace with God—eternal peace, righteous peace. He was reconciled to God *by the death of His Son*.

This young man now finds his joy in pointing

others away from any works of their own, as a ground of peace, to that one work of Christ on the cross, whereby God has been fully and eternally glorified, and sin for ever put away for the believer. "Now once in the end of the world He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

How did that young man *get* the blessing? He believed God speaking in His written Word. He read the Bible, wherein God speaks to man, and he *believed God*. Why not you, too, dear reader? In what seemed to be impossible, it is written (Rom. iv. 3), "Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted to him for righteousness." God sent a warning of judgment about to come on Nineveh, and it is written (Jonah iii. 5), "So the people of Nineveh *believed God*;" "They repented at the preaching of Jonas," and they were spared. In Acts xxvii. 22, 25—just when destruction seemed imminent, *at the word of the Lord* all on that ship were called upon to "be of good cheer"; "*Wherefore*, sirs, be of good cheer: for *I believe God*, that it shall be even as was told me."

Dear reader, do *hear God*; believe *God* in His Word. "Hear, and your soul shall live."

L. P.

“WHAT SHALL A MAN GIVE FOR HIS SOUL?” 237

“What shall a Man give in
Exchange for his Soul?”

“**W**HAT 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?” What would you give? What are you giving?

“Save me! save me! I will give you all I possess. Save me! save me! Cut off my arms and my legs! Save me! *save me!*”

What desperate language! That it is. It was the language of one in a desperate condition, and that condition realised to the full. That fearful cry of agony came from a burning train three summers ago outside Paris. Unexpectedly and suddenly, when all seemed safe, there took place a terrible collision; passengers were hurled from one side of the compartments to the other. All was confusion, whilst the carriages were fast jammed together, so firmly fastening in the unhappy occupants that neither they nor their would-be deliverers could extricate them. A passenger, who had succeeded in

making good his escape, heard this imploring appeal for help, and on looking towards the spot from whence the cry came, saw one of his late fellow-passengers thus helplessly fastened in, the flames from the burning wreck fast surrounding him. It makes one shudder to think of it! He would have given *all* he possessed—yes, even his limbs!—if his *life* could be saved. Such was the value at which he counted his life. But this cry came too late!

Fellow-traveller to *eternity*—for we are all

“Passing onward—
Yes, but whither, whither bound?”—

at what do you value your *soul*?—your soul that will never die. This poor fellow, as he sat to all appearance in safety a few hours before, would have thought long before he yielded up *all* he had to another; but, now life itself was in peril, he could let all go—yes, give all he possessed for his life. With death in front of him, the *real* value of what he had perhaps set much store by took a very different colour.

Is there not a lesson for us all to learn here? For we also are on a journey. Do we know the end? “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end of that way is *death*.”

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Solemn warning! Danger ahead! And this in “a way which seemeth right unto a man.” God sets before us two ways—“The way of life,” and “The way of death.” Which have we chosen? The words of the Lord Jesus Christ are these: “Whosoever will save his life *shall lose it!*” That is, “whosoever” counts this life dearer than the next, when the life to come is ushered in—when that time comes of which it is written, “The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and whosoever was not found written in the book of *life* was cast into the lake of fire”—*in that day* “he shall lose it.” Still the One who in mercy thus warns you beforehand knows the value of your precious soul. He has set a value on it, if as yet you have not, and it is He Himself who asks the searching question: “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

With the loss of the “Victoria” and her priceless freightage of close on four hundred souls, comes yet another warning. In the full light of day, commanded by one of the ablest of seamen, this mighty man-of-war has sunk—never to rise. How eagerly was the signal for “help” responded to! Boat after boat put out

to the rescue ; but for many, alas ! of no avail. It was too late—too late to save them !

Oh ! let us take it to heart, for God has surely spoken to us in this terrible calamity. Life's journey will soon be over. What port are we bound for ?

Suffer the question, dear reader, What port are *you* bound for ? Is CHRIST *your* HOPE ?—*your* ANCHOR ? He is the only hope that is "*both sure and stedfast.*" And more than this, a hope that enters "within the veil," into the presence of God in heaven. What a wonderful thing to have an anchor in *heaven's* haven ! In God's rest !—a rest that nothing can disturb. Are you bound for *that* haven ?

"Passing onward, quickly passing ;
 Yes, but whither, whither bound ?
 Is it to the many mansions,
 Where eternal rest is found ?
 Passing onward—
 Yes, but whither, whither bound ?"

L.

IF you were to take half the people in the world into heaven, they would get out if they could. There would be nothing there that they would like.

J. N. D.

"Fire from Heaven."

I WAS called one night out of my bed to the bedside of a little boy who was very troubled. When I reached the room he asked me to go close to him, and to put my face near his. I did so, and shaking with sobs, he said, "I dreamed that there was a fire from heaven." I tried to show him that, although there would be fire from heaven one day, those who were sheltered by the precious blood of Christ need not be afraid of that fire touching them, and that if he came to Christ and believed on Him he, too, would be quite safe.

Dear reader, young or old, perhaps God sent that dream to that little boy to warn him to be prepared for that day. Are *you* prepared? For "fire from heaven" will certainly come, as we read in 2 Thess. i. 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 that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Since writing the above, I am glad to be able to add that our little friend went one Sunday as usual to the Sunday school, where he heard a little incident which appears to have struck him.

His father gave the children an address that afternoon, in the course of which, he told them of a Christian father who dreamed that the judgment of the living nations, spoken of in Matthew xxv., had come, and that he and his dear children were separated; *he* was placed on the right hand of the Lord, but *they* had to go to the left.

After school was over, he said to his youngest sister, who was some seven years older than himself, "I believe it was father who had that dream," to which she replied, "That she did not think it was." But, to make my story short, little Edward lay awake a long time in bed that night, with thoughts passing through his little mind of which we knew nothing at the time. However, during the week, he said to another sister, "I am saved now, and you are saved if you believe that Jesus died for you, are you not?" When it was suggested to him that the Lord should be thanked for saving him, as he had been the subject of many prayers, he said, "I have thanked Him."

Dear fellow-Christian, are you praying for the conversion of a soul? Then do not be discouraged. We had prayed for this little one, and I fear we little expected the answer would come so soon.

"FIRE FROM HEAVEN."

To any child who may read this little story, remember that if *unsaved* you will spend eternity in endless torment; you will be separated for ever from your *saved* relatives, parents, brothers or sisters, unless you come to Christ Jesus, who says, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." May you hear God's voice speaking to you and come before it is too late, as this little boy did. God speaks in many ways—by sudden deaths, by dreams, by His Word. *Now* He says, "Come;" by-and-bye He will say, "Depart."

The Lord is waiting *now* to show His saving grace to any who will receive it. Oh! how tenderly, when on earth, He said, "Come unto Me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He is the same now; He is not changed. "I am the Lord, I change not," He says to any poor sinner who will put his trust in Him.

Truly "the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation," but the day is coming when He will no longer be a *Saviour*. To those who have spurned His offers of grace and pardon He will be only a *judge* without mercy.

Reader, if still unsaved, flee from the wrath to come.

* * *

“That is like a Picture of how He brings us from Earth to Heaven.”

THIS remark both surprised and delighted me, coming, as it did, from a poor woman, who a few weeks before had been in terror at the thought of death. When I first visited her, I found her unwilling to listen to that tale of love which attracts so many hearts, saves, and satisfies, as nothing else can. Only a short time after, she had been prepared by man's rites to meet the last enemy ; but she found all unavailing to give peace, and take away the sting of sin.

She told me it was not death that so terrified her, but what lay beyond, and she was bound to die as all had been done.

I asked her if this preparation had given her rest ?

She looked at me with tearful eyes, while the perspiration poured from her forehead, showing the soul-anguish the poor thing was passing through, and exclaimed, “Rest ! rest ! can rest be had ?”

“Indeed it can, thank the Lord,” I replied,

"but it is only the Son of God that can give that rest. He has given it to me; I have no fear of death."

"Oh! that is wonderful!"

I asked her what she could do?

"Oh! nothing, nothing!"

What she could bring Him?

"Nothing but sin."

Then I said, "You are just in the fit state."

I described to her the scene in Israel's history, when the brazen serpent was lifted up for the dying Israelites to look upon, adding, "What could the poor bitten Israelite do?"

She lay back for a moment in deep thought, and then said, "Nothing but look. They could only look."

"Yes," I replied, "they could only do what God told them to do—just look. God knew their hearts—He who made them, and He knew they were powerless to do anything else. Just so we find in John iii. 14, 15, 16—'Whosoever believeth.' God says, 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved.'"

Several times I visited her, and felt assured God Himself was speaking to her. I asked her one day, 'Did she not think, if the Blessed Saviour loved poor sinners so well, that He went into

death and judgment for them, He was more full of love for, and more willing to forgive, than any of those who pleaded with Him, and kept asking Him to save them. More willing to forgive than the sinner was to be forgiven. More longing to save than the sinner to be saved. More full of love than the sinner could ever imagine.

She eagerly drank in each word, and said, "I never saw it in that light before."

I pleaded with the Lord, who delights to do more than either we ask or think, to open her eyes to see His love, and to enable her to say—

"O save me for Thine own Name's sake,
And take me as I am,
My only plea, Christ died for me,
Oh! take me as I am."

She raised her poor feeble hands in the attitude of prayer, and when I rose, said, "You speak to Him so plain-like;" but with the old slavish fear, added, "but He cannot accept my work."

"No, indeed," I said, "for if you or I could have done a work fit for Him, God might have spared His well-beloved Son."

Each time I went I could see the rays of light were breaking in upon her darkened soul. The great load, she told me, was gone—

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the fear of what lies beyond. She saw the love that went into death for her, and the sacrifice that had fully satisfied God's claim against the sinner, and that had purchased for each a bright home above. One day, when I read to her that sweet tale of love, in Luke xv., she exclaimed, as the title to this little story tells, “That is like a picture of how He brings us from earth to heaven.”

Very soon after she died, and a little before the Lord took her, I asked her if we should meet up there? The first time she said, “I hope so,” but soon added, “I believe we shall, and I will thank God for all your visits.”

