

GOSPEL GLEANINGS

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Gospel Gleanings

TIMELY TALKS TO ALL WHO MAY BE CONCERNED.

I OCCASIONALLY find it a useful practice to address a question to myself on a topic which is supposed to be familiar in order that I may the more readily convict myself of downright ignorance on some branches of the subject. And having been so convicted, one is in a more favourable frame of mind to receive information on those points.

The term, "believer," is one of fairly frequent occurrence. It is used in senses other than religious, as when we speak, for instance, of a believer in homœopathy. But even in its religious usage, with which we are particularly concerned in these pages, it is connected with many shades of meaning according to the opinions of the class of persons who utter the word.

The result of this simple word receiving such a

variety of senses is to create confusion as to it in the minds of many. I have read of a servant of the Lord who, in the course of his ministry, found himself in a part of the country (Scotland) where he was entirely unknown; without a friend, without lodging, and without means. It was near nightfall, and he knew not where to go.

Seeing a boy crossing a field, he called to him, and said, "Are there any godly people here about?" "Na, na," replied the lad, "there is nae sic fouk in this pairish." "Are there any believers?" asked the evangelist. "Bleevers!" exclaimed the boy; "I never heerd o' sic things."

I do not, of course, in the least imply that you are so ignorant as the Scotch lad. But your ideas may be somewhat vague and unpractical. That was a better reply which was given by the lady who, when questioned as to her faith, said, "I believe in heaven, and I believe in hell, and I believe in the third chapter of the Gospel by John."

If however you wish to learn the proper sense of the term, you must observe its use in the word of God. And you will find there that faith in-

**THE
BELIEVER
BELIEVES
GOD.**

variably brings the individual soul into exercise before God. Man cannot have to do with God without faith. As it is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please him."¹

¹ Heb. xi. 6.

A believer therefore is one who believes God. Abraham was a believer, for he "believed God, and it was counted unto him, for righteousness."¹ The Philippian jailer received the testimony of the apostles and became a believer, "believing in God with all his house."²

But faith in God is not dissociated from faith in His Son. It is indeed by Him that we believe in God³; even as, "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."⁴ So the jailer

THE BELIEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS CHRIST to whom I just referred responded to the exhortation of Paul and Silas to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and then it is said of him that he believed in God.

Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue at Corinth, believed on the Lord with all his house.⁵ And one might go on to quote many more cases, but these are enough to shew that a believer has the Person of Christ before his heart.

Now I would like to put to you the question that the Lord addressed to the man in Jerusalem whose eyes He had opened, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"⁶ Is He before you as the Ever-blessed and Holy One Whom you love and adore, Who has forgiven you all your sins and given you peace through believing?

¹ Rom. iv. 3. ² Acts xvi. 34. ³ 1 Peter i. 21. ⁴ 1 John v. 10,
⁵ Acts xviii. 8. ⁶ John ix. 35.

Depend upon it, my friends, a believer is not one who receives creeds or subscribes to certain articles, but one who can look up to heaven with a heart full of peace and joy. The Son of God is there. God Who sent the Son is there. The believer knows this and rejoices in it, because he accepts the gospel which contains the blessed news of the grace and salvation brought down from above. Are *you* a believer?



THE CONVERSION OF G. V. W.¹

GOOD instructions as to the contents of the Bible were mine at school at seventeen under a John-the-Baptist ministry; but I never knew the gospel till, at nineteen I went abroad, full of the animal pleasures of a military life.

I and my comrade spent a long and tiring day on the field of Waterloo in June, 1824. Arriving late at night at ———, I soon went to my bedroom.

It struck me, "I will say my prayers." It was the habit of childhood, neglected in youth. I knelt down by my bedside, but found I had forgotten what to say. I looked up as if trying to remember, when suddenly there came on my soul a something I had never known before.

¹ The account is in his own words.

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It was as if some One, Infinite and Almighty, knowing everything, full of the deepest, tenderest interest in myself, though utterly and entirely abhorring everything in, and connected with me, made known to me that He pitied and loved myself.

My eye saw no one; but I knew assuredly that the One Whom I knew not, and never had met, had met me for the first time, and made me to know that we were together.

There was a light, no sense nor faculty my own human nature ever knew; there was a presence of what seemed infinite in greatness—something altogether of a class that was apart and supreme, and yet at the same time making itself known to me in a way that I as a man could thoroughly feel, and taste, and enjoy.

The light made all light, Himself withal: for it was love itself, and I was loved individually by Him. Oh, the exquisite tenderness and fulness of that love, the way it appropriated me myself for Him, in Whom it all was, while the light, from which it was inseparable in Him, discovered to me the contrast I had been to all that was light and love.

I wept for a while on my knees, and said nothing, then got into bed. The next morning's thought was, "Get a Bible." I got one, and it was thenceforward my handbook. My clergyman

companion noticed this, and also my entire change of life and thought.

We journeyed on together to Geneva, where there was an active persecution of the faithful going on. He went to Italy, and I found my own company—stayed with those who were suffering for Christ.

I could quite now, after fifty years' trial, adopt to myself these few lines, as descriptive of that night's experience:—

“Christ, the Father's rest eternal,
 Jesus once looked down on me,
 Called me by my name eternal,
 And revealed Himself to me.
 With His whisper, light, life-giving,
 Glowed in me, the dark and dead;
 Made me live, Himself receiving,
 Who once died for me and bled.”

GRACE FOR THE PERSECUTOR.

GOD often magnifies His grace in our eyes by bringing unto Himself some person notorious in his opposition to the truth. It was so at the beginning in the case of Saul, the persecutor of the saints. To him did the Lord make known His mercy and His grace. For by grace was Saul of Tarsus saved, and so all besides: only he was a foremost leader in rebellion against the gospel.

An instance is recorded of a striking conversion

occurring among the open enemies of Christ. It took place in a dark part of Ireland, where the truth was making its way, and some were being brought from darkness to light.

A preacher of the gospel was expected from a distance, and some Romanists who heard of his coming resolved to destroy the house where the meeting was held.

Accordingly, having carefully watched the man's movements this party secretly followed him one Lord's day morning determined to make short work of this "new sect."

They besieged the house, and sent in the ring-leader to watch the movements, and to give the signal for their entrance at a proper time; but to the great surprise of the gang outside, Pat did not reappear as soon as they expected, and they decamped with all speed as soon as they heard what follows.

The fact was Pat waited while the hymn was given out and sung.

"This is very purty," said he; "I'll not disturb them yet."

Prayer was then offered up.

"I'll let them alone until they have done with their prayers," said Pat to himself.

The meeting continued, and Pat said again to himself, "I'll hear what they have to say for themselves at any rate."

At length, the preacher thus accosted the rough stranger: "My good man, did you ever know yourself a sinner before God, and that you deserved to be excluded from His presence for ever?"

Pat wept exceedingly, and cried out, "Lord, have mercy upon me! What shall I do? I'm a wicked sinner."

The whole meeting joined in earnest prayer for him, and very soon Pat was "sitting at the feet of Jesus, quiet, and in his right mind."

How great are the wonders grace can do, even for the most violent of sinners!

SPEAKING FROM HEAVEN.

HEBREWS xii. 25.

DO you know that the Lord Jesus speaks from heaven in the gospel? Have you heard His voice by faith? Or are you of those that turn away from the Saviour?

He is God's Son, the appointed Heir of all things, as He also made the worlds. He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His subsistence; He upholds all things by the word of His power. Yet He it was Who by Himself purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. How blessed for all who believe on Him! How awful for you if you reject such a Saviour, and the sacrifice thus

accepted of God above and attested by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven !

It is in vain to talk of the heathen and their gross idolatries. It is in vain to speak of the Jews, empty, swept, and garnished ; or of those beguiled by the Mohammedan imposture. Are you not aware that you in Christendom are more responsible by far ? For from infancy you have heard the holy scriptures, not only the old covenant like Timothy, but all the new revelation of God. You have the word of Christ in its fulness. You are of all mankind most obdurate and blind, if you believe not God concerning His Son and the one sacrifice He offered for sins. For He came to do God's will, by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. This is the great truth for every sinful man : do you believe ?

No ordinance can take away your guilt, or bring you to God with a purged conscience. The institutions of Christ have their suited place, and are great privileges ; but by faith are we justified, and all is self-deception without it. If we believe, service and worship and a holy walk follow. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. "For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast."¹

¹ Eph. ii. 8, 9.

THE GROUND OF PEACE.

I WAS once standing with a commercial gentleman in his office, conversing with him about his eternal prospects. He had manifested some anxiety as to the great question of his soul's salvation, and I had frequently spoken to him before.

On the occasion to which I now refer, we were speaking about the ground of a sinner's peace in the presence of God. There were some files hanging up in a corner of the office, and pointing to them, I said, "What have you got upon those files?"

"Receipts," said he.

"Well," I said, "are you anxious about the amount of those various bills?"

"Not in the least," he replied, "they are all receipted and stamped."

"Are you afraid," I continued, "lest those persons from whom you received the bills should come down upon you for the amount?"

"By no means. They are all legally settled, and do not cost me a single thought."

"Now then," said I, laying my hand upon his shoulder, "will you tell me what is God's receipt to us for all that we as sinners ever owed to Him as a righteous Judge?"

GOSPEL GLEANINGS.

II

He paused to consider, and then replied, "I suppose it is the grace of God in the heart."

"Nay; that would never do. God's grace in my heart is no receipt for all I ever owed Him."

My friend paused again, and then said, "It must be the knowledge of salvation."

"No; you have not laid hold of it yet. You cannot but see the difference between your knowledge that these bills are paid, and the receipts which you have on your file. You might know they were paid, and yet, if you had no receipt, your mind would not be at ease."

"Well," said he, "it must be faith."

"Not right yet," said I. "Faith is no receipt."

At length, feeling assured he had the true answer, he exclaimed, "It is the blood of Christ."

He seemed a good deal disappointed when I still demurred, and he quite gave up the attempt at further reply.

"Now," said I, "it is most blessedly true that the blood of Christ has paid the debt which I, as a guilty sinner, owed to divine justice; yet you must admit there is a difference between the payment of a debt and the receipt. For even, though you had seen the full amount paid down, yet until you were in possession of the receipt, your mind would not be at ease, inasmuch as there was no legal settlement of the transaction. You must have a receipt."