The last time I visited her, I asked her, was she only resting entirely on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ? She clasped my hand, and exclaimed with great feeling, “On nothing else; on nothing else.”

Reader, how is it with you? On what are you resting? God's eye only sees—His own foundation—the precious blood of Christ. He knows the value of the death of Christ. There is a cloudless sky above the cross. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. He offered one sacrifice. He for ever sat down. “By one offering He hath

perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). Oh! take Him at His word. Rest on His finished work. Accept His loving gift, and you are safe for ever. Because He lives, you shall live also.

" Sweet the moments, which in blessing,
 Musing o'er the cross we spend ;
 Life, and health, and peace possessing,
 From the dying sinner's Friend.
 Here we rest, in wonder viewing,
 All our guilt on Jesus laid !
 And a full redemption flowing,
 From the sacrifice He made."

A. H.

The Pharisee and the Publican.

(LUKE xviii. 9-14.)

NUMBERS speak about the Pharisee and the publican who know nothing of the truth that is here revealed. But how is it with ourselves as to this? Have we been brought to take the *publican's* place before God? and is *this* the ground on which we now stand before Him? I do not ask whether we are still saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The publican would

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not say that, if knowing that God had had mercy on him, and that he went down to his house *justified* rather than the other. But he would still have the same judgment of himself as that he owned to when, not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, he stood and smote upon his breast, and said, "God BE MERCIFUL to me a sinner" — he would still be on the ground of *what God is*.

The Pharisee took the ground of *what he was*. He does not take to himself openly the credit of what he was and did. He does not say, I thank myself that I am this, or that, or the other. He was quite as orthodox in this respect as numbers in the present day, who are looking within for their grounds of peace, and who say, "We give God the glory of all that we hope He has wrought in us, and own Him as the One who has produced it all." But if God has produced anything in our souls, it is nothing for us to rest upon, or to glory in, or find peace in. We are upon the Pharisee's ground, if we found our peace upon anything that we may suppose grace to have wrought in us. He thanked God, but it was for what *he* was, what *he* did, and what *he* did not. These considerations formed the ground on which his soul sought to stand before God,

and he *thought* he did stand; he was self-deceived, he was on perfectly good terms with himself—"God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," &c.

And there are numbers in the present day, bearing the name of Christ, professing in words to have no confidence but Christ—numbers who would be shocked at the idea of attributing salvation to any but Christ—who are practically and really taking the Pharisee's ground before God. Where such persons have any real work of God in their souls, they are destitute of peace. Where there is thorough self-deception, men may thank God that they are not as other men. But supposing the soul is brought to the sense of what man is really before God, and yet attempts to take this ground, misery must be the result.

Such may be the case with some who read this, who, if asked, "Do you take the ground of the Pharisee?" would say, "Oh, no." Then, what ground do you take? What are you wishing to stand upon before God? Is not this the reason you allege for not having peace, that you do not find in yourself such fruits as would be a certain mark of your being God's child? or, if sometimes you hope that you see some such marks, you cannot always find them, and there-

fore you are cast down and desponding. Is not this the way in which you explain your own state? Or, perhaps, with some examples of rare devotedness before your eyes, you say, "If I were but such an one!" And what if you were? Would it do *then* to say, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men"? What now are you really wishing and seeking for? You are seeking and wishing to be something better than you are, in order to stand before God. And if you could have your wish and be that, would you stand upon it? *Then* you would be the Pharisee outright.

What was the publican's ground? There was the deepest sense of what he was—a sinner; and he was not even *asking to be something better*. No doubt he did desire deliverance. He would not have been so troubled about his state if he had been content to be a sinner. He had the deepest sense of what he was; but what was his refuge—the only open door before him? It was *what God is*, and what God is to what he knew himself to be. It was, "God be merciful to me a sinner." When the soul is once brought there, there is no doubt as to the issue. The Word of God now contains an answer to this state of soul, such as was not found even while our Lord was

living upon the earth. God's perfectly blessed answer is in the fulfilment of the Saviour's own prediction of His sufferings and blood-shedding on the cross. There was the answer, on Christ's part, to God for all the sin—yes, for all the sins, let them be what they may—upon your conscience. There is also God's answer, on His own part, in the love that gave Christ to die for all, to take the sinner's place—to stand, dear sin-burdened one, in your stead, and bear the punishment due to you—the answer, on God's part, to the cry "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Oh! that you may, through God's own teaching, be led to see how mercy has interposed—how mercy has triumphed! May you see something of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the glory of God in His mercy—*God's mercy, the sinner's only refuge, his only resource.* It is not mercy without atonement, without sacrifice, without the full vindication of God's holiness and righteousness. It is not mercy at the expense of all these. But as sin has reigned unto death, even so grace now reigns "through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

W. T.

A Lost One Found.

THE village of S—— was favoured for situation. The river swept majestically down to its mill, having first released four streams that went to form a backwater of more than ordinary size and beauty.

Yet aching hearts were there, for sin was present and felt. Had not the “faithful Word” told us that all had sinned, all like sheep had gone astray? And, even to our dim vision, it was apparent that the inspired words mirrored the situation.

But a greater favour was to be bestowed on S——. There was One who cared for the “heavy laden.” It was the same One who had arrayed the lily, given grace of form to the trees, made the water to reflect, and endowed the sun with its lustre-lending power. These conduct but to the “outer court” of His presence, one has said; His *heart* is revealed in seeking and saving “that which was lost.”

Of all the lovely figures which the Spirit of God has used to set forth the compassionate

grace of the Saviour, none, perhaps, appeals to the heart with such simplicity and power as that of the shepherd going after the lost sheep. What could so forcibly portray our folly, misery, and impotence as the lost sheep entangled and entrapped, famished and faint, bereft of shepherd care, and far away from the shepherd's voice, exposed to every form of danger, a helpless prey to the destroyer? And what could so finely picture the individual love of the Divine Seeker, the force and persistency of it, as the shepherd going after the lost sheep just as if there were no other, regardless of toil, hardship, or danger, seeking on till He finds it, sparing not Himself till He saves it, resting not till He brings it right home rejoicing?

Reader, have you ever well considered the stupendous fact that this beautiful illustration was chosen by the Lord of glory Himself while on the way to the cross, and that it is preserved in His Word for the very purpose of attracting the hearts of destitute sinners? Should these lines meet the eyes of one such, weary of this cold and selfish world, and yearning for a deeper and more abiding love than it can afford, be comforted, here it is in divine perfection proffered to you. A love that needs not a worthy

object to call it forth, nor a worthy response to sustain it, but which, in the majesty of its own infinite excellency, flows forth to the one without worth, beauty, or strength, and, having cleared a divinely righteous ground for its free exercise ("by the sacrifice of Himself"), endowers that one externally with its unsearchable riches.

His seeking and saving grace is still in blessed activity, all praise to His sacred name! It filled the hearts of some in towns near to S——, and constrained them to come to the village to tell out the good news in a cottage there.

Among the toilers at the mill was Susan D——, and she was one of those who came to the cottage-preaching. So really and deeply did she feel the burden of her guilt, that she expressed it in her looks; and bowed her head, as if the load were on her shoulders as well as on her conscience. The last ray of hope was sinking from her breast. For was it not now for a long time that she had been looking within for the experience of an elect one, and had looked in vain?

Alas! that even good men should so little understand the *love* of God as to render void His Word by their tradition.

The astronomer reads His *power* in the constellations with more diffidence. Peering through billions of miles, he dares not set bounds, knowing that as the penetrating power of the observatory glass is increased, it is but to bring more millions of miles of illimitable space into ken, and fresh worlds "that declare the glory of God." Precious for us is it, that to the same One that belongeth power, belongeth also mercy (Ps. lxii. 11 and 12).

"His love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end."

In the cottage at S—— it was no mixture of thoughts (Ps. cxix. 113), that was preached with God's glad tidings, but the free, full, blessed, grace of God which *bringeth* salvation. And it was spoken out of a full heart by men who sometimes had to wade ankle deep through flood water, and to cross the river at some risk.

To Susan D—— it came as music from the skies. It was more welcome than the cry of "sail" to the ocean waif, and more eagerly drunk in than rain by the parched ground after drought. Despair gave way to delight, gloom to gladness, doubting to thanksgiving, mourning

to praise. And when, not a great while after, she was laid low, never to rise again (for this world), her joy seemed proportioned to her previous sorrow, and her love to the amount forgiven her (Luke vii. 47). In her intervals of consciousness these would find expression in the words of the "highly favoured among women" — "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" — which she would often quote, with uplifted eye and extended hands, in tones that betokened the intense fervour of her feelings. Told by an acquaintance she would soon see —, a mutual friend who had "gone on before," she replied — "Perhaps I shall, but it seems to me it will take me twenty years to look at Jesus." Thus was she taken right home rejoicing through His boundless grace.

Once more has attention been called to the judgment passed by supreme authority that "all have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23). Once again has been pointed out the ocean fulness of that grace which "justifies freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24), and now would we beseech earnest consideration of the resultant responsibility as set forth in the divinely sanctioned words, "How shall we escape

if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. ii. 3). The *refusal of grace* must entail the *acceptance of judgment*. They who will not be cleansed *from* their sins must be punished *for* them. The Saviour, in the supremacy of His grace, stooped so low to make propitiation, because He "loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity" (Ps. xlv. 7; Heb. i. 9). But having been appointed Judge in virtue of His work, He will judge in righteousness (Acts xvii. 31; Rev. xix. 11).

The warning is given and emphasized, but our desire and prayer is, that they who may have read this feeble presentation of His grace, may have had their interest awakened in Him. For such we have a special message: He who came to seek and save is coming again for those who have accepted His grace to take them home to His Father's house (John xiv. 2, 3). This crowning moment is drawing very near. While we wait for it, watching for Him to see Him in His beauty, He bids us, in the very closing hours (ay, it may be moments) of this day of grace, publish abroad the divinely given and sweetly opportune word, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).

A. J. H.

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"Where is He?"

I WAS looking over some premises one morning with a builder whose men were employed in alterations, when, missing one of the carpenters, he inquired of his mate, "Where is —, Thomas?"

"Dead, sir," quietly answered the man.

"Dead," said the master, "you don't mean that!"

"Yes, sir; dropped down last night not far from his door, and was gone in no time."

The master looked very grave, and for a moment there was silence as we pondered over the awfully solemn fact, that a man who yesterday was at his work, apparently in health and strength, was now numbered with the dead. I knew nothing of him personally; whether he was a saved soul, or a Christless, careless man; but I could not help saying a word to master and men, as we stood there together, of the necessity of being prepared for an event that may so suddenly happen to any one of us.

"*Gone over to the majority,*" says some careless person as he hears of another passing away.

"*Gone over to the majority,*" says the newspaper,

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commenting on the death of some notable person, but this may be true in a way that they do not mean, and do not perhaps think of. Did you ever think, my reader, of where the majority are gone? If the grave were the end of it we might dismiss the matter very soon; sorrow fills our hearts at the loss of some loved one, and time wears off the pang more or less quickly, even as "the waters wear the stones," but we know well that that is not the end. It is "the dread of something after death," as Shakespeare so justly said, that makes the matter a solemn one indeed; and the Word of God tells us what this something is. After death is the judgment (Heb. ix. 27), and we may well dread that.

"But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" asked Job in his day (chap. xiv. 10).

Ah! where is he? where is he, friend? You well know that the grave is not the end; you may have tried to persuade yourself that it is, and listened to the foolish reasoning of the sceptic, with a hope that it may quiet your conscience, but it has not done so. Many a poor troubled broken heart would seek the silence and rest of the grave from this weary scene of wickedness and woe if there were no *hereafter*, but

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"conscience makes cowards of us all," says the great poet again, and truer word he never spoke.

Many a one would say with Job to-day—"Oh that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret until Thy wrath be past" (chap. xiv. 13), but, my reader, neither death nor the grave is the end of our existence. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall come forth" (see John v. 28, 29). The sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell (hades) shall deliver up the dead that are in them; and they shall be judged every man according to his works (Rev. xx. 13).

If Job's question is to be answered by the only infallible standard—the Word of God—then what answer can we give to this momentous question? If a man dies in his sins, *where is he?* His body lies in the grave, and perhaps a costly and beautiful memorial marks the place; but what of the deathless spirit, his soul? "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," said the Lord Jesus, when describing the fate of the rich man who had lived only for the gratification of himself. If a man dies in Christ, a sinner saved by grace, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, Scripture as plainly says, "absent from

the body"—that body perhaps in a pauper's grave—but himself "present with the Lord." "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," said the Lord Jesus to the repentant robber, who was receiving the due reward of his deeds on the gibbet.

Is your soul awakened to the reality of these things, dear reader? then let me tell you, there is such a thing spoken of in God's Word as "boldness in the day of judgment." "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" (1 John iv. 17). God's love has been manifested in sending His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The penalty and judgment of sin have been borne by the righteous, holy Son of God. "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." He was, in His own blessed person as coming into this world, thus to die for sinners and make atonement for sin, the expression of God's love to this world—to you and to me. If we have known and believed the love that God hath to us, we know that perfect love which gives boldness in the day of judgment; but if you have not the forgiveness of your sins, you may well dread that something "after death." If you are Christ's—if as a poor sinner you have

accepted Him as your Saviour, no doubt or uncertainty need harass you as to what is *after death*.

Does the prisoner approach the bar with boldness if his guilt has not been cleared? Does not the day of judgment loom before his mind by day and by night, so that it is even a relief at times to know his fate? How much more when we know that we have to meet God, and that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be judged! But, dear reader, it is this same God that you and I have to meet in judgment, that has "sent His Son to take away our sins," and that "we may live through Him"—may have *eternal life*. He *commends* His love to us—seeks not for love from us, nor waits to find in us that which is not there. We are asked to believe the love that God hath to us; to open our hearts to it, to receive this blessed Son of His as the expression of that love which is in His heart, and whose finished work has settled every question between God and the believing sinner. The future is as clear and certain as the sun shining in the heavens to him who believes in Jesus. "*As He (Christ) is,*" is how the Scripture describes what such are now; and *as He is,* is how they will see Him when they are where He is.

T. R.

Faith's Resting-Place.

IF my soul rests entirely on the work of Christ and His acceptance, as the One who appears in the presence of God for me, that is a finished work, and a perfect, infinite acceptance. "*As He is*, so are we in this world;" so that herein is love with us made perfect, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment. Now what men substitute for this is the examination of the effects of the Spirit in me. The *effects* of regeneration are put as the *ground* of rest in lieu of redemption; whence I sometimes hope when I see those effects, sometimes despair when I see the flesh working. Having put the work of the Spirit in the place of the work of Christ, the confidence I am commanded to hold fast never exists, and I doubt whether I am in the faith at all. All this results from substituting the work of the Spirit in me for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished—the *sure*, because finished resting-place of faith, which never alters, never varies, and is always the same before God. The discovery of sin in you, hateful and detestable as it is, is no ground

for doubting ; because it was by reason of this, to atone for this, because you were this, that Christ died ; and Christ is risen, and *there* is an end of that question. J. N. D.



A Frank Confession.

“ I ’LL tell you what it is, *I don't believe we know anything about it.*”

The words were spoken with considerable emphasis, and the speaker apparently meant what he said. We were standing on the deck of a fine outward bound steamer one beautiful night in the tropics. The clear star-lit sky overhead, and the deliciously cool and balmy air after an oppressively hot day had tempted me to remain on deck rather later than usual.

I was taking my last round just before going below when Captain — met me, and to my surprise seemed inclined for a chat. Though always treated by him most courteously, he had nevertheless shown some slight hostility to the gospel services I was conducting on board, but

on this occasion he volunteered the inquiry, "What sort of a service had you to-night?"

"Oh, very good," said I; "we need to be reminded about eternal matters when on the sea just as much as when on land, for I fear that people are disposed to trifle with their souls and eternity just as much at sea as on shore."

"Perhaps so, if there be such a thing as eternity," was the tardy and sceptical reply.

"Well, I have no doubt about it, and that is why I preach, so that careless souls may wake up before it is too late, and meet Christ *now* as their Saviour, otherwise they will have to meet Him by-and-by as their Judge. The gospel, Captain, is 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'" (Rom. i. 16).

"But that is where I believe the missionaries and you preachers make a great mistake, going round the world threatening people with death and damnation. That would never win me to God."

"At any rate you acknowledge that you are away from God!" I replied, "and a very good thing it is to feel it. But who told you that the evangelist went round the world threatening people with death and damnation? No, he goes into a world where he finds multitudes of poor souls weary and labouring under the burden of

their sins, and he tells them how and where they may find *rest*—he spreads abroad His Saviour's loving invitation, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Do you not need rest? And where can you find it in this world? Nowhere. But come to Christ, and He will give it to you. True it is that most solemnly and tenderly he warns his hearers of the folly of rejecting the Saviour's gracious appeal. But so far from going about the world threatening people with death and damnation, as you say, he offers them, on God's behalf, life, yes, eternal life and everlasting salvation."

A good deal more in the same strain followed, and the opportunity was taken of warning our friend to beware of putting off until too late the matter of his own soul's salvation.

It was this that elicited the remark, "I don't believe we know anything about it." "You know nothing about the future, Captain, is that so?"

"Well, no more do you, or anybody else," he replied.

"Oh," said I, "never mind me and other people. You admit that *you* know nothing about it; that is a frank confession at all events. Your mind is a perfect blank, you know absolutely nothing about the future that lies

before you. There *may* be a heaven—you do not know. There *may* be a hell—you do not know. Well, then, as you *know* nothing you need say no more about it. Keep quiet now, and listen to what God says about it.”

We are living in days of scepticism and infidelity. The mind of man is active and the tendency of the hour is to doubt everything and to believe nothing, but it is well that people should clearly understand that if the testimony of the Scriptures is laid aside the mind of man has absolutely no knowledge whatever as to the future. All is dark, vague and uncertain.

Reader, will you venture to face this unknown future in this uncertain manner? What if the Bible be true after all? Oh! what madness to turn a deaf ear to the warnings with which it abounds, and to reject the offers of everlasting bliss which fill its pages. With no uncertain sound it rings out the terrors of death, judgment, and eternal perdition to all those who die in their sins and despise the precious Saviour who died to rescue them from eternal woe. With equal distinctness it describes the peace, the rest, the endless joy that await the one who has found refuge in the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God at Calvary's cross. Away with infidelity and un-

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belief, which must ere long land you in darkness and despair, and in their place let in the enlightening, soul-saving, and heart-cheering promises of the inspired Scriptures.

Remember that whilst God warns you of hell, it is because He loves you and invites you to share the bright and happy heaven of His presence, where there is *fulness* of joy and pleasures for *evermore*.

The precious blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sins, alone can fit the guilty sinner for that pure and holy scene.

A. H. B.



The Head of Every Man is Christ.

A DIALOGUE.

Sunday Afternoon. A Cottage Door.

Lady Visitor.—Good afternoon, Mr B. Is your wife at home?

Mr B. (in his shirt sleeves).—No, miss, she gone a bit o' the way with the children to the Sunday school. She won't be long, I expect.

Lady.—Then perhaps you will let me come in and wait for her?

Mr B.—Certainly, miss, take a chair.

Lady.—I wanted to tell her about the gospel preachings at B—— Hall. Have you been to any of them?

Mr B.—No, I ain't, I stays at home mostly Sundays. It's bad enough to have to go out all weathers every day of the week.

Lady.—You must find the time hang rather heavily on your hands, don't you?

Mr B.—Not I. What, with my pipe, and a bit o' readin', I make Sunday what it ought to be, a day of rest.

Lady.—If you are fond of reading, perhaps you will accept a little book from me.

Mr B. (glancing at the title "God is Satisfied—Are You?").—No, thank you, miss. None o' that sort for me. I don't want no ladies comin' round here teachin' *me* what I ought to do.

Lady.—I think you are under some mistake.