“What, therefore, is God’s receipt for that heavy debt which we owed Him? Blessed be His name it is a risen Christ at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. The death of Christ paid my debt; His resurrection is a receipt in full, signed and sealed by the hand of Eternal Justice. Jesus ‘was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.’

“Hence, the believer owes not a fraction to divine justice, on the score of guilt, but he owes an eternity of worship to divine love, on the score of free pardon, and complete justification. The blood of Christ has blotted out his heavy debit; and he has a risen Christ to his credit.”

How marvellous that a poor guilty creature should be able to stand as free from all charge of guilt, as the risen and glorified Saviour! And yet so it is, through the grace of God, and by the blood of Christ. The Lord Jesus has paid all our debts, discharged all our liabilities, cancelled all our guilt, and has become, in resurrection, our life and our righteousness. If it be true that “If Christ be not raised we are yet in our sins,” it is equally true that, if He be raised, *we who believe in Him are not in our sins.*

It was Thyself, O God, Who sought,
 With tender yearnings deep,
 The loveless soul Who sought Thee not,
 The worthless, wandering sheep.

THE GOSPEL OF GOD.

ROMANS i. 1.

FELLOW-SINNER, let me say a few words of truth in love. They are God's words. They are tidings not gloomy but glad. They are addressed to you as much as to any other. Listen, I beseech you: they concern you now and for ever.

The gospel of God is not something for you to do. It is the glad tidings of what He has done by His Son, that you might by faith know your sins forgiven, and yourself justified in His sight. Then and thus only you may have peace with God, and be saved. God alone can do all this and more for you; but even He can only do it righteously through His Son as the propitiation for your sins.¹ The Lord Jesus gave Himself up as a sacrifice for us. No other way was possible. This way is all-sufficient. It meets man as he is in his sins. It glorifies God as He is even as to man's sins, and His own judgement of them.

The Son, Who is God over all blessed for ever² no less truly than God the Father, became man in a way altogether above man, that He might manifest God even the Father, defeat Satan, and bear sins in His own body on the tree. God was thus vindicated in all His attributes; and through Christ He can reconcile, cleanse, and save the most

1 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10. 2 Rom. ix. 5.

guilty. What can so fully prove, on the one hand His goodness, love, and grace; on the other His holiness, justice, and truth? The death of Jesus the Lord, His Son, was nearer to His heart and more to His glory than the worth of all the creatures that ever lived. Yet Him God gave to endure the judgement of sin; and Jesus glorified God in that wondrous work, as in every other, perfectly and according to the glory of His person.

You are a sinner, and in your conscience dread God's judgement of your sins. You are lost, as He tells you: what can be more certain or dreadful? But Jesus, the Son of man, came to seek and to save the lost. Is not this equally certain? Is it not beyond anything blessed news for you if you believe God? But remember you only aggravate your guilt if you disbelieve Him. For it is more heinous to insult the glad tidings than to despise the law.¹

Beware then that you refuse not Him that is speaking from heaven in the gospel. There is salvation in none other than Jesus. His is the only Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.²

Doubt not God's infinite compassion to you. He it was Who gave His only-begotten Son for you. It is equally true that the Son came, and that the Father sent Him, in a love altogether

¹ Heb. x. 28, 29. ² Acts iv. 12.

divine. So it is the gospel "of God," as it is also "of Christ." Nor can you do greater despite to the Spirit of grace, than to treat His saving message with contempt or even neglect.

Delay here is most dangerous. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Therefore could the apostle and his companion say to the heathen but alarmed jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."¹ Oh believe, that you too may be saved! Why should you perish in your sins and unbelief?



DOES YOUR CONSCIENCE CONDEMN YOU?

THE object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God. Jesus suffered, "the just for the unjust to bring us to God;" yet it is impossible that we could be happy even then if there were still a thought of God's being against us.

There can be no happiness unless we have the perfect settled assurance that we have no sin upon us before Him. God's presence would be terrible to us if the conscience were not perfectly good; the sense of responsibility makes us unhappy where *any* question of sin stands against us.

We see this in the case of the servant with his

¹ Acts xvi. 31.

master, or of a child and its father : the conscience is miserable where there is the sense of anything upon it which will be judged. Hence if there is any happiness in God's presence, it must be in the sense of His favour, and of the completeness with which we have been brought back, so that He sees us without sin.

This is the perfect assurance of the "worshipper once purged, having no more conscience of sin."¹ Thank God, the condition of every believer is that his conscience is so purged *once for all* that he has "no more conscience of sin," and as a result he also has "boldness to enter into the holiest." Do you believe this?



THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

MATTHEW XV. 21—28.

THERE was no lack of earnestness in the Syro-Phœnician. But she appealed at first on the ground of promise and prophecy. This was a mistake which the Lord corrected. A Jew might have done so, and rightly, and never in vain. But she was a Gentile, and under the curse of Canaan. Her faith in the Lord was strong, but she must be in the truth in order to be blessed.

Therefore when she invoked Him as Son of David, He answered her not a word. The

¹ Read Heb. x. 1—22.


disciples, shocked by her importunity and far from sympathy, besought the Lord to send her away, for she cried after them. But He would do nothing of the sort. He meant her better blessing; and He answered, "I was not sent but for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Persisting in her appeal, she came and paid Him homage, saying, "Lord, help me;" which brought out His seemingly hard but helpful and gracious explanation, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." Apprehending the truth by grace she at once exclaimed, "Yea, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done to thee even as thou wilt!"

The Canaanite reached to the fulness of love in God, the grand and ultimate object before the Lord. Grace and truth came through Him. He had shewn man's worthlessness in the beginning of the chapter. Here He shews what God is. If she took her true place as a dog, outside and unclean, God would not deny Himself as the God of all grace. And the Lord, Who came to give its deepest ground and fullest effect by His cross, delighted in the faith of her who owned the truth as to herself and looked for His grace.

Oh what a Saviour is the Lord Jesus! If He tries the soul, it is to remove mistake and

hindrance; and when the soul is brought down to confess its real state, grace meets it to the uttermost. Doubt not then, but believe.

THE HAND DIVINE.

 Oh, tell me not of sorrow,
 Oh, speak not of despair,
 The dawn will break to-morrow
 Without our mortal care.
 Weep not the withered day-dream,
 The sun again will shine;
 His hand Who paints the sunbeam
 Moves over all, divine.

Oh, tell me not of sorrow,
 For from this world of pain,
 Life's oars we only borrow
 Our native shore to gain.
 Earth's bitter hours of sadness
 To temper joy combine;
 Then wake the harp to gladness,
 There is a hand divine.

Oh, tell of smiles forthcoming,
 For life is far too brief
 To spend in tears and pining
 O'er every fallen leaf.
 The hearts of those who love us
 A wreath of joys entwine,
 The hand that moves above us
 Is over all, divine.

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Life's sweetest flowers decay;
 The worm is at the bud;
 The bright, the fair, the gay,
 Are swept by death's cold flood.
 We may not rule to-morrow,
 Nor spare one hour's decline;
 Then linger not in sorrow,
 There is a hand divine.

If came the winter never,
 We should not love the spring;
 If sang the birds for ever,
 They would not seem to sing;
 Along life's coasts of weeping
 The heavenly beacons shine;
 The Watchman guard is keeping,
 There is a hand divine.



HANDFULS LET FALL ON PURPOSE.

THE SINNER'S BROKEN HEART.

THE sinner finds he has a title in God's heart when he can find none in his own. The woman, who was a sinner, loved much because much was forgiven her. It was a broken heart that met the heart of God in Simon's house, and the heart of God met the sinner's broken heart.

How wonderful when the human heart meets the heart of God! The moment I am brought through grace into full, distinct, consciousness that there is no good in me, I find the perfect, blessed love of God come to me where I am.

THE MISUSE OF ELECTION.

I DREADED the future; but Satan furnished me with a pillow on which to sleep. It was this: "If you are to be converted, you will be converted; if not, you cannot help it." I took the opiate greedily, and was rocked to sleep in the devil's cradle.

Many strike on this rock; many a noble ship is dashed to pieces here. This is not truth but fatalism. Can the husbandman expect to reap if he does not sow, or the sailor to reach the port if he does not spread the sails? What sick man would say, "If I am to get well I shall, no matter though a physician be not called or medicine taken?"

Of all preachers of election, Satan is the worst. He distorts that glorious truth, and hides the blood of Christ through which we should behold it. He keeps out of sight the only decree with which sinners have to do, viz., "He that believeth not shall be damned."

ASHAMED OF JESUS.

IF you take a false religion, you never find a man ashamed of it; you never see it among Mohammedans, the heathen, or even in corrupt Christianity. But take a Christian, a real Christian—is he not ashamed to confess Christ before men?

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It is a sad thing never to find a person ashamed of a false religion, but to find Christians ashamed of the true.

BIG SINNERS OR LITTLE?

How much sin will shut you out of heaven? You cannot say to me, "You are a big sinner, and I am a little one." Suppose you have committed ten sins, and I eleven, then am I to be shut out of heaven, and you let in?

If I find two crab-trees, one bearing one crab-apple, and the other one hundred, I say the one is a crab as well as the other.

How many sins had Adam committed when he was driven out of paradise? One. That one sin proved his distrust of God, and his confidence in Satan. One crab proves the tree.

CHRIST IN THE HEAVENS.

WHEN the Lord Jesus was here upon earth, as we learn in Matthew iii., the heavens were opened to get a sight of Him. There was then an object here worthy of the attention of the heavens.

He returned; thereupon the heavens contained an object they had never known before—a glorified Man. Now it is the office of the Epistles to shew us the heavens as the place of this glorified Man. And, as in Matthew, we get the heavens opened to look down at Christ here, so in the Hebrews,

we get the heavens opened that we may look up at Christ there.

RUTH THE GLEANER.

BOAZ said, "Let fall some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not."¹ Timid gleaner, have you never found handfuls of blessing dropped on purpose for you? How suited such a word was to you! What a handful you picked up in such a promise! Perhaps you did not know how God had ordered it all on purpose for you.