Mr B.—I ain't under no mistake. You comes round here preachin' and talkin' and pitchin' into me about my duty, and I ain't a-goin' to have it, not from you nor nobody else, though you *have* been good to my missus when she was ill. Let ladies mind their own business, I says, and I'll mind mine.

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Lady.—There, I think, you are quite right. But I don't come to teach you, on the contrary, I expect you to teach me.

Mr B.—What d'ye mean?

Lady.—You say it isn't a woman's business to preach, and that is just what God's Word says too. Well then, whose business is it?

Mr B.—Why, the parson's, I suppose; at least that's what he's paid to do, I reckon. I wish I could earn my living as easy.

Lady.—Did you ever have to collect subscriptions for a club?

Mr B. (surprised and delighted at the change of subject).—Why, yes. I used to go round trying to get people about here to join a Mutual Benefit Society — the Hand-and-Heart they called it. But there, I soon gave it up.

Lady.—Why?

Mr B.—Oh! it was more bother than profit. Why, there wasn't more than two out of three I could persuade to join, and when they did, I couldn't get 'em to keep the rules, or pay up their subscriptions, though they were sharp enough after the club money when they wanted it themselves.

Lady.—It didn't do *you* any good, I suppose if they did join.

Mr B.—Oh! of course it was a feather in my cap to get plenty of subscribers. But I didn't get any benefit except from belonging to the club myself. I told 'em I'd found the good of it; but it's wonderful how few care to provide against a rainy day.

Lady.—Well, how do you think people must enjoy going from house-to-house day by day, and preaching night by night, warning people of the wrath to come, telling them of the riches of God's grace waiting for them, and getting no thanks for it, only jeers and rebuffs, and weariness of heart and body; scarcely any one attending to their message; and those who do, half of them, only wanting to be saved from hell-fire, and quite unwilling to devote their hearts and lives to the Saviour who gave up all to die for them?

Mr B.—Well, I don't know that I ever thought about it like that before. Perhaps it ain't so pleasant as I thought for.

Lady.—Yes, I daresay you thought everybody made it as pleasant for the Lord's servants as you did.

Mr B.—Well, I don't know about that. I don't know as I ever tried to make it very easy for 'em. Let 'em do it if they like, I says,

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more fools they. But there ain't no call for ladies to be doin' of it.

Lady.—No, the Word of God forbids women to teach, and what is more it doesn't say one word about its being the business of a certain class of men, whether priests, parsons, or anything else. So that brings us back to our first question, whose business is it?

Mr B.—I don't know and I don't care neither.

Lady.—Don't you care to know? Perhaps you would not mind reading what God tells us about it in I Corinthians xii.

Mr B.—Oh! yes, I'll look at it if you like. Here's Mrs Blake's Bible.

Lady.—Please read the third verse.

Mr B. (reads).—“For I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” I don't see what that's got to do with it.

Lady.—You are a platelayer on the line, are you not? Will you tell me how you work?

Mr B.—Why, in gangs, with a foreman, to be sure.

Lady.—And if anything went wrong and caused an accident, who would be blamed?

Mr B.—Why, the foreman, of course.

Lady.—Why ?

Mr B.—Because he's at the head of us, and has to tell us what to do.

Lady.—But suppose you did something wrong without his telling you, would you be punished, or he ?

Mr B.—Why, both would be punished, unless he could prove I did it wrong after he told me right. He's got to *see we do* right as well as tell us what to do, else it's culpable negligence.

Lady.—Then the head of the gang is responsible ?

Mr B.—That's about it.

Lady.—You told me just now that the head of the woman is the man. Now will you kindly turn to Ezekiel xxxiii., and read the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses ?

Mr B. (reads).—“ So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it ; if he do not turn

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from his way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

Lady.—That is just like what you told me about the foreman's liability, isn't it?

Mr B.—Yes, I must say it is. But I don't know what you're drivin' at yet.

Lady.—Do you mind reading one or two other passages, and then, I think, you will see. First in 1 Corinthians xiv. 35.

Mr B. (reads)—"And if the women will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home."

Lady.—Now in 1 Timothy ii. 11.

Mr B. (reads).—"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection."

Lady.—And now in Ephesians vi. 4.

Mr B. (reads).—"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath : but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Lady.—Now do you see that God holds you responsible for your wife and children, not only for this life, but for the life to come? You saw those words in Ezekiel, didn't you? that if they do not repent they will have to bear the penalty, but their blood will be upon your head ! that is on the head of the man God holds responsible.

Mr B.—I ain't a bad father, nor yet a bad

husband ; my family gets all my wages, and they can go to church or meeting too, if they like. I shan't hinder them.

Lady.—That is quite true, Mr B., and there are hundreds like yourself, honest, steady men, kind to their wives and families. And you have your reward in being prosperous, happy, and respected. But how about your responsibilities to God? If your wife asked you questions about the things of God, could you teach her? or do you leave it all to ministers of the gospel, and chance visitors? Are *you* bringing up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? or do you leave it all to their Sunday-school teachers?

Mr B.—Well, I don't know how God Almighty can expect me to teach them what I don't know myself.

Lady.—And why don't you know it yourself, Mr B.? Haven't you the same opportunities that they have?

Mr B.—You see I never thought about its being my business before.

Lady.—Mr B., wouldn't it be a terrible thing for you to see one of your dear little boys grown to be a wicked man—to see him cast into the lake of fire, and to know it was *your* fault—that

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you did nothing to lead him to God? What punishment would you deserve, you who are responsible for his existence, and who calmly left him to be the prey of Satan?

Mr B.—I never saw it like that before.

Lady.—I fear I must go now without seeing Mrs B., it is getting so late.

Mr B.—Good-bye, miss. You've given me a deal to think about, but I don't quite see that you practise what you preach about not teachin' men.

Lady.—Oh, I haven't been teaching you, Mr B. If you remember, I have only been asking you questions, and I thank you for answering them so courteously. It was the Word of God that was teaching you—not I.

Mr B.—Well, I don't know what you understand by learnin' in silence with all subjection:—seems to me *I've* been doin' the best part of that this time.

Lady.—Thank God, Mr B., if you *have* learnt in subjection to His own Word. I only hope and pray, you may do so more and more. It is pleasant and easy for you to remember that “the head of the woman is the man;” but it is even more solemn and important, is it not? to remember that “the head of every man is Christ,”

and "we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to receive the things done in the body whether they be good or bad."

B. V. L.

◆◆◆

"Jesus Wept."

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.)

ALL must pass away here, the stamp of death is on everything, but marvellous the power that the gospel gives to face it all! To nature death is terrible, and there is sadness in the thought even of the fading of a flower, not to be expressed. Seeing flowers in the room of a sick one, and feeling that both are fading and dying, and the hand that gathered shall gather no more. Yet the grace of God comes in just there in all the sweetness of the gospel, giving His dying children to realize and to know all the brightness of their future home in heaven. What if all the power of the enemy is brought before us at the grave, have we not all in Christ to uphold and lift us above everything?

We are all passing on, going *home* if we are the "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

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We have to look upon heaven as a home to which we are on our way, and so to have hold of the hope of the gospel with one hand as to let go of the world with the other.

The gospel brings eternal realities before the soul, and shows how we ourselves are linked with them. Oh, how bright the glory of God burning in the lamp of the believer's future!

To have hold of Christ is to have hold of the resurrection and the life. He is the power and the spring of life. He spake, as it were, upon the tombs of us all in this vast charnel house. We see in Him the God of creation and the God of resurrection; He who could people earth out of nothing, and raise the dead out of nothing by one and the same power.

The very fact of our Creator being presented to us as a man, how marvellous! To have Him who "spake, and it was done," down on this earth in our form, God "manifest in the flesh." To have Him up there on the throne of God, a man still, and able up there to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; to know there is nothing for us in all our sorrows, but gathering round this tender-hearted, risen Jesus—how blessed a thought!

Alas! alas! how we do shut out God from

His creation. How would you have your Creator manifested to you in this vast charnel house, where pining sickness and misery meet the eye on all sides? If you don't know your God, you may know Him by His having been manifested down here; and when He manifested Himself it was to meet the condition in which the world was.

Mark Him in this death scene, He, "the resurrection and the life," weeping with the weepers! Mary does not go to the grave but to Christ.

There is something so marvellously blessed in the fact of God in human form down here to weep with man, and by almighty power and love to turn man's sorrow into joy—to see Him going further still, to give life to the dead, and entering the house of mourning for that purpose.

Here we read, when Jesus saw this poor woman weeping, He groaned in spirit, anguish choked His utterance. God in human form placed Himself beside man, and wept with him. It was worth, as it were, an ocean of tears to see these precious drops. It was through the human nature of Christ the heart of God was let out—"JESUS WEPT."

JOHN W.

HOW A CLERGYMAN FOUND PEACE WITH GOD. 281

How a Ritualistic Clergyman found Peace with God.

“**T**WO gentlemen called to see you, sir, this afternoon, and were sorry you were out, but they hope to write. You will find their cards upon the table.”

A remarkable work of the Spirit of God had been taking place in the little town of R——. Night after night many had gathered together in a public hall to hear the message of life and salvation. Numbers had been awakened to think seriously of their souls' eternal interests. Careless sinners had been aroused to flee from the wrath to come and find refuge in Christ. Regular church-goers, too, had been brought to see the emptiness of mere outward religiousness, and were beginning to learn the truth that “there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 23).

The preaching of the truth of man's lost condition, and of God's perfect remedy in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus was producing its blessed effects, and many were now

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rejoicing in the knowledge of forgiveness of their sins, the possession of eternal life through faith in Christ, and the certain hope of eternal glory.

On going into my sitting-room I found lying on the table the two cards which had been left that afternoon, and the reader can judge of my surprise on finding the names of two ritualistic clergymen living in the neighbourhood. One of the two was an extreme ritualist, well known to me by name, and who was looked upon by many as a Romanist in very faint disguise.

What could have been the motive for their visit? Had they come to reprove me for disturbing the peace of easy-going parishioners, and to "warn me off" the premises?

I was not long left in doubt, for the next day brought me a short and courteous note which, for the reader's benefit, I beg leave to transcribe. It ran thus:—

"— RECTORY, 15th October 1881.

"DEAR SIR,—I understand you are kind enough to hold services with the object of awakening the careless and unconverted.

"I should feel deeply thankful if you could hold an occasional service with that object in a school-room of mine at ——. The inhabitants

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generally speaking are in a most apathetic condition, and sadly need to be aroused to a concern for their souls. . . . If you would kindly waive ceremony, and come and talk over the best method of trying to do something, I should be very glad.—I remain, yours very truly,
 _____.”

In response to the above invitation, at the earliest opportunity, I found myself on the way to ——— Rectory. Mr ——— was a man of the most refined and gentle disposition, and had a longing for the conversion of those amongst whom he lived. He told me that he deplored the state of division of the professing Church, and had a strong leaning towards Rome, for there, it appeared to him, there was unity.

That unity, I tried to show him, was false, it was merely the outward unity which resulted from handing over the keeping of mind and conscience to a tyrannical priesthood, and that that system could not be of God which deliberately withheld the Scriptures from the people wherever it had power to do so, and pronounced its awful anathemas upon all those who dared to read and interpret them for themselves.

After much interesting conversation, I expressed my great surprise that with his extreme

views he should have invited me, a layman, to preach the gospel in his parish, and remarked that before arranging anything I ought in common honesty to tell him that my preaching would differ entirely and radically from his own.

“If I come,” said I, “I shall tell the people that simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work on Calvary is the only way of salvation. And I shall tell them that sacraments and ritualistic observances, and all their works and prayers will not even *help* to save them.”

Oh, how the whole fabric of ritualism crumbles to the ground in presence of that one perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross! “By one offering He hath perfected FOR EVER them that are sanctified” (Heb. x. 14). Such is the plain declaration of God’s Word; on this firm foundation multitudes have rested, and have found peace.

“All that I had been building up for years,” said a toiler in the ritualistic workshop, “was demolished at one blow by those three words: ‘It is finished.’ But oh! what a *come-down* it was.” Yes, indeed, to be justified by faith in the finished work of Christ, and *not* by works of righteousness which we have done (Titus iii. 5),

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is humbling to the pride of man, but it exalts Christ; and ere long those who by grace learn the lesson will join in the redemption song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive . . . honour and glory" (Rev. v.).

"I leave you perfectly free to preach what you believe to be the truth, for if you do the people no good you are not likely to do them much harm. They will not come to church, and if I do try some special services in the school-room I cannot get more than half-a-dozen to attend."

Arrangements having been made, I proceeded to go from house to house through the parish, a very scattered one, and invited all to be present the following Thursday evening.

At the appointed hour, much to my friend's surprise, but in answer to the prayers that had gone up from many Christians interested in the matter, the little school-room was packed with people, so much so that we ourselves found it difficult to get in.

On this occasion I felt led to preach from the interesting incident in Mark v. 25-35,—the poor woman who had sought for healing in her own way for twelve years, but who had to give it all up and come as a poor, helpless creature to the Lord Jesus Christ, and be healed by a touch.

From this I sought as simply as possible to bring out *first*, man's hopeless and helpless state of need before God as a sinner, and *secondly*, that all the sinner's best efforts are worthless. "Come to Jesus first, trust in Him, and in Him alone for salvation; the work is finished.

"Cast your 'deadly' doing down,
Down at Jesus' feet,
Stand 'in Him,' in Him alone,
Gloriously 'complete.'

"To put works before salvation is like putting the cart before the horse. Salvation by faith first, then works out of love to a Saviour who has saved you, &c."

Concluding the address with some such words as these, I scarcely expected that the privilege would be extended to me of holding a second service, and so before I sat down I thanked Mr — for his kindness in permitting me to use the school-room.

I shall never forget the tall figure rising from his seat in the corner of the room, and the gracious reply, "I think it is for us to thank you, sir, and I for one should be very glad if you would kindly come next week."

Three services in all were held in the school-room before my leaving home for a long voyage,

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and feeling that we might never meet again on earth, I longed to know how matters stood between himself and God. With this desire uppermost in my mind I went one day to call on him ; we met in the road, and the following conversation took place.

“ Mr ——, will you be kind enough to tell me *when* you were converted.” I scarcely liked to wound his feelings by asking *if* he were converted.

“ In one sense of that word,” he replied, “ I have been converted most of my life ; but in your sense of it I was converted last Monday morning at ten o'clock.”

Greatly surprised, I asked what he meant.

“ Well,” he replied, “ I had always believed in my Saviour, but I had always thought that something more was needed on my part, and I was always trying to do this ‘something more,’ but on Monday morning I was on my knees in my study, and the glorious truth contained in those words of Jesus on the cross, ‘It is finished,’ flashed into my soul ; and oh ! it is peace to know that all is done.” “ Now,” he continued, “ I understand what you meant the other night when you told the people that *it was not works in order to be saved, but works because we are saved*, that were precious in the eyes of the

Lord." Much more followed in the same strain which I treasure in my memory, and, with a warm shake of the hand, we parted never to see one another again on earth.

Two or three days after my return home he passed away.

Should any read this little story of "how a ritualistic clergyman found peace with God," and who are seeking by their own works *to do a work which is done*, I earnestly pray that they too may be led to see the truth of words so often sung, but so seldom believed—

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

A. H. B.

How a Little Boy was Converted.

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. xviii. 3.

"**C**OME here, H——, and I will read to you from the Bible about a great King," said a fond mother one day to her little boy of nine years of age.

The child obeyed, and in a few moments was

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sitting by her side, listening with the utmost attention to the following wonderful description of what will take place when Christ comes to set up His kingdom over the earth.

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory :

“And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats :

“And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in :

“Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me :

“Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink?

“When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?

“Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?”

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink:

“I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not.

“Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?”

“Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

The words made a very deep impression on the child's mind, and very shortly afterward,

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probably two or three days, the mother was awakened very early in the morning by a little rap at her chamber door, accompanied by a plaintive cry, "O mamma, let me in." The mother, supposing the child was ill, hastened to the door and, opening it, said to her little son, as he stood before her in his little night-dress, weeping, "What is the matter with you, H——? Are you sick?"

"Oh no, mamma, but it was awful; it was dreadful!"

"What was dreadful?" And so saying she drew her boy into the room, and in a few moments the child unbosomed his heart to her.

"O mamma," he said, "I have just been dreaming, and I saw the Lord Jesus sitting on His throne of glory—you read me all about it the other day—and all His angels were with Him, and before Him there was a great, great crowd of people, and I knew what was going to happen, because I remembered what you read me about. I knew He was going to separate those people, and all the sheep would be on His right hand, and all the goats would be on His left hand. I wondered if I were a sheep or a goat, and if He would tell me I was saved, or tell me to go away and be punished for ever. And, O mamma, I did

not wait long ; in a few moments, when He divided the sheep from the goats, I was among the goats. And oh ! I knew what a naughty boy I had been, and then I waked up. I was so glad that it was only a dream."

The mother was much affected by the child's story, and began to speak in this wise to her boy :—" I have often told you about Jesus, who came from heaven, who lived a perfect, holy life, for He was the Son of God, and when He was thirty-three years old, men took Him and nailed Him to the cross, killing Him ; then three days afterwards God raised Him from the dead, and He is now in heaven ; then God sent a message to those who had killed Him, and told them that though they had killed Jesus, and their sin was very great for having done so, it must needs be that Jesus should die for men, or all men would be lost and go to hell when they die, but that God offered to every one that believed in Jesus a pardon for their sins ; and many believed it and were saved ; but many others did not believe it, and their souls were lost. And, now, my little boy, God is still offering to forgive everybody that will take the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, whether it be grown people or a little boy like you."

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The little fellow had often heard the story of grace before, but it sounded so new to him now. Before, it was only an historical fact ; now, he felt, as he never had before, that Christ was one who had died and risen again for him, a truth in which he had a living eternal interest. He felt that he was in debt, like the poor woman who came into the house of Simon the Pharisee to see Jesus, and stood at His feet, behind Him, weeping. Simon too was in debt, but it was a matter of little consequence to him.

Little H—— also, like the prodigal in the far country, had learned what it is to be “in want,” and it was not long afterward that rest and peace, as a result of believing God’s simple message, filled his heart.

Over twenty-three years have passed. His life has been spared to bear witness to others of the Lord Jesus as a *present* Saviour, and to the peace-giving efficacy of the blood of Christ, for the burdened conscience and sin-troubled soul.

He says, now, with all the blessed assurance that the Scriptures give, “Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have *boldness* in the day of judgment, because *as He is, so are we in this world*” (1 John iv. 17).

Reader, do *you* know this love? S.

“Only Two!”

I HAD been preaching the gospel in the open air in one of the small rural villages of Devonshire one summer evening a few years ago, and among the listeners was a Christian farmer upon whom I had called a day or two before. At the close of the preaching the farmer kindly offered to show me a way to the hamlet where I was lodging, nearer than by the main road over which I had come, and as we walked along in the dusk I asked, how many real Christians—converted persons—he thought there were in the village we had just left? After a few minutes' consideration, he replied, very thoughtfully: “Well, I think I can speak for two,” and named the two persons that he thought might be considered such.

“I suppose you know all the people in the village pretty well?”

“Oh, yes,” he replied, “every one, I think.”

I had been speaking a little, during that preaching, of Christ's second coming; showing that the Word of God plainly teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming back again to take away all that are His from this earth.

"They that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 23). Although the Scriptures tell us this so distinctly, and it is their unvarying testimony from beginning to end, very few persons really believe it; and all kinds of theories and ideas are mixed up with it to weaken the force and simplicity of the fact. Some are apt to think that such an event would put a stop to all the world's doings, and others that the end of the world will have arrived when this takes place; but supposing my friend's estimate of the inhabitants of that little village to be a correct one, and that the Lord had come that night, *only two* persons would have been missing. Of course, our friend may have been mistaken. I hope he was. He could not see into their hearts, and perhaps the Lord knew that more than two, yea, many more poor sinners from that little village had accepted Him as their Saviour. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim. ii. 19). But, on that eventful day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, the only persons missing from that village, or anywhere else, will be the true believers on the Lord Jesus Christ. "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 " (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17).