"UNDER CONVICTION."

I HAD been on a holiday to Scarborough and was returning to London. When we had proceeded some distance, we were joined by the mate of a vessel from Grimsby. He had the charge of a poor sick lad to whom the passengers shewed much kindness and attention.

The mate was an infidel, and began scoffing at the word of God; and I felt it my duty to speak to him. We sat at opposite ends of the carriage, so that all could hear what was being said. We talked together for a long time, but with no apparent result.

As we drew near to London, a young man

¹ Ruth ii. 16.

leaned over, and said to me, "Do you live in London? If so, I should like to correspond with you; I am under conviction."

He gave me his address, and I wrote to him, and we met by appointment on the Embankment.

He told me that he had gone home for a holiday, and found his mother lying dangerously ill, and he had stayed with her till she died. So that, when we met in the train, his heart was softened, and the word which seemed to have no effect upon the mate touched him.

He then opened his mind to me, and told me that he had been employed in London for twelve months, and had been leading a gay life.

We met again, and I invited him to come with me to hear a servant of God who had been used very much in the conversion of souls. He then told me that twelve months before, he had been brought under conviction at Hull whilst listening to this same preacher.

The end of it was that he was converted that night, and shortly afterwards came with God's people.

Dear reader, it may be that you like my friend have been under conviction. As you heard the word of God expounded, conscience was awakened, but there was no yielding on your part. You allowed that favourable moment to pass, and the consequence was that Satan came and took away

the word that was sown in your heart; and you are now in a worse state than before. You have now a measure of light that you had not formerly, which prevents your enjoying the pleasures of the world as you once did; and you are in danger of plunging deeper, so as to drown the voice of conscience altogether.

Now, my dear reader, be warned in time, for it is a solemn thing to trifle with convictions. God has spoken to your heart; it is for you to obey. Sooner or later you must be obedient, for God has decreed that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."¹

Let it therefore be a willing submission on your part now. Let the door of your heart be opened wide to receive the Saviour. He brings you life, and peace, and joy. He will give your weary heart rest. He will satisfy that craving of the soul which never can be otherwise satisfied.

Day by day you are being borne onward to eternity. Nothing that defileth can enter that holy place, the dwelling-place of God. There is but one entrance. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

¹ Phil. ii. 10, 11.

Strange indeed it is that men try to approach God in other ways, which are all vain. God's appointed way is by His Son, and coming in this way you are sure to find acceptance. God having removed every hindrance, see that you slight not His offered mercy. Think of what He offers, and to whom He offers it, and at once embrace what is offered—a full, free, and present salvation. This is what you need, and without it you must perish.

As you value your soul, let me affectionately urge you not to delay coming, for it is a perilous thing to put off from day to day that which should be attended to at once. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?”



CHILDREN'S CORNER.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—We propose to keep a corner in this magazine especially for you, and we make this announcement that you may be on the look-out for your own special letters, etc. We are also hopeful that some grown-up friends of yours may see from this that an opportunity is afforded them of writing to you.

Some of you will remember the first time you received a letter, and your excitement at opening it. Probably you will not be quite so excited about our letters, because you will not find yourselves mentioned by name, and moreover you may not

know the writer. Still you will begin to see that more people take an interest in you than you are aware, and that they are evidently often thinking of you and your welfare. If you find that you like their letters, we think that in the end you will be better pleased that they are open for everybody to read.

Talking about letters, perhaps it has never occurred to you that the Bible is full of letters addressed to all sorts of people, and that in this respect it resembles a Post Office. We should come off very badly however, if we had a Post Office without a postmaster or postmen, shouldn't we?

Imagine everyone running down to the Post Office and helping themselves to letters; some people, who could not read, taking the first that came whether addressed to them or not! Now God has made provision that the letters He has addressed should reach their proper destination, and He has His postmen too. As the every-day postman is looked for eagerly, so of God's postmen He says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings."¹

You and I, as young people, may often have thought what a wonderful person the postman is; and it is only when we get older we learn that he is by no means the most remarkable person connected with the Post Office. He only does

¹ Is. lii. 7.

what he is told, and he must be very careful to obey. He, however, happens to be the person we see most of.

As we grow older we discover that the more wonderful person is one whom we have probably never seen,—the Postmaster General. He, with all his great army of workers, hidden away from the public view, is ever busy thinking out and planning and arranging that the letters may get to their right destinations. So that you see the daily postman's part is really a very modest one.

Now God has entrusted His letters to none other than God the Holy Ghost, and He it is Who directs His servants to the doors of people's hearts with God's word. Now this brings us to a very serious consideration. It is quite possible to refuse to receive a letter addressed to one—not even to listen to it. Some one omitted to stamp a letter to a gentleman whom the writer knows; this so annoyed him that he refused to take it in, and all the while there was a cheque inside for a large sum of money. It would have been more sensible to pocket his annoyance and the cheque at the same time, and cheerfully to pay the twopenny fine, would it not?

To bring this home however, somebody perhaps spoke to you about your soul before others, and this annoyed you, and so you wouldn't even listen, although they were speaking the words of eternal

life, which no cheque in the world could buy.

Again, some people receive a letter, read it and put it aside, intending to answer it at a more convenient season. It may be a letter that requires an answer immediately, and they find out when too late that an invitation given was for a day which they carelessly allowed to slip by.

Now let us see if you can be wise about these things and look at the words addressed to you in these columns from time to time, in a little different light. A postman, although he may be only a very ordinary individual, when wearing the Queen's uniform, is a person no one can afford to despise as the uniform tells us that he is doing the Queen's work. Now, my dear young friends, the remarks that will appear here from time to time are written by ordinary folk, not naturally different from any one else; but they serve the King of Kings, and just as we who are old enough to understand should pay great attention to a letter headed "On Her Majesty's Service," so should you heed the word of God when brought to you by a servant of His.

Fancy any one being so silly as to refuse an invitation from the Queen, because they didn't like the postman who brought the letter. And yet grown-up people have often no better excuse to offer for refusing to listen to God's invitation!



TIMELY TALKS : TO ALL WHO MAY BE CONCERNED.

IN the common things of daily life the worth of all goods and property is measured in terms of some generally accepted standard of value. Houses, lands, labour, etc., are each equivalent to

THE STANDARD OF VALUE.	so many British sovereigns. In the spiritual realm also there is a divine standard of value. That standard is Christ. Before God everything is viewed in its relation to His Son. Unbelieving man on the contrary reckons in terms of a human standard. Anything that "becomes a man" is his standard of fitness. But the truth is, "nothing counts but Christ."
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SELF OR CHRIST?	What are you resting on for eternity? Self or Christ? Can you say like one of old, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day?" ¹
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CHRIST THE TOUCHSTONE.	Christ is the test for all things, not alone in the question of present salvation or guilt. The believer is called to judge all things as to the manner in which they range themselves in regard to the person of Christ.
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1 2 Tim. i. 12.

I was interested in observing how a servant of the Lord acted on this principle in the Crimean war. He was serving Christ in one way and another among the soldiers. And a large quantity of Popish tracts, full of Mariolatry but barren of Christ, came into his hands.

**THE
CHRISTLESS
TRACT.**

He was at a loss how to dispose of them. Eventually, by the help of a party of soldiers, he dug a deep trench. "There," says he, "we gave them decent burial;" "but," he goes on to say, "we had no burial service over them, and dropped no tears; we only said quietly in our hearts, 'Let the memory of the wicked rot.'"

Another heap, "not at all about Christ," he thrust into a Russian furnace at which he and a friend warmed their cold toes.

A third parcel of rubbish he took out in a boat, and cast the dangerous lies into the sea. "We must put poison out of the way of children," was his wise remark.

A religion without Christ is a deadly snare. It acts as an opiate on the conscience. Men persuade themselves that all is well with them because they are religious. Annas and Caiaphas were religious, but they crucified Christ. Saul of Tarsus was eminently religious, but he was a persecutor. They, like Nicodemus, needed the

**RELIGION
WITHOUT
CHRIST.**

suade themselves that all is well with them because they are religious. Annas and Caiaphas

GOSPEL GLEANINGS.

31

new birth, that Christ in His beauty might be before the soul.

I beseech you, therefore, to challenge your own
WHAT THINK heart as to what Christ is to you.
YE OF Is He better to you than all
CHRIST? beside? Have you by faith seen
 His face and heard His voice?

Marvel not that Christ in glory
 All my inmost heart hath won ;
 Not a star to cheer my darkness,
 But a light beyond the sun.
 All below lies dark and shadowed,
 Nothing there to claim my heart,
 Save the lonely track of sorrow
 Where of old He walked apart.

I have seen the face of Jesus—
 Tell me not of aught beside ;
 I have heard the voice of Jesus—
 All my soul is satisfied.
 In the radiance of the glory
 First I saw His blessed Face,
 And for ever shall that glory
 Be my home, my dwelling place.



THE DANGERS OF SUCCESS.

SUCCESS often takes us out of the place of communion, because it is *our* success when we do not acknowledge God in it. The faith which waits on God turns to God when the blessing comes, and the joy is much greater.

ARSENIO'S CONVERSION.

I THINK it was in the summer of 1840 that Senhor Arsenio first came to consult me about his daughter's health. After having prescribed for her corporeal ailments, we had a little conversation about the soul.

In a few days he returned; and, after several visits at the hospital, he expressed a wish to converse with me at my own house privately. We sat down together, and I inquired on what subject he wished to speak.

"About the way," was his reply, "in which a guilty man can, under the government of a just God, escape the punishment which he deserves."

"Well," I said, "tell me what you think about it."

"I understand," said he, "that in baptism the blood of Christ is applied, so as to free from original sin;" and then he went on to speak of penances, etc., for actual transgression.

I interrupted him by saying, "I understand that the blood of Christ cleanses from *all* sin."

"What?" he cried.

"I understand," I repeated, "that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, of every kind."

"Tell me that again!"

"No," said I, "but read here, and here"—and I pointed out several texts.

Great tears came coursing down his cheeks, as he read words of God, attesting the wondrous truth; and the doctrine of His free favour in pardoning even the chief of sinners seemed for the first time to break upon his soul.

He had often been mentioned to me, Dr. K—— added, under the epithet, "*O avaro*," "the miser." At the time of the interview related, I was furnishing a small hospital. He sent me a large basket full of sheets, towels, and other articles for it, with a note saying, "My heart was gangrened; it has felt the power of the love of God; and I send you the firstfruits of it."

PEACE BE UNTO YOU.

JOHN XX. 21.

HOW sweet were those words from our Lord's lips to the agitated and perplexed disciples! He was crucified when they thought His kingdom would immediately appear. "We trusted that it had been He that should have redeemed Israel." And so it was and far more, by the death of His cross; but they had this to learn by faith.

How is it with you? Have you heard His voice? Or have you as yet profited as little as the two when they met Him on the road to Emmaus?

See the honour He put on God's word. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets He ex-

pounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Was not their heart burning in them, while He spoke to them by the way, and opened to them the scriptures? Why is it not so with you, dear reader? Is it not because you regard the word of God as said to the air, rather than to and for your own soul? Oh that you would hear His voice! Harden not your hearts, like Israel in the wilderness.

But you object that peace may be for the disciples, but not for you. It is no less for every soul that believes on Him. Does not the apostle tell you¹ that Christ came and preached peace to you, those afar off and to those nigh? This is just what He does speak from heaven, whither He went in all the efficacy of accomplished redemption. The blood of His cross deserves peace even for you. This is the righteousness of God, Who will never slight the sacrifice of Christ for sin. It is for you if you believe on Him. Refuse not Him that speaks from heaven.



"I HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP IN IT."



So said a young man, when I asked him how long he had known the Lord. And I am afraid he is by no means the only one who would

¹ Eph. ii. 17.

give a similar answer to the same question.

It is indeed a great privilege to be brought up under Christian influence, with the word of God before the eyes. Such persons are thereby kept from much open wickedness and many snares of Satan, to which others are often exposed. But be it known there is something more needed. The Lord once told a respectable religious teacher, "Except a man *be born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

There must be a time in our life's history when we "pass from death unto life." We are found in this world in a state of spiritual death; but God has made known His love towards us, "because He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might *live* through Him." Through His death we may have life. He was "lifted up" on the cross, and the scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

It is by no means enough to bear a Christian name without having living faith in Christ: it would be simply a mask which must be removed in a day near at hand.

Then again there is the question of sins; for however moral and religious the life may have been, yet God brings all up on one common platform, and declares that "*all* have sinned and come short of His glory." Had we to stand on our own ground before God about our sins, He, being

righteous, must send us to the lake of fire as our punishment.

But He is love as well as light, and has proved it by sending His own Son to be the propitiation for our sins. The Son of God was the only One Who could become such a sacrifice as would satisfy the justice of God about sin. This He has done, praise His Name; and as a result God now sends the good news of a free pardon to every creature under heaven.

His only conditions are, that there be *repentance* toward Himself and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a matter no pretending priest can settle for us; it must be real work of conscience between ourselves and God.

Dear reader, are you one who has felt the guilt of sins, and in true repentance acknowledged them before God, trusting His Son as the only One to meet your need? To such God is saying, "Your sins *are* forgiven you for his name's sake."¹ And such are entitled to say, "in whom [Christ Jesus] we *have* redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."²

Let no one think it is enough to be brought up among Christians; to become a minister of a church or chapel, or a Sunday school teacher; or to partake of the Lord's Supper, or whatever else might be added; for none of these things bring

1 1 John ii. 12 2 Eph. i. 7

us into God's family. It is like the foolish virgins who took their lamps, but no oil. They had to prove their folly—when it was *too late*. All such will find they have been like the man at the wedding feast without a "wedding garment." The father had "the best robe" ready to put on the poor returning prodigal, when he owned his guilt; so God has a robe wherein to clothe every returning sinner, and that robe is Christ Himself.



BEHOLD, THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS RENT IN TWAIN.

MATT. xxvii. 51.

THE veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom, I see the holiness of God. But the very stroke which has thus unveiled the holiness has judged the sin that would have hindered any standing in presence of that holiness. I see also what God in His love has done for the believer in the person of Christ. Here I have God Himself coming down to me, and I am enabled now to go back with Christ into the rest of His holiness. In the death of Christ I believe the fearful vengeance of God against sin; and the rending of the veil which displays both His holiness and His love to man. Thus the more God's eye scrutinises and searches me, the more it brings out the blessed

truth that the blood of Jesus cleanses the believer from all sin. It shews the whiteness of the robe that has been washed in the Lamb's blood.

Do I hesitate to stand in His presence Who invites me? It is questioning the value of Christ's precious blood. Do you say I hope? You cannot *hope* that Christ will die for you. It is no matter of hope, but of faith. Ah, if I could only know that I have an interest in Him! But God declares in His word, that he who believes Him about His Son *has* the interest. *He* joins the faith with the interest; why should you sunder them?

Do you ask a proof of His love to sinners, to the world? What greater could He give than He has already given, and presses on your faith? What was it for Him to give His own Son? and His Son to die for the ungodly? Rest on the peace Christ made by the blood of His cross.

“I AM ALL WRONG.”

“You have opened my eyes; I thought I was all right, but I find I am all wrong.” Such were the words addressed to me by one whom I had known for many years, on my second visit during his last illness. He had passed through many domestic sorrows, and had been compelled through force of circumstances to work

beyond his strength, which doubtless hastened his end.

My friend had been laid aside for some little time before I had heard of his illness, so that when I called he said to me, "I have been looking for you."

I had often spoken to him about his soul's welfare, and now that he felt himself drawing near to his end, he was anxious to see me.

God had evidently used what I had said to him on my first visit, to shew him his true state as a lost sinner needing a Saviour, and eagerly did he listen, as the Lord enabled me to set before him the way of salvation.

It needed no effort on my part to press home God's claims upon him. He had discovered his sinfulness. All that I had to do was to endeavour to unfold the riches, the freeness, and the fulness of God's salvation. As a drowning man clings to a rope thrown to him, or a person in a burning house enters the fire-escape, so did my friend receive Jesus as his Saviour.

A quiet, settled peace took possession of his soul; and his face beamed with joy, as he realised the place into which by the grace of God he had been brought. My friend lingered for a short time. Having an opportunity to go to a Home for the dying he embraced it, and was taken there.

On calling to see him, I found him in the same

happy state of mind, though in a very feeble condition of body. He said to me, "The sisters here cannot understand my being so happy under such circumstances."

He was evidently ripening for the Home above into which he was shortly to enter. It was not long ere the summons came, and it found him joyfully ready.

My dear reader, you, like my friend, must sooner or later pass into the presence of God. Indeed it is only a question of time for all of us. Are *you* ready for the change?

My friend thought he was, but as the light of God shone into his soul, he found that his own righteousness could not carry him through the valley of the shadow of death, and land him safe on the heavenly shore. How many are being deceived by the enemy of souls, who seeks to hide from them the solemn realities of the great white throne, and occupies them with present things! Should conscience speak, Satan lulls it to sleep, and contents them with the form of godliness without the power, than which perhaps nothing is more dangerous. How can it be possible for a sinful man to fit himself for the presence of a holy God! If all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, what must our sins be?

"No outward forms can make us clean,
The leprosy lies deep within."

Blessed be God if it is beyond man's power to make himself better than he is, God Himself has provided a remedy. Where could there be a more blessed statement than this: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

LITTLE THINGS.

WE cannot all be heroes
 And thrill a hemisphere
 With some great daring venture,
 Some deed that mocks at fear;
 But we can fill a life-time
 With kindly acts and true:
There's always noble service
 For noble souls to do.

We cannot all be preachers
 And sway with voice and pen,
 As strong winds sway the forest,
 The minds, and hearts of men,
 But we can be evangelists
 To souls within our reach:
There's always love's own gospel
 For loving hearts to teach.

We cannot all be martyrs
 And win a deathless name,
 By some divine baptism,
 Some ministry of flame;
 But we can live for Christ's sake,
 Can do for Him, and dare:
There's always faithful witness
 For faithful lives to bear.

THREE CUPS.

I.—THE CUP OF JUDGEMENT.

DEATH is stamped on all beneath the sun! The sad evidences of Adam's sin and Satan's power remain to-day, in all their terrible reality, before the eyes of men; and the whole world stands guilty before God!

Yes, ever since that solemn hour when man, through sin, became the slave of Satan and an out-cast from God's earthly paradise, death has claimed his victims by unnumbered millions, and has thus for nearly six thousand years become the most forcible preacher the world has ever known! Every day the silver cord is broken, and Time's ever changeful river is swiftly carrying us all on to the ocean of eternity! "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgement." This is God's verdict, for, "as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned."

In view of these solemn realities, dear reader, surely, if still unsaved, "it is high time for you to awake out of sleep," for the world is dying fast, and you yourself are lost! Ere thy spirit then returns to God Who gave it, may the words of Him Who suffered, bled, and died, ring loudly in thine ears, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup

[the cup of judgement] pass from Me ; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

But alas ! it was not possible, and Calvary's cross tells its own sweet tale of judgement fully borne, sin righteously put away, and death eternally triumphed over ! Yes, reader, Jesus, the Son of the living God, yea, His own precious spotless Lamb, was the only One in heaven or earth Who could drink that bitter cup, but oh ! what mystery of grace ! He drained it to its dregs, even for His enemies, and now,

Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love.

Judgement is passed and gone for every true believer, since every claim of divine justice has been met and completely satisfied by "the blood of the cross." "There is therefore now no judgement to them that are in Christ Jesus."¹

2.—THE CUP OF SALVATION.

This cup is yours, dear reader, the very moment you believe in Jesus. The psalmist could say, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."² Old and New Testament saints both speak alike ; and Joel's words are re-echoed in a later day by Peter and Paul, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." David had sung the same song many years before, "I will take," "I will call," and

¹ Rom. viii. 1.

² Ps. cxvi. 13.

grasping salvation's cup he drank it, and "passed from death unto life!"