At some unexpected moment when everything seems just as usual, the shout will be heard by the Lord's people, and they will be gone—gone from their place in the shop or at the desk—gone from the railway carriage and the ship's deck—gone from the street of the busy city or the lonely country road. Without a sign or a warning, without a moment for preparation, the shout will be heard, and every single soul who has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour will be gone.

But that is not all, dear reader, your hope will be gone, too, if you are unsaved; if you are not Christ's, your chance of becoming His will be gone; your opportunity for salvation will be gone; you will be left behind for judgment, for the coming wrath of God. It may be you will wake up one morning, and find your believing parents gone, or your believing children, if you are a parent; your converted shopmate that has often been a laughing-stock to his companions will be gone; but remember, your chance of spending eternity with them will be gone too; and why? Not because they were better than you, but because they accepted Christ, and you

did not ; they believed God's Word, but you did not ; they were washed in the precious blood of Christ, and you were not. They were Christ's ; you were not !

In another verse of that oft-repeated scripture, 1 Cor. xv., it says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment." Numberless are the times this has been read at the funerals of "all sorts and conditions of men," but how few reflect on what it means. It is the commonest remark as to death, that "We must all go some day," and of man as such this is quite true, for it is the common lot of man. "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. ix. 27), but the very next verse says, "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

My dear friend, there is a double reason why you should get the question of your soul's salvation settled ; one is, that you may at any hour be called away in death, and the other is, that the Lord Jesus may at any moment return to take away those that are His, and afterward to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel. Remember that what settles the question of whether you and I will be among those that are "caught up" is, whether or

not we are Christ's. Poor, despised, ignorant, it may be, in the estimation of this world, but "the Lord knoweth them that are His;" and He is coming to take away those that are His before the wrath of God is poured out upon an unbelieving and ungodly world. "The dead shall be raised," "The living shall be changed." When? At His coming! Are you ready?

The children of God around you *may* have to pass through death, but the truth remains that thousands, aye, tens of thousands (blessed be His name!) who are now passing in and out amongst us, may not die at all, but may be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This is the Christian's proper hope. But, my reader, if you are still in your sins, what is *your* hope? If you die in your sins, without Christ, there is nothing before you but the second death, which is the lake of fire.

God grant that you may turn to Him now, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, who suffered "the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

T. R.

WHEN a man is in a wrong road, the farther he goes in it the more he is astray.—J. N. D.

Christ is Risen !

“**G**OD is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” He is INFINITELY, ETERNALLY HOLY, so that no sin can ever enter His presence. He is, likewise, INFINITELY, ETERNALLY RIGHTEOUS, and “can by no means clear the guilty.” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” is the divine decree, and, “after death, the judgment.” No power in heaven, earth, or hell can reverse this. It *must* be faced. Philosophy may suggest, and infidelity may argue, but God’s unerring word *must* abide. “The word of the Lord endureth for ever.”

Now, it is when the light of God’s holy Word is brought to bear in living power upon the conscience that the sorrow of soul is known, which has been so vividly depicted by John Bunyan, in the following terms :—

“I saw a man clothed with rags standing in a certain place with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a burden upon his back. I looked and saw him open the book and read therein, and as he read he wept and trembled, and, not being able longer to contain, he brake

out with a lamentable cry, saying, What shall I do? . . . I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment. . . . I fear that this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the grave."

An important moment it is, indeed, when such a cry as this is elicited from a soul.

What a wonderful DAY was that day of Pentecost, when "pricked in heart" through the preaching of the apostle Peter, the cry was drawn from conscience-stricken souls, "Men and brethren, *What shall we do?*" It was a wonderful day, for we read that "there were added *that day* about three thousand souls, who continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

And, what a glorious NOON was that when, arrested on the road to Damascus, on his murderous mission, by a light brighter than the mid-day sun, Saul of Tarsus, "trembling and astonished," inquired of the risen Jesus, "Lord, *what wilt Thou have me to do?*"

Again, what a never-to-be-forgotten NIGHT was that when the jailer of Philippi sought, with trembling, from the prisoners Paul and Silas, an

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answer to his question, "Sirs, *what must I do to be saved?*" These very men he had previously "thrust into the inner prison," but now he "brought" them "out, and washed their stripes."

"To be *saved*," there is nothing *to do*, for God, who is infinitely, eternally holy, and infinitely, eternally righteous, is likewise INFINITELY, ETERNALLY MERCIFUL, and He so loved this world of sinners, that He gave His only begotten Son, who, "being found in fashion as a man," went to the cross, and "died for our sins, according to the Scriptures."

No mere creature could have done this. None but He, Who (equal with the Father as touching His Godhead) "took upon Himself the form of a servant," could have accomplished it; for none but He, that blessed God-man, was able to *so fully estimate* the extent of the Divine requirements, as to be able to say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will."

And He did that will, for, bearing the sinner's sins "in His own body on the tree," Christ died for the ungodly." He is now in glory, having been "raised again for our justification," and such is the completeness of the Redeemer's work, that God now declares, concerning those who believe in Jesus, that "all that believe are

justified from all things," and He further says, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember NO MORE."

Reader, "*understandest* thou what thou readest?" for, it is written, "He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and *understandeth* it, which also beareth fruit."

"Forsaken" (Mark xv. 34), Christ on the cross was the measure of the sinner's distance from God.

"Received up into heaven" (Mark xvi. 19), Christ in the glory is the measure of the believer's nearness to God. Yes,—

"So near, so VERY NEAR to God,
I could not nearer be,
For, in the person of His Son,
I am *as near as He.*"

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

"The Lord is risen indeed," and this is proof that the Divine claim in regard to sin has been met, and that, too, according to God's estimate, not man's. So that now, in reply to the earnest inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" we can point with uplifted hand to Him whom God hath made "both Lord and Christ,"

and say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," for "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

N. L. N.

Bound or Loosed : Which ?

THERE is a verse in Peter's sermon to Cornelius and his friends, which beautifully describes the life of Jesus in this world. He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38). Among those oppressed by the devil that came in His pathway was a poor woman who had been bound by Satan for eighteen years. "She was bound together, and could in no wise lift up herself" (Luke xiii. 11). Now *we* should have said, had we been onlookers, that disease and suffering had caused this: *Jesus* said, "Ought not this woman, *whom Satan hath bound*, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond?"

And Jesus "laid His hands on her ; and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."

God was with Jesus, and He only could heal one oppressed by the devil. Have you ever imagined what this poor woman must have felt—what any poor sinner feels, when tied and bound by a chain of sins? Ah, the devil is a hard task-master! His victims are "bound" by him; this one had been so for eighteen years. And what did Jesus come here for? "To heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke iv. 18). Would *you* like to be healed by Him—to be "loosed from" your sins thus?

Some years ago an officer in the army who is not now alive, was thrown from his horse, and rather seriously injured. For many days he lay upon his bed suffering great pain and murmuring loudly. His wife at last hearing him wish himself dead, reproved him, saying, "Take care what you say—you may find yourself in a worse case than this."

What could be worse, he thought, than this agony? Ah! "the wicked shall be turned into *hell*" (Ps. ix. 17). *Hell* would be worse than

suffering here ; hell is for the wicked—for all who do not know God—do *I* know God ?

Thoughts such as these passed through the officer's mind—thoughts of his sins, and death and judgment and hell. It is quite easy to *say*, "I do not believe in hell," but what would you feel were you face to face with it, like Captain K—— ?

What did Jesus say to the Jews who disputed with, instead of believing on Him ? "If ye believe not that I am, *ye shall die in your sins*" (John viii. 24). To die in your sins, means never to be separated from them, to have them bound upon you for ever and ever—aye, not bound on you for only eighteen years like the woman bound by Satan, but tied about you like a chain for eternity. No loosing from them then will be possible, for the day of God's wrath will come, and mercy will be over for ever. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust *still* : he which is filthy, let him be filthy *still*" (Rev. xxii. 11), is what will be said in that day, for eternity admits of no change of place or state.

Captain K—— knew about these things, and God pressed home His Word, and his wife's solemn warning to his conscience, and when he arose from his couch, he was a humble follower

of the Lord Jesus. He *was loosed from his sins*. Reader, *are you?* "Through His name," said Peter, the name of Jesus, "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). If you trust in Jesus, you, too, may now receive loosing from or remission of your sins, and become free indeed, for "the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32).

Later on in his history Captain K—— was enabled to witness for his Saviour as one who *was* "free indeed." He was an officer of some distinction, so on being ordered to another foreign military station, a dinner was given on his arrival. Determined to show his colours at the outset, he paused at the door of the mess-room, and looking round, he asked, "Is there any man here who knows the Lord Jesus Christ?" There was a pause of astonished silence; suddenly a young officer sprang forward, and with outstretched hand replied, "I do." Perhaps for the first time he openly took sides with Christ. "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36). So these two men, both loosed from their sins, and Christ's free-men, began to work together for the One who had loosed them, and sought to rescue others from "the snare of the devil, who are

taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. ii. 26).

Dear reader, which do you prefer? Chains with Satan, or freedom with Jesus? It is a blessed thing to be enabled to stand for Christ as His freedmen in a world that is governed by the devil—to have courage to own the One who was cast out here. Think, too, of what it cost Him to make us free! We were the slaves of Satan, in bondage to him, until Christ the stronger than he, entered his palace and *overcame him* (Luke xi. 21, 22). The Lord Jesus went down into death to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). Yes, Jesus *died* to accomplish this, do you believe it?

On the other hand, how terrible to pass out of this world still bound by Satan, and not only so, but tied up in your sins, so to speak. Many a man of the world even here loathes the sins which beset him, and from which he cannot free himself—think, then, what it must be to have the very things of which you have a horror bound on you for ever! "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins."

Reader, make your choice now, take sides with Christ; your chains will fall off, and you will be free, and all this because Jesus died,

“He paid in blood the dreadful score—
The ransom due for me.”

H. L. H.

“What do You know?”

AN aged saint grown grey in his Master's service (for he was a minister of Christ), was once in conversation with a young man who was full of himself, and of what he had been acquiring at college. “Of course, Mr —, you are acquainted with such an author, and familiar with his works.”