Judgement's bitter cup having been exhausted by the holy Lamb of God, God can now righteously offer salvation's cup to all of Adam's race, though all, alas! do not take it, like David, nor make it their own, like Joel, Peter, and Paul. Reader! the wounded hand of Jesus now offers thee the cup of salvation, for "now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." Wilt thou take it, or perish in thy sin? The same God Who says, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely," also says, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." David says, "I will take."

The blind man, the leper, poor sinking Peter, and the dying robber, all alike, in their distress, called upon the name of the Lord, and "were delivered;" and when you, dear reader, do the same, your eyes too will be opened, your uncleanness will be removed, life instead of death will be your portion, and the realms of glory, instead of the lake of fire, will be your happy future!

3.—THE CUP OF BLESSING.

"The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"³ Reader! if you have indeed truly drunk of salvation's cup,

³ 1 Cor. x. 16.

and are now, through grace, rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven, and "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," let me lovingly entreat you, by the wounds of Jesus, not to slight His last loving request, "This do in remembrance of me," for "this cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you."

Soon, very soon, will He come to "receive us unto himself," that where He is, there we may be also, and even now, as you read these lines, His words ring out in all their sweetness from the glory, "Remember Me." Oh! is it possible you can ever forget that He was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities? Nay, rather may you take, even now, from His pierced hand the cup of blessing which speaks so loudly of a full and accomplished atonement, and of a love that is past all telling. Thus will you announce, in a dark and evil world, the death of Him Who has set you free, and declare, in the drinking of that cup, that you are not your own, but bought with a price. Redeemed at such a cost, may you then take at once this cup of blessing from the loving hand of Jesus, while His word rings sweetly in your ransomed soul, "This do in remembrance of me."

Trials make the promise sweet,
 Trials give new life to prayer;
 Trials bring me to His feet,
 Lay me low and keep me there.

THE WEAPON OF OFFENCE.

CÆSAR Malan, when travelling on one occasion in France, met an infidel, with whom he entered into conversation, and in the course of his remarks he quoted various passages of holy scripture. The infidel told him it was of no use his quoting from that book to him, inasmuch as he did not believe one word of it; that he should first establish its authenticity.

Malan replied, "Suppose I were to plunge a sword into your body, there would surely be no need of any logical proof that it was a sword; it would prove itself by its effect upon your person."

He then proceeded with the conversation, still quoting from the word of God.

They parted; but the truth of God did its own work. It entered, as the sword of the Spirit, into the heart of the infidel, and cut its way through his infidel system, shewing it to be a mass of folly, and himself to be a guilty hell-deserving sinner.

Time rolled on, and after many years, Cæsar Malan was accosted in the streets of Paris by a gentleman, who asked him if he remembered having met him in the *diligence*. He then told him that the word of God had, in very deed, proved itself in his case to be the sword of the Spirit, and he now needed no logical proof.

Christian reader, do we not want to quote scripture more after this fashion, with a deep and earnest faith in its divine power, with a full assurance that it is nothing less than the "sword of the Spirit?" Too often, alas! we use it as *our* sword, and then instead of doing good, we do mischief.

"I AM VERY HAPPY."

DURING the winter of 18—, in a village not far from London, a poor man was dying. A gentleman of the village came to his bedside, and kindly asked if he could do anything for him.

"I am very, very happy," was his simple reply.

"But," producing a prayer book, "you are dying; shall I not read a prayer with you?"

"Oh! no, sir, I am very happy; I'm resting on the finished work of Christ."

Having so said, he bade his friends farewell, and "fell asleep in Jesus."

My reader, are you also resting on the *finished* work of the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you inquire, "What must I *do* to be saved?"

"Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner—No!
Jesus did it—did it *all*—
Long, long ago."

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

THE DESTRUCTION OF POMPEII.

THE following extract from a recent daily paper affords a solemn warning from the world's history of the sudden destruction that shall overtake the careless and impenitent :—

In the year 63 of the Christian era an earthquake shewed the city of Pompeii on what tenure her lease was held. Whole streets were thrown down, and the evidences of hasty repair are still to be detected. From this period occasional warnings were given in slight shocks, until, in the year 79, Vesuvius poured out all his old accumulation of terrors at once; and on the clearing away of the cloud of fire and ashes which covered Campania for four days, Pompeii, with all its multitude, was gone.

The Romans seem to have been fond of villas, and the whole southern coast, declares a writer to "*The Architect*," was covered with the summer palaces of those lords of the world. Vesuvius is now a formidable foundation for a house whose inhabitants may not wish to be sucked into a furnace 10,000 fathoms deep, or roasted *sub ære aperto*, but it was then asleep, and had never flung up a spark or stone from time immemorial. To those who look upon it now in its terrors,

grim, blasted, and lifting up its sooty forehead among the piles of perpetual smoke that are to be enlightened only by its bursts of fire, the very throne of the powers of darkness, no force of fancy may picture what it was when the Roman built his palaces and pavilions on its side.

A pyramid of 3,000 feet high, painted over with garden, forest, vineyard and orchard, ripening under the southern sun, "zoned" with colonnades and turrets and golden roofs and marble porticoes, with the eternal azure of the Campanian sky for its canopy and the Mediterranean at its feet, glittering in the colours of sunrise, noon, and evening, like an infinite Turkey carpet let down from the steps of a throne—all this was turned into cinders, lava, and hot water, on (if we can trust to chronology) the first day of November, A.D. 79, in the first year of the Emperor Titus.

The whole story is told in the younger Pliny's letters; or, if the illustration of one who thought himself born for a describer, Dio Cassius, be sought, it will be found that this eruption was worthy of the work it had to do, and was a handsome recompense for the long slumber of the volcano. The Continent, throughout its whole southern range, probably felt this vigorous awakening. Rome was covered with the ashes, of which Northern Africa, Egypt, and Asia Minor had their share; the sun was turned into blood and darkness,

and the people thought that the destruction of the world was come.

At the close of the eruption Vesuvius stood forth the naked giant that he is at this hour; the palaces and the gardens were all dust and air; the sky was stained with that cloud which still sits like a crown of wrath upon his brow; the plain at his foot, where Herculaneum and Pompeii spread their circuses and temples, like children's toys, was covered over with sand, charcoal, and smoke, and the whole was left for a mighty moral against the danger of *trusting to the sleep of a volcano*.

Oh, heed the warning God gives in the scripture :
 "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?"¹



"HE that trusteth in his own heart" is a fool; and he that trusteth his *own conclusions* is no better.

1 2 Peter iii. 10—12.

HANDFULS LET FALL ON PURPOSE.

THE PASSEVER AND THE RED SEA.

WHEN the blood was put upon the lintels of the door posts, it was to keep the judgement out, and God passed over; for had He come in, He must have judged them (the Israelites) as they deserved, since they deserved judgement as much as the Egyptians, nay, more for they knew better.

Therefore it was grace keeping God out as a righteous judge, and according to His righteousness; but at the Red Sea they were to stand still, and see the salvation of God. For God was over-riding every barrier, coming in, and taking them completely out of the place of judgement and bondage, and bringing them to Himself.

While the one was keeping God *out*, the other was bringing God *in*, or rather bringing the people to God.

DONE IN SECRET.

MEN care not what they do, when they believe that God sees not what is done. "They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. They say the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." "The adulterer waits for the twilight." His sin gets up when the sun goes down. The time of darkness pays most tribute to the Prince of Darkness. There are

many that blush to confess their faults who never blush to commit them.

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

THOUGH my strength is but weakness, my weakness is strength,
 For my weakness to Jesus will lead ;
 When wearied with planning and doubting, at length
 In Him I'll find all I can need.

No more let perplexity hinder my peace,
 Let all fears for the future subside,
 Let this questioning mind from anxiety cease,
 And remember "The Lord will provide."

CHRIST IS ALL.

IF you have Christ, you have all—without Christ you have nothing. If Christ is yours, you can be happy without money, without liberty, without parents, and without friends. If you have not Christ, neither money, nor liberty, nor parents, nor friends can make you happy.

Christ, with a chain, is liberty ; liberty without Christ is a chain. Christ without anything beside is riches—all things, without Christ, is poverty indeed.

SIN CONDEMNED ON THE CROSS.

OBSERVE what a disgraceful kind of death, and how man did everything to add insult and shame and disgrace the Lord in it.

I think if those who did it had understood how the Lamb's sufferings were the expression of what

was God's estimate of man's vileness, how nauseous and loathsome man's sin was to Him, they could not, in their self-righteousness, have more strongly expressed themselves against such an estimate of themselves than they did against Jesus.

O poor, self-accusing sinner! stop thy self-accusations, and listen to God's charge and accusations against thee in the cross; for there He shewed His utter detestation and abhorrence of thee. There He was bearing the judgement of His own detestation of thee, that while He condemned thy sin, He might pardon thyself.



CHILDREN'S CORNER.

THE postman of last month now proposes to become an attendant in the divine picture gallery, as the Old Testament might be described. And just as one obtains a catalogue in visiting a modern gallery so the teaching of the New Testament gives us the key to unlock the meaning of the Old Testament pictures. Thus we understand the picture gallery better for the catalogue, and the catalogue better for the pictures!

Let us look at one of them—one which you, I am sure, will soon recognise. How courteously this young girl treats this travel-stained stranger, and busies herself to feed his camels, while his

eyes follow her graceful movements. She had listened respectfully to him when, as an entire stranger to her and her country, she might have acted very differently, or have run away. It was most fortunate for her that she did not do so, for she found herself, to her utter astonishment and delight, within a very short time the possessor of costly jewels, which I suppose were as prized by the young ladies of those days as they appear to be now. Such events did not happen every day, that a wealthy traveller (as he is discovered to be spite of his travel-stained garments), should take such notice of a village maiden, and she would have been dull indeed not to have run to tell them all about it at home.

You have no doubt discovered by this time that we are in the "Genesis" room of the divine picture gallery, and that Rebecca is the figure we have been tracing. I wonder whether your experience will have proved anything like hers, as you most certainly will meet the One whom this wealthy stranger pictures, if you have not already done so. He is a type of the Holy Spirit, and even as this unnamed stranger is full of the glories and wealth of his master's son, so the Holy Spirit is working unseen among the sons of men, as we saw last month, to tell them of the glories of Christ's person and the wonders of His salvation, and that He is seeking a bride among the children

of men to share these blessings with Him.

I would strongly advise you to compare notes with Rebecca. She had sense to see beyond the travel-stained garb, and although the stranger did not tell her he was the prime minister of a great prince, but asked instead a trifling favour of her, she listened respectfully, and readily granted it. How it reminds us of the Lord Jesus when here, and His gracious way of introducing His priceless gift of eternal life to a sinful woman at the well of Sychar by asking a simple act of politeness from her. Now that the Lord Jesus is exalted at God's right hand, the Holy Spirit is carrying on the same work in His absence, and the reverent and attentive ear is still of the utmost importance.

How wonderful that God should be calling to us from heaven to reason with Him about our sinfulness, so that He might correct all our hard and wicked thoughts in order that He might build up untold blessing upon the foundation of a soul born again !

It is marvellous, but true ! "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."¹ There are other wonderful things yet to be discovered in the picture before us which we will leave for another occasion.

¹ Is. I. 18.

ANOTHER LETTER.

READING in *Gospel Gleanings* last month about the postman, led me to search out in the Bible one of God's letters to you which I fear in some cases has been waiting a very long time to be delivered.

Our old friend, the postman, does not care to wait long after he has knocked at our doors, does he? No, if we haven't a letterbox, he likes us to fetch them at once, or he must go away without delivering them. Unlike God, Who is still patiently waiting, he hurries on to other people, who will be only too glad to welcome him. But God will not wait for ever. His Messenger must some day sorrowfully turn away, with the same feelings that led the Lord Jesus to say of Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not.*"

Now here is a very beautiful letter for you, full of love and tenderness. Do please take it at once. It tells of a free gift for you; you will find it in the third chapter of John and the sixteenth verse.

Please remember it is all for you—I don't, of course, know what your name is, but you can insert it in place of the 4th, 5th and 14th words of that verse, and so make it really and truly your own.

TIMELY TALKS: TO ALL WHO MAY BE CONCERNED.

LIFE in itself is mysterious. Its origin and development are the profoundest of secrets.

LIFE. But its presence in the world is a fact none can overlook. Everything around us is divided into the living and the non-living.

This great division in the world of natural things has its analogue in spiritual things. The divine

LIVING AND NON-LIVING. classification of the human race is into the living and the non-living: "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life."¹ "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him."²

Solemn words from solemn pages are these! Have you thought of them amid the hum of the

LIFE, BUT NOT ETERNAL LIFE. crowded street or the hum of a June garden? Life in full evidence is around you in both instances, but *not* the "life" of the scriptures. For none can have "eternal life" apart from Christ.

1 John v. 12.

2 John iii. 36.

There is a wide difference between the unhewn marble and the sculptor's masterpiece, but neither the one nor the other possesses *life*. He who can **THE LIFELIKE** give beauty to the shapeless **MAY NOT** block is powerless to bestow **BE ALIVE.** upon it life. There was such a difference, socially, intellectually and religiously, between the Jewish Rabbi and Philemon's slave, as some would compare with that between the life-like statue and the quarried rock. But there was nevertheless an absolute resemblance between Nicodemus and Onesimus in this—they were both spiritually dead. The Lord Himself laid down in His own emphatic words as the Son of God from heaven :

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a
man be born again, he cannot see
the kingdom of God.”³

Each must have a new life imparted—those that are “nigh” equally with those that are afar off. A man may be “not far from the kingdom of God,” but except he be “born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

Dear reader, let me ask, Are *you* a possessor of eternal life?

3 John iii. 3.

NOT LAW, BUT GRACE.

° HEBREWS IX. 10.

GOD's purpose by the law was that the offence might abound, and that sin might appear exceeding sinful. Man set about to make himself righteous by the very thing by which God was proving him a sinner. This you are doing, if you are seeking to satisfy the demands of righteousness by your own ways. Man seeks to save himself by obeying the law : God never thought of saving any but by Jesus.

Nor did rites or sacrifices cleanse the conscience. The Jews, like others since, took them to eke out their own righteousness. There were many offerings under the law, which God gave as types of that One Who was to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness ; and He taught thereby that these repeated sacrifices can never perfect the worshipper.

To attempt either way now, or to employ both together, is mere superstition and worse ; for it is virtual denial of Christ and of His one sacrifice. "He, when he offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made

his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.¹

In the face of Him and His work, are you, reader, relying on the law and the sacraments? Is it your religion to stand on keeping the commandments, and then to add rites and ceremonies when conscious of your failure? Beware of following the Jews in their fatal error, which God has set in His word to warn you. In your case it is wholly inexcusable; for the Son of God is come, and gives the believer an understanding to know Him that is true. Alas! this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. They might cry up the need of good works; but their own works were evil, and there are no really good works without life in Christ.



CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

2 COR. V. 7.

So the apostle wrote to the Corinthian church. So he meant and says "to all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Why should not that name be yours as well as theirs? It is yours when you believe on Him; and God is calling you in the gospel to believe on Him.

1 Heb. x. 12—14.

The Passover night in Egypt may well encourage you; especially as Christ is far more than the Passover. He is now for Gentiles as well as Jews. The sacrifice of Christ is far too precious in God's sight to be restricted to any nation. By God's grace He tasted death for every one. Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.¹ Salvation is in none other, for there is no other name under heaven, that has been given among men, whereby we must be saved.²

Yet the Passover, though it may not reveal all that Christ is, tells much to a soul that justly fears divine judgement. So God taught Israel that night. Thus He spoke to Moses and Aaron, "This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye to all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household be too little for a lamb, then shall he and his neighbour next to his house take one according to the number of the souls; according to every man's eating ye shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole

1 Rom. x. 13.

2 Acts iv. 12.

assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings. And they shall take of the blood, and put it on the two side-posts and on the lintel, upon the houses wherein they shall eat it. And in that night they shall eat the flesh roast with fire, and unleavened bread; with bitter [herbs] they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; its head with its legs and with the inwards thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; but that which remaineth until the morning ye shall burn with fire. And thus shall ye eat it: your loins shall be girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; ye shall eat it in haste; it is Jehovah's passover. And I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am Jehovah. And the blood shall be to you for a sign on the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you or destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."¹

Let your soul dwell on these last words: they concern you deeply and for ever. There you may find redemption in Christ through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.² Is not this your urgent and

¹ Exod. xii. 2—13.

² Eph. i. 7.

actual want? Without it you are only waiting for death and judgement, the sad portion for sinful man—once to die, and after this judgement. But in the blood of the Lamb is the security which God is now proclaiming in the gospel; and it is for every one that believes.

Undoubtedly if you own not your guilt His gracious message is nothing to you. Not the strong but the sick have need of a physician.

Belie not your conscience. Is pride or vanity fit for God's presence? Deceit, insolence, malice, are they not evil? If indeed you have not wronged your neighbour, have you rendered what is due to God all your life? Have you not defrauded and dishonoured Him this day? Be not self-deceived. There is revealed (not yet executed as it surely will be, but revealed) God's wrath from heaven against all impiety, and unrighteousness of men holding the truth in unrighteousness. Here God warns, not profane people only, but those who may be religious in forms and habits, and ever so rigid in their creed.

He calls on souls to own their sins, to repent and believe the gospel. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed; but this can save none that hears the glad tidings unless he believe on Him. It is essential that a sinner should judge himself and confess his sins; it is essential that he should confess Jesus as Lord, Whom God raised from the

dead. This was shewn by the Israelite putting the lamb's blood on his door-post. This was making it his security on the warrant of the divine word.

So are you, if you believe on Christ, assured that His blood cleanseth you from all sin. Do not think that this as yet means a deep feeling of God's grace, or an adequate estimate of Christ's redemption. A soul in believing passes through many an exercise of heart and conscience. But faith means his resting, not on what he finds in himself, but on what God sees for him in the blood of the Lamb. "When *I* see the blood, I will pass over you." No thoughts of a saint, even the most mature or instructed, can equal God's sense of Christ's sacrifice, or His value for that precious blood. The Israelite in faith sprinkled it on his own house; and so must every sinner at God's word appropriate it for himself, a lost sinner. But by that blood God's judgement is stayed, and He passes over. He, and He alone, sees its infinite value; and on His value of Christ's blood the believer rests. He knows that he is lost for ever without that blood; but his comfort, his security, is, not from what *he* sees in the blood of the Lamb, but in God's seeing the blood. Thus can he calmly, thankfully eat of the lamb, though it be with the bitter herbs of repentance, the inseparable accompaniment of living faith.

HOW MAY I BE FRUITFUL ?

JOHN XV.

THE answer to this question is very simple. The Lord Jesus has said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

The word "abide" occurs many times in this chapter. As believers from the heart, we well remember the happy moment when we first trusted in Christ. There stole into the heart like a beautiful light the sweet consciousness that we had passed from death into life through faith in His name, leading us to exclaim, "My beloved is mine and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies."¹

Then the Lord became our object of adoration and contemplation; then the soul revelled in the enjoyment of unhindered fellowship with Him continually; then prayer was a source of constant delight; then His promises were exceeding great and precious to us; then the world seemed too poor and small to engage attention; then we reckoned ourselves to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," causing us to sing aloud for joy.

Well we are to abide, to continue, to remain,

¹ Song of Solomon ii. 16.

just there, knowing our own need and weakness, and casting ourselves in confidence upon His fulness. We are, in this, to stay where we were ten, twenty, it may be fifty years ago. As to our trust and the foundation of our hope, we are never to leave the place of child-like faith ; though we must never rely upon any feelings, any experiences, any attainments, any knowledge of our own. But in every fresh discovery of the evil of our hearts, in every fresh manifestation of His boundless grace, in health and in sickness, in life and in death, we may say, "Christ is my all."