“No,” replied the aged man, “I do not know them.” Some other subject was started by his companion, and question after question put, to each of which the answer was, “I do not know.” Teased at length, and forgetting the honour due to grey hairs, the young man asked, “And what, sir, *do* you know?”

“Young man,” was the reply, “I know HIM whom to know is LIFE ETERNAL.”

Reader, “What do *you* know?”

* * *

How long halt ye?

WE are nearing the end of another year. Rapidly have its hours slipped away, and rapid has been the march of events towards the fulfilment of God's purposes with regard to this poor world. Multitudes who but a few short months ago, full of health and vigour, were wishing one another a Happy New Year, with hearts filled with bright hopes for the future, a future on this earth, are now numbered with the dead.

Their place knows them no more, and though some sorrowing hearts may be left behind to mourn their absence, yet the river of time flows placidly on, for men and women are so engrossed with the present, that they must forget the past, they can scarcely indeed find time to give a hurried thought to the future.

Possibly you who are now reading these lines began this year with a fixed determination to forsake the service of sin and Satan, and to enlist in that of the Lord Jesus Christ. How does its close find you?

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“Further off than ever,” I fancy your heart replies.

Thank God, then, you are still alive. Oh, do let me, with all the earnestness I can, beseech of you for your poor soul’s sake to bow at once at the blessed Saviour’s feet. Before this year passes away, before the clock has ticked away the precious moments of this very day, come with all your many sins to the Lord Jesus Christ, and hear Him say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee ; go in peace.” “How long halt ye between two opinions ?” (1 Kings xviii. 21.)

“The silver trumpet’s sounding
The year of Jubilee ;
And grace is all abounding,
To set the bondmen free.

Forsake your wretched service,
Your master’s claims are o’er,
Avail yourselves of freedom,
Be Satan’s slaves no more.

A better Master’s calling,
In accents true and kind ;
He asks a loving service,
And claims a willing mind.

He offers you salvation,
And points to joys above ;
And, longing, waits to make you
The objects of His love.

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In living faith accept Him,
 Give up all else beside ;
 While grace is loudly calling,
 Look to the Glorified."

A. H. B.



Sought—Saved—Satisfied.

(LUKE viii. 22-40.)

HOW this lovely incident unfolds to us the interest of Christ's heart in needy sinners! "It came to pass on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His disciples; and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth."

It was after a hard day's work. The "even was now come," and they might readily have excused themselves by the plea of fatigue from putting to sea again. But they had companied long enough with Him to know it was not a casual suggestion, it was no mere pleasure trip which prompted Him to cross the lake at that late hour. Nor does the Lord's servant—the "man of God"—go anywhere by *chance*. He

may be taken to the other side of the world, or brought from thence to be God's messenger to some needy soul; that is, if he lives close enough to Him to hear His directions.

"And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit." Here, then, was the object whom He sought. Not an interesting one, from man's point of view; but the captive of Satan, and as such, making a claim upon the pity, tenderness, and love of Christ. Wonderfully blessed moment when the Saviour and the sinner are thrown together for the first time!

Reader, *you* will have to meet Christ some day! Willingly, or unwillingly, you will have to hear His voice, and look upon His face, and bow your knee to Him. For it is written, "Every eye shall see Him." Every knee shall bow, and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," and you will be one of that vast multitude. Are you prepared for this? Will it be a joy to you, or a moment of unutterable terror? Face the question now, we entreat you, and settle it without loss of time.

"Bound with fetters and chains." What a picture this presents of man's state by nature!

“Sold under sin,” for “to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are” (Rom. v., vi.) Have you thought of it? As you walk up and down in the world, if not the Lord’s freeman, you are a captive of Satan. “Tied and bound,” as thousands repeat every Sunday, “with the chain of your sins.” Surrounded by death, and corruption, “dwelling amongst the tombs,” and yet in this place, and in this condition, attracting the love and pity of the heart of God! Just think of it. This whole world a scene of death—one vast graveyard—to the eye of God. “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

“In the midst of life we are in death,” is a maxim of the world’s. It looks at its assemblages of fashion—where rank, beauty, and wealth congregate; its ball-rooms—race-courses—theatres, and calls this *life!* But God looking down upon it all, sees death stamped upon the scene; save where Christ has been received, and has given life unto the soul. “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (John iii. 36).

Is this your condition? Are you still “dead in trespasses and sins”? A poor slave of Satan?

With the best this world can give, it may be, within your grasp, and yet spiritually dead? Without a desire of your mind, or a pulsation of your heart Godward? Well, though you may be too unconscious of it to pity yourself, the Lord has pity upon you. His eye sees your danger; His heart feels for your unhappy state; and He has taken that wonderful journey from the glory to the cross, that He might come where you were. He has passed through a far more terrific storm than that which ever swept the Sea of Galilee; even the storm of the wrath of a Holy God which burst upon Him, when "He who knew no sin, was made sin for us," and in anguish of soul He cried out, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing"; "all Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over Me." And all this, that He might meet you, as He "met" this poor man of whom we are reading, for your eternal peace and blessing.

"And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, Legion: for we are many." Here was the honest confession of his terrible state. This must ever take place before there can be blessing. Have you learnt your need, and *confessed it*? Learnt that you are a sinner, and need a Saviour? If so, the link is formed

between your soul and Him. You want Christ, and He wants you. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*." You, the sinner, want to be saved, and He wants to save you. How simple it all is! How satisfying! and how worthy of God!

He "commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man." The work was done, Satan defeated, and his captive released. And the next thing we find is "the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind." Lovely evidence of the work which had been wrought! Sought—saved—he now finds his shelter and satisfaction in the presence of the One from whom formerly he would have fled. How beautiful and fitting is this result, when the soul apprehends the salvation of God! He "prayed Him that he might be with Him." Do we thus covet the company of Christ? Do we delight often to turn aside from the turmoil of surrounding things to rest with Him? Can we say, Wherever Jesus is, there I want to be; or, as Bunyan puts it, "Wherever I have seen the print of His feet, there have I coveted to set my foot also"? If so, we can understand this poor man desiring to be with Him, and finding

his deepest enjoyment now, in the presence of his Deliverer.

“ My heart, which late could beat for nought
 Save earthly love and earthly care,
 Now rose, with one controlling thought,
 To follow Him—I know not where !

He gave no word of stern command,
 But drew me with a magnet power ;
 His company—where'er 'twas found—
 My heart's one craving from that hour ! ”

But now we read a solemn thing. If, on the one hand, the healed man prayed that he might be with the Lord ; on the other, we find the people of the country praying Him to go away ! More concerned about the loss of their swine than the salvation of a poor sinner, “ they besought Him to depart from them.” Such has been the desire of man in every age—to get rid of God. It is but the echo of the same mad choice the world has been making from before the Flood, when “ they said unto God, Depart from us ” (Job xxii. 15-17). While later on, it was Baal instead of Jehovah, Barabbas instead of Christ, the “ spirit of Python ” instead of the Spirit of God. (See Acts xvi. 16-39.) Thus Father, Son, and Spirit, have each in turn been rejected by the world !

Are not *you* doing the same thing? Seeking to shut God out of the scene? seeking to exclude Him from your life, because the remembrance of Him mars the world's mirth, as it did the revelries of Belshazzar's feast? Are you placing greater value upon the "herd of swine"—your earthly possessions—than upon the Son of God? Take care that the day come not, when He will utter that terrible word, "*Depart!*" thus sealing your eternal doom!

Well, the Lord took these people at their word. He left their country, recrossed the lake, and came again to Galilee. And it is a relief to read the closing words of this narrative, and find that there, in that dark, despised, outcast place, were a few true hearts looking out for Him. "When Jesus was returned, the people gladly received Him: *for they were all waiting for Him.*"

Child of God, may this be a true description of your attitude, and mine. Looking for our Lord's return—waiting for the Son from heaven. To welcome Him, oh! how "gladly," when His shout falls upon our ears.

"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
A. S. M.

A Terrible Panic.

NO one in the least degree familiar with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures can have the smallest doubt of one thing, and that is that the *Lord Jesus Christ is coming again.*

That He is coming again to judge the world, none but an avowed infidel will deny, and every creed in Christendom acknowledges. But there is to the thoughts of men such an indefiniteness as to the day and the hour when this shall take place, it seems to be so far away in the dim future, that multitudes of people are content to run the risk of being prepared for that solemn and awful event, in the vague hope that somewhere between this and the hour of death they may be made fit to stand the terrible ordeal.

But before the Lord Jesus will appear to judge the world, He will come to take His people to heaven. It is not our purpose in this paper to enter into the Scripture proof of this latter remark,—it has been so frequently and abundantly done elsewhere,—but we would state the fact again with all the emphasis of firm conviction.

For more than twenty years, ever since the

gracious Lord of the harvest sent us forth to preach the glad tidings of salvation in this world of perishing sinners, it has been our happy privilege to sound abroad the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" Yes, we have known this truth, held it as a doctrine, and preached it as an all-important part of that whole counsel of God which no servant of Christ should ever shun to declare. We have preached it, moreover, as an event which might at any moment take place, but we have never before realized so vividly as we do now that the coming of the Lord indeed draweth *very* nigh. We do not attempt to fix dates. All these vain and presumptuous speculations we leave to others. "Of that day and hour knoweth no man," is the clear utterance of the Word of God. But, for all that, we believe that His coming is very rapidly drawing nigh. Everything points to this, whether in the Church or in the world; and we feel compelled once more to sound the alarm, and to urge upon all our readers the immense importance, nay, the *imperative necessity, of being ready*. "They that were ready," and they only, "went in," and "the door was shut."

Reader, are *you* ready?

If not, come at once as a poor, lost, and guilty

sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ ; trust Him for salvation, own your need of cleansing in His precious blood, and accept on the spot the forgiveness which God is now offering to every one who believes in His Son.

While preaching the Gospel not long since, we were speaking of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and stated as our conviction that it was near at hand. A man went away saying, "That man believes the world is just coming to an end!"