Thus it is, and thus only that we abide in Him, and the *first* result of abiding in Him is *fruit*; "He that abideth in me and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." We are prone to think we can do some little thing, but severed from Him we can do nothing, for we cannot think a right thought, nor have a right desire, nor perform a right act, nor take one step forward in the Christian life, nor draw one breath, but as we continue in the place of dependence and communion. His life flows through us; even as the life of the vine penetrates and vivifies the branch, so He says to us, "From me is thy fruit found."¹

The *second* result is *answered prayer*: "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

1 Hosea xiv. 8.

Abiding in Him is asking in His name, and His promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."¹

A beggar who takes to the bank a cheque having upon it the name of a rich man gets all the money demanded, because he represents the rich man, and is for the time one with him. So he who abides in Christ is one with Him, and when he prays is as sure to obtain what he asks, as Christ Himself would most certainly be heard and answered by the Father.

The *third* result of abiding in Him is *love*: "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, abide in my love." Notice, He does not tell us to abide in our love for Him, but in His love to us. It imparted great gladness to our hearts once to believe that He loved us notwithstanding our own unworthiness. He wishes us to abide in the firm persuasion, that having loved His own in the world, He loves them unto the end, and that nothing in heaven, nor in earth, nor in hell, shall be ever able to separate us from that eternal, infinite and unchangeable love of God which is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The *fourth* result is *obedience*: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments,

¹ John xiv. 13.

and abide in His love." There are many who never hear nor read the word "commandments" without thinking of the ten commandments, or the ten "nots;" but since God sent His well-beloved Son to the cross, this is His commandment, that we should "believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."¹ Under the law God's commandment was, "Love me;" under grace God's commandment is, "Believe in my love for you." Under the law the commandment was, "Love thy neighbour as thyself;" under grace the commandment is, "Love one another as I have loved you." And the Lord Jesus Christ promises the man who keeps His commandments, that He and the Father will love him, and manifest themselves to him, and come and abide with him.²

The *fifth* result of abiding in Him is *joy*: "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might abide in you, and that your joy might be full." Literally this is, that my joy in you might abide.* He actually has joy in His blood-bought people. And it may be said to them now, as truly as of old, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."³

The time was when it could be written to the

1 1 John iii. 23. 2 John xiv. 21—23. 3 Nehemiah viii. 10.

* Christ's own joy which He had in doing the Father's will would also be theirs.

followers of the Saviour, "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not [with the natural eye], yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.¹ If such joy entered into the experience of Christians to-day, can any one doubt their fruitfulness?

The *sixth* result is *fellowship*: "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Blessed fellowship! when He takes us into the intimacy of His imparted secrets, and tells us of the Father's counsels, and of our future glory. The one thing better than prayer is communion; and this sweet and holy companionship He gives to those who abide in Him.

The *seventh* result is *enduring service*: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." If we only abide in Him, fruitfulness shall surely follow. We shall gladly say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."² So the graft can say, I live yet not I, but the tree liveth in me, and the life I now live, I owe it to the choice of that life-giving tree, imparting to me all the flower, and fragrance, and fruitfulness there are in my life.

1 1 Peter i. 8.

2 Gal. ii. 20.

I HAVE INSURED MY LIFE FOR £500.

I WAS travelling from Lancashire to London by the Midland Railway. All had gone right until we passed Leicester. As we drew near the village of Kibworth, I found the train proceeding slowly, and wondered what it meant, as being an express, our first place of stopping was many miles beyond.

Being alone in the compartment, I was spending a little time on my knees in prayer, when I heard the guard calling aloud to the signalman as we came to a stand. He then came along and told the passengers that we were to get out of the carriages, as there had been a breakdown just ahead, and the train must wait until the line was cleared.

It was a cold day, and the passengers were glad to get into the station and enjoy what little warmth the fire afforded.

After we had been there a short time, one of the passengers spoke out loudly and said, "If we had been killed, I have insured my life for five hundred pounds."

Though a very young man, I felt I ought not to be ashamed, and so I said in a tone loud enough to be heard by all, "My friends, I have not insured my body, but I have insured my soul."

No reply was made, but the passengers were left to consider the two insurances.

My dear reader, it may be that you like my friend have made ample provision for your body, but what about your soul? Have you made any provision for that? If not, why not? Is it of such little value in your estimation, that you can afford to let the matter stand over until you have satiated yourself with earthly pleasures, and drawn near to the end of your life; and then when you are no longer able to indulge as formerly, you will give attention to its interests?

If such is the case, surely you must set a very low estimate upon the value of your soul. Listen to these words, and then you will see your mistake, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

These are words uttered by One Who knew far better than you or I can know what is meant by the loss of the soul.

Think for a moment of the countless millions of wealth the world contains, and learn that in comparison with the value of the soul it is as nothing. Then reflect, that in order to save the soul, it necessitated the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The loss of the soul is a matter of which neither you nor I have but little conception. To be shut out of heaven means to be shut up in hell; nothing


that defileth enters heaven. All who reach that holy place must have a nature fitted for it. God in His mercy has made a provision for man's need, a way of escape from the consequences of sin. That way is in the gift of His beloved Son, Who in order that He might suffer in our stead, took upon Himself a nature like unto ours (sin excepted), and suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

My dear reader, let me urge you to make sure work for eternity. Suffer not the perishing things of time to interfere with the true interests of your soul. Heaven with its untold joys may be yours, if you are but wise to listen to the voice of God bidding you to turn to Him. It may be that some day you intend doing this, but that you are so engrossed with the world, that you have not time to attend to it now. Let me ask, when will you have time? "Now is the accepted time: now is the day of salvation."



DEPARTED FRIENDS.




 ONE by one through death's dark portal
 Out of sight they pass
 Into life no longer mortal,
 Withering as the grass.

GOSPEL GLEANINGS.

73

Some depart amid the brightness
 Of the genial hours,
 As the hawthorn sheds the whiteness
 Of its fading flowers.

Others pass when mists are creeping
 Over plain and hill ;
 Motionless as marble sleeping,
 And as marble still.

Then awakes the voice of sorrow ,
 And bereavement's cry ;
 Ever on some coming morrow
 Some beloved must die.

Sad indeed did death's dark angel
 End our troubled way ;
 Were there no divine evangel
 Of eternal day.

Nay, by grace of God is granted
 A triumphant close
 Oft to simple faith, undaunted
 By the last of foes.

How could dying seem terrific
 Or a blank surprise,
 When the Vision Beatific
 Lights the Christian's eyes ?

When a glory past all thinking
 Dawns upon the gaze,
 What if earthly lights be sinking
 With declining rays !

Here and there such highly favoured
 Souls I too have known:
 Ah, dear trust, that never wavered,
 Be it, Lord, our own !

HANDFULS LET FALL ON PURPOSE.

PRESENT *versus* FUTURE.

SUCH as have no present holiness are for a present happiness. "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" Any good will serve the turns of those who know not the chief good. But David adds, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us."¹

Oh, how sordid is it for men to prefer the garlic and onions of Egypt to the milk and honey of Canaan! Visible things to them are better than invisible. They mind the world that is come so much as if it would never have an end; and the world to come so little as if it would never have a beginning.

IN CHRIST NOT IN SELF.

That which I could never be,
Thou hast found in Him for me;
Life and light and holiness,
Wisdom, strength, and righteousness.

Sin and self I am below,
Sorrow, conflict here, I know;
But before th'unsullied throne,
Seen I am through Christ alone.

All of sin, O Lord, is mine,
All of perfectness is Thine;
What of death was due to me,
Thou hast borne to set me free.

¹ Psalm iv. 6

CHRIST IN THE LIFE.

THE Christianity of the closet and the Christianity of busy life are not, as is often fancied, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with Jesus in his solitude knows how to carry the savour of that fellowship even into the most common affairs.

There is need of prayer in this matter. For though we be convinced that there is but one thing needful, we are easily led away, like Martha, to busy and trouble ourselves about the "many things."

Many things we must needs do and care about, while we are in the flesh ; but the work to which Christ calls us is to do and care about these things in such a spirit as to make them part and parcel of our great work—the work of keeping close to Jesus, and of following Him whithersoever He goeth.

If we were only willing to leave all and follow Christ He would make the cross not heavy to be borne, but a delight, more pleasant than to the miser is his store of gold, or to the earthly monarch are his insignia of power. Even so He spake ; "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

CONTINUING IN PRAYER.

As the bee is ever on the wing between the flowers and its honey-cells, so should our affections ever be going forth in prayer to God without,

and returning to God within. In our mutual intercourse and conversation, amidst all the busiest scenes of our pilgrimage, we may be moving to and fro on the rapid wing of prayer, of mental prayer—that prayer which lays the whole burden of the heart on a single sigh.

A sigh breathed in the spirit, though inaudible to all around us but the Lord Himself, may sanctify every conversation, every event in the history of the day.

We must have fellowship at all times either with the spirit of the world or with the Spirit of God. There is no neutral ground between fleshliness and spirituality of mind. There is the greater need, therefore, of watchfulness and prayer, if we would keep ourselves so that the wicked one toucheth us not.¹

Prayer will be fatiguing to the flesh and blood, if uttered aloud and sustained long. Oral prayer, and prayer mentally ordered in words, though not uttered aloud, no believer can engage in without ceasing; but there is an undercurrent of prayer that may run continually under the stream of our thoughts, and never weary us.

Such prayer is the silent breathing of the Spirit of God Who dwells in our hearts;² it is the temper and habit of the spiritual mind; it is the pulse of “our life which is hid with Christ in God;”

1 1 John v. 18. 2 Rom. viii. 9; 1 Cor. iii. 16.

it is the consciousness of the divine nature communicated to us.

THE GROUND OF CONFIDENCE.

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, I am resting on a *finished* work, and a *perfect, infinite* acceptance. Then, "as He is, so am I in this world:" so that "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we [the children of God] should have boldness in the day of judgement."¹

Now, what men substitute for this is the examination of the effects of the Spirit in them; the effects of regeneration are put as the ground of rest, in lieu of redemption. Hence I sometimes *hope* when I see those effects, sometimes *despond* when I see the flesh working; and having put the work of the Spirit in 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 of God in me for the work, victory, resurrection, and ascension of Christ actually accomplished—the *sure* (because finished) resting-place of faith, never altering, never varying, but always the same before God.

I I John iv. 17

CHILDREN'S CORNER.

THE picture we were looking at last month might be said to be painted in three different parts, and, having last month examined the first, we now proceed to the next, which carries us out of the fierce glare of the Eastern sun into the refreshing shade of Rebecca's father's roof.