We believe no such thing. The world will not come to an end when the Lord Jesus comes into the clouds to take His people to heaven (1 Thess. iv.). No, no. Every child of God, whether dead or alive, will be "caught up" to meet the Lord in the air ; but the world will continue its course, and many things of the most solemn import will take place on the earth, after the removal of the Church.

But will the world see the saints being "caught up"? This is a question often asked, and we believe that the Scriptures imply that none shall see it actually taking place. Will it not be in the twinkling of an eye?

But of this we feel sure, that the world will very soon become aware of the fact that the

Church is gone. People will be missing in every direction.

Some little while ago a man was lost in New Zealand. A search was immediately instituted. Hotels, steamers, and trains were all watched to try and find the missing man. Search-parties were sent in every direction ; all in vain. What took place then on a small scale will take place at that day on an infinitely larger one.

Panics there have been from time to time in the history of this world. When epidemics have swept a country, and hurried thousands into a premature grave, men have been seized with alarm. But the day following the coming of the Lord, we can easily believe that the most awful panic that has ever been known will take possession of those that are left behind.

Let the reader for one moment consider. Steamers will be crossing the ocean ; on board, many of those we are personally acquainted with, in some instances Christian captains and officers, and in others Christian seamen and firemen. Imagine the alarm when it becomes known, as it would in an instant of time, that all these were missing from their posts, some of the passengers too along with them ! Again, we are acquainted with not a few converted engine-drivers. There

goes an express train, when, in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the driver is "caught up" from his post, and the train speeds on to its destruction!

But these are isolated cases. Think what must be the despair that will seize hold of the human breast, when news of similar disasters will come from every direction, and quick as the electric fluid can convey the intelligence, from every quarter of the earth the tidings come pouring in that men, women, and children are missing, and that not in twos and threes but in multitudes!

The world will, so to speak, reel to and fro with fright; terrified crowds will possibly rush to the churches and chapels, and cry for mercy to the One whose mercy they had so long slighted and despised. Business of every kind will for the moment be suspended, and everything be at a standstill.

"*Afterward*," yes, afterward, mark this solemn word! "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us." *After* those that were ready had gone in, *after* the door was shut, "*afterward*," when it was too late! Oh, that terrible word "afterward."

Reader, let it not be in your case that you will

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come "afterward," when the door is shut. Come *now* while it is open, and while the blessed Saviour invites you, and stands ready to bless and receive you.

"Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

It may be at morn, when the day is awaking,
When sunlight through darkness and shadow is
breaking,
That Jesus will come in the fulness of glory,
To receive from the world "His own."

It may be at mid-day, it may be at twilight,
It may be, perchance, that the blackness of mid-
night
Will burst into light in the blaze of His glory,
When Jesus receives "His own."

A. H. B.

Will Good People go to Heaven?

"**T**HE Bible speaks, does it not, of a place called hell, where wicked people will go?" said a poor woman. She was a Roman Catholic, and the person to whom she addressed her question knew very well that, had she expressed all her thoughts, she

would in her blind ignorance have added, "But you and I, who are good, will go to heaven." Perhaps some one who reads this paper has also thought that hell is for bad people, and heaven for those who are good. If so, let me tell you the answer that was made to this poor woman. She was told that heaven will not be peopled with good people at all, but with sinners whose sins have been washed away in the blood of Christ.

God's Word gives us the record of many such sinners with whom Christ came in contact to bless and save, and they will be in heaven, and myriads more. There was the thief on the cross; the woman who was a sinner, in Luke vii.; the woman taken in adultery (John viii.); Mary Magdalene, out of whom were cast seven devils; the woman of Samaria (John iv.); the prodigal son, in Luke xv.; the poor publican, in Luke xviii., who cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; the impotent man, in John v., to whom Jesus said, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee"; the man possessed with devils, in Luke viii.; and the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, in Luke xiv. Then we read of those dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1); and in I Cor. vi. 9, 10, we see that there were thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, who had been

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converted,—for Paul says, “ And *such* were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” And can we not all re-echo the words in Titus iii. 3-5 ? “ For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

The book of life of the Lamb slain will not contain the name of one *good* person, for why was He slain for us if we could reach heaven by our own merits ?

One of the first signs of conversion is a sense of sin upon the conscience ; and so little does the sinner understand what God’s grace is, that even when alive to his sinful condition, he frequently thinks that he is too bad to be saved, whereas it is just his badness which recommends him to God’s mercy.

A few years ago a Christian was kneeling in prayer with one who, through God’s infinite goodness, had been awakened to feel his need of

a Saviour, after a long life spent in the enjoyment of what the Bible calls "the pleasures of sin." The Christian was interceding with God for the salvation of this soul, and, as he paused, he said, "Now, you pray yourself." "*I pray,*" was the answer, as the tears rolled down his cheeks, "why, I'm the biggest sinner in ——" (naming a large city). "Well, just tell God *that,*" said the Christian; and the poor burdened soul poured out its tale of guilt and misery into the ear of One who, "if we confess our sins, is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." He rose from his knees at peace with God, and in the sunshine of His favour, to spend the remainder of his days on earth in the service of his Redeemer.

"The countless multitude on high,
Who tune their songs to Jesu's name,
All merit of their own deny
And Jesu's worth alone proclaim.

Firm on the ground of sov'reign grace,
They stand before Jehovah's throne,
The only song in which blest place
Is, 'Thou art worthy! Thou alone.'

Salvation's glory all be paid
To Him who sits upon the throne;
And to the Lamb, whose blood was shed,
'Thou, Thou art worthy! Thou alone.'

C. A. W.

Lost! Found!

LOST! Found! such, in two words, is the subject of Luke xv.

There are three parts to "*this parable*," which the Lord Jesus addressed when the "publicans and sinners" drew "near unto Him for to hear Him."

The first part shows the *heedlessness* of the sinner, under the figure of a foolish, wandering sheep—"All we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. liii. 6).

The second part illustrates the *deadness* or insensibility of the sinner, under the figure of a lost piece of silver—"You . . . who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. ii. 1).

The third part sets forth the *wayward self-will* of the sinner, under the figure of the prodigal son—"We have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. liii. 6).

But "God so loved the world" of sinners, that He has provided *a way* whereby they may be saved from wrath, and brought unto Himself,— "Yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him" (2 Sam. xiv. 14).

God "gave" His Son,—Jesus "gave Himself."

He alone was able to meet the claims entailed by sin. He "died and rose again," "according to the Scriptures"; and, having "finished" redemption's toil, He is now on the Father's throne—the "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Jesus risen is "*The Way*,"—"No man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (John xiv. 6).

If, owning myself a *lost* sinner, I claim Jesus as the lost sinner's Saviour, and rest satisfied that by His work upon the cross, when He "died the Just for the unjust, that He might bright us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18), every divine requirement was fully met (whereof His resurrection is the proof)—this *is* faith; and "by grace" *I am saved* "through faith" (Eph. ii. 8).—"Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

Thus saved, I am *a child of God*. Possessing Christ, I "*have Eternal Life*" (1 John v. 11, 12); am taken into favour "in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6); live now "to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).—"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26).

Behold, "NOW is the day of salvation," the day of certainty, wherein "he that believeth on the Son hath Eternal Life" (John iii. 36).

“TO-MORROW” may be the day of despair (Prov. i. 28)—too late! wherein “he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John iii. 36).

N. L. N.

Afraid of the Consequences.

GOD had been mightily working that night. Sinners had been awakened to a sense of their lost condition— anxious souls had found “peace in believing,” and the people of God were stirred up and refreshed.

Whilst passing from one to another during the inquiry-meeting at the close of this gospel service, a fellow-labourer in the harvest field said to me—

“Here is a young man who does *not* believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“And are you not a sinner?” I asked of the youth in question.

“Oh yes, I suppose I am,” was the somewhat careless reply.

“Then, if so, do you not *need* a Saviour?” I continued.

“No, not to-night, thank you,” he calmly replied.

“Yes, my dear lad, you do *need* Him, but perhaps it is that you do not *want* Him. There is a great difference between *needing* Christ and *wanting* Him. Every sinner *needs* Him, but alas! some sinners do not *want* Him.”

It evidently was thus with our young friend, and so I proceeded to endeavour to point out the awful risk he was running in rejecting the immediate offer of forgiveness and salvation that God was making him, through faith in Christ and His work.

“It’s no good,” said he, “I simply could not believe to-night. Why, the young fellows down at the works would laugh it all out of me in a week’s time.”

“And do you think,” I urged, “that if you die in your sins, and enter eternity rejecting Christ, that those young fellows will be able to laugh you out of hell? Take care they do not laugh you into it, for they most certainly will never laugh you out of it.”

Dear reader, are you like this young man, afraid of the consequences? What! afraid of the consequences of receiving Christ! Afraid of the consequences of rejecting Him, you may

well be. Let the world mock and deride you—let companions laugh at and shun you—let friends forsake and turn from you, what of all that? The worst that they could do would be to kill you, but “be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” How poor, and vain, and paltry will this world appear by-and-by; how valueless are its approval or disapproval, its praise or its censure, its flattery or its scorn, when weighed in the balances of God, and seen in the light of eternity.

But if man need inspire you with no fear, “I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him” (Luke xii. 4, 5).

Oh, my friend, let not Satan rob you of your precious soul’s salvation by filling you with the fear of man. Have you ever read the descriptive list of those who find their part in the lake of fire? If not, turn *at once* to Rev. xxi. 8. Read these solemn words slowly and attentively, and may the Spirit of God send them home to you in soul-awakening power! Do you see yourself described therein?

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the

abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Let there be no mistake on this point. Do not imagine that those described in this verse shall by some means or another find their part in heaven. No. "*In the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,*" is the solemn declaration of God's Word, and remember, that "He HATH POWER to cast into hell."

But awful as is the doom of the godless, the abandoned, the wicked, and the depraved, *it is shared* by the "fearful and unbelieving." Is the reader one who is afraid of the consequences of believing in Christ? Then oh, beware, for the "fearful and unbelieving," just as much as the murderer and the whoremonger, have their part in the lake of fire—they even head the list!

Away, then, with the moral cowardice that is afraid to believe in and confess Christ, and oh! for more of the courage that is not ashamed to confess Him before men. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

A. H. B.