"What!" we exclaim, "More presents?" Yes, Rebecca's decision to accompany Abraham's servant across the desert when asked, "Wilt thou go with this man?" has given a fresh occasion. It must have been an eventful experience to find a stranger ready to distribute valuable gifts so liberally; for, you notice that although Rebecca is the object of his visit, other people benefit by it.

When they have settled down, however, and have quite finished admiring the costly gifts, and bestowing their thanks, we have the opportunity to discover what very different ideas these four people had about this eventful visit. On the one hand, Rebecca's mother and brother are all anxiety to make this stranger at home where they are, but nothing will tempt him to settle down. On the other hand, Rebecca is in the stranger's secret and has her heart set on the father's house in Canaan where Isaac lives, and even the pleasure of appearing before her old friends with her new treasures has lost its charm; for, of course, she has heard all about Isaac and his romantic history, and the

honour of having been chosen as his bride captivates all her thoughts. It is true there is a long weary journey between, which would have dismayed the heart of many, but she is not to take it alone, and she can see at a glance that abundant provision has been made for it.

Perhaps, however, we are getting along too fast if we are to continue to make suitable comparisons with Rebecca.

We too find ourselves in a world which has been very much enriched by the work of the Holy Spirit in spreading the gospel. For although the hearts of men and women are naturally just as evil as they were in the darkest heathen days; yet in converting to God those who were once "enemies in mind by wicked works," such a marvellous change has been brought about that people *without being converted* enjoy the benefits of it.

Now just as Laban and his mother appear to have thought to themselves that it would be a good thing if they could persuade this stranger to stay with them, people are now indulging in the false hope that it is God's purpose to gradually improve the world. Perhaps we too have thought how we should like to play the part of great reformers, and so after a long and honoured life leave the world better for our lives, as men say: in fact, display our presents and possibly be made a great deal of!

How long Rebecca remained in anything approaching this state of mind it is impossible to say, but at any rate I am sure the stranger was very patient, and let her thoroughly enjoy her presents before he firmly but kindly brought back her attention to the real object of his mission, the interests of his master's son. And when she really grasped this she did not need to be reminded that their plans must be guided by his master's thoughts who had said, "Beware that thou bring not my son thither [*i.e.*, into Laban's country] again." How ashamed she must have felt if even for a moment she had given herself and her kindred the most prominent place when Isaac should have been first in her thoughts.

So last month we saw Rebecca as illustrating God's call: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear," this month we come to the practical result shewn in the same verse: "Forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."¹

It would not do for young people to misunderstand this verse. It is clearly not meant to suggest disrespect to parents, for it would then contradict other scriptures, but it illustrates what is becoming in a girl who leaves her home as a bride. It would be a poor compliment to her

¹ Psalm xlv.

husband (would it not?) if she had left her heart behind in the home of her parents, the value of which had grown less only by comparison. And so God would have our hearts attracted personally to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the glories which surround Him, not lingering, like Lot's wife, after worldly aims and ambitions which, even in their most refined form, prove but air-bubbles.

A bubble to a baby-mind is just as solid as anything else and far more attractive than most things, with its reflections and variegated colours, but we who know what it is to have grasped it and found it vanish, may perhaps understand by it how strongly it resembles the pleasures of sin, and how Moses by faith refused a royal palace and became a stranger on the earth, "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."¹

It may have been that after Rebecca had made up her mind the servant kept her waiting while he performed some necessary work in connection with the journey, but the feelings of her heart were the test: she has become like him, a stranger, however long kept waiting.

It would have been just as unbecoming for

¹ Heb. xi. 25, 26.

Rebecca to have shewn impatience about getting away, however, do you not think? It was her part to wait upon the one who had undertaken to conduct her, and meanwhile she could be suitably occupied: still, as already said, with the consciousness of being a stranger in heart amid old surroundings.

It must however delight the Holy Spirit, Whom we are told not to grieve, when we have responded to His invitation. And it reminds us of the Lord Jesus when He said to Thomas, "Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed." Indeed it also reminds us of Luke xv. where we see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as typified in the three parables, joined by the heavenly chorus of angels in rejoicing over "one sinner that repenteth."

We must take care however we do not forget while waiting to go up to meet the Saviour, that we can enjoy the temporal blessings God sends, and and fulfil our everyday duties with the highest zeal, because God enjoins it, and yet be strangers in heart in a world that is going on to judgement.

DISOBEDIENCE.

How often in the word of God we read of the sin of disobedience!

Disobedience to God's commands and dis-

obedience to parents are the sins spoken of specially in the Bible. It is spoken of in Timothy as one of the sins of the last days.

Two servants of an Indian Rajah once paid a dreadful penalty for the sin of disobedience. One of them had been strictly ordered to keep away from a cave in a wood near the residence of the Rajah, and also to prevent any other person from going there. This servant, however, instead of resolving at once to obey the command he had received, began to consider the probable reason of his having been forbidden to enter the cave, and persuaded himself that his master had a great treasure hidden there.

He, at length, resolved to get possession of it. Knowing that he could not roll away the stone from the mouth of the cave himself, he communicated his design to a fellow-servant, who willingly engaged in the plot, on being promised a part of the booty.

When the night came, and the silvery moon was pursuing her course through the heavens, they stole quietly into the wood, and approached the cave, thinking only of the manner in which they should dispose of their treasure.

But, alas! what sudden calamities come upon evildoers! No sooner had they, with great labour, rolled away the stone, than a tremendous tiger,

with eyes glaring in fury, sprang upon them, and tore them to pieces!

LOVING BACK.

LITTLE Alice was playing with her doll while her mother was writing.

When her mother had finished the writing, she told Alice she could come and sit in her lap, and Alice said, "I'm so glad; I wanted to love you so much, mamma."

"Did you, darling?" and she clasped her tenderly. "I am very glad my Alice loves me so; but I fancy you were not very lonely while I wrote; you and dolly seemed to be having a happy time together."

"Yes, we had, mamma; but I got tired after a while of loving her."

"And why?"

"Oh, because she never loves me back!"

"And that is why you love me?"

"That is one why, mamma, but not the first one, or the best."

"And what is the first and best?"

"Why, mamma, don't you guess?" and the blue eyes grew very bright and earnest. "It's because you loved me when I was too little to love you back; that's why I love you so."

THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T GO IN.

LUKE XV. 28.

FAITH judges as God judges. I see sin in the light of God's holiness, and learn grace in the heart of my Father. He that believes sets "to his seal that God is true."

Faith is the only thing that gives certainty. Reasoning may be all quite well for the things of this world; but if God speaks, faith believes.

Faith sets to its seal, not that it may be perhaps, but that "God is true." "Abraham believed God" (not in God, though this is also true); he believed that what God said was true.

What then does God tell me if I am a believer in His Son? That my sins and iniquities He "remembers no more." I believe it. That I have "eternal life." I believe this too. It were sin to doubt it; not to believe that of which He assures me is to wrong God. If a son, I am in His presence without a spot of sin, through the blood of the Lamb. Faith believes this: God has said it.

Were it my own righteousness in which I stood there, it must be torn to shreds; but it is a question about God's estimate of the value of Christ's blood. What has it done? Cleansed half my sins? No! it "cleanseth from all sin." Again I read: "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"—is this some of our sins? It is "our sins." And then, if my soul knows on the one hand, the value to God of the blood of the Lamb, I know,

on the other, that it all results from the love of the Father.

When I see the character Christ gives here of what God is towards me as a sinner (and He was forced to do this by the self-righteousness of the Pharisees—of man), the doubts of my heart are silenced before such grace.

Is there one who, after having read these few words, says that divine grace sanctions sin?—one in the spirit of the elder brother?¹ I would reply : “therefore came his father out, and entreated him.” We see the patience of love towards this wretched man—not merely towards the poor prodigal, but towards this one who shared not in the general joy. The servants were glad; they could say, “thy brother is come,” etc. All caught the tone of joy, save one. And who was he? The man who thought of self and self-righteousness, who said, “Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.” Take care lest your heart be turning to sourness the love and grace that God shews to a fellow-sinner. “He would not go in;” the father reasoned with him, and said, “It is (not my son, but) thy brother come back,” etc. Love is high enough up for anything; but in vain. He could not enter into the spirit which actuated all in the house, from the father down to the lowest menial.

1 Luke xv. 28.

He remained without, and had none of the happiness and none of the joy. There was in him manifested opposition of heart to the riches of the father's grace; and this is man.

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 the 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?"

Do not be saying to God, "Make me as one of thy hired servants."

All true service must result from the knowledge of Himself. Do not be putting the estimate of your own hearts on God's goodness. Our wretched hearts have such a tendency to turn back to legalism, and call it humbleness. The only real humbleness, and strength, and blessing, is to forget self in the presence and blessedness of God.

THE FAITH OF ABEL, AND THE WAY OF CAIN.

HEBREWS xi. 4. JUDE II.

DEEPLY affecting is the account scripture gives of the two brothers, the earliest representatives of Adam's race. And it is a solemn con-

sideration for you, dear reader, for your lot must be with one or other. God has told the tale that you may be blessed no less than Abel, and escape the curse which fell on Cain for his unbelief and wickedness.

Cain was not what men call irreligious. He brought of the fruit of the ground as an offering to Jehovah. Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat. It is in their worship that men most of all betray the ground of their heart. For it is no question of mere sincerity.

Cain's offering was wholly natural. In a sinless paradise it might have been acceptable. But it took no account of the fall, no account of his own sinfulness. The LORD God had said to Adam, Cursed be the ground on thine account; and Cain, who had often heard the sad sentence, brought of earth's fruit all the same. He thought that Jehovah was altogether such a one as himself, and that the produce of his hands must be acceptable. There was no self-judgement, any more than faith without which it is impossible to please God.

With Abel it was far otherwise. He believed the word of the Lord. He bowed to the just judgement of sin. He was looking for the Seed of the woman, who, bruised ever so keenly, should bruise the serpent's head. He valued and understood the divine mercy, which clothed his parents when fallen with coats of skin, with a covering of

their nakedness founded on death. His offering was in accordance with Jehovah's word and action. "By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness to his gifts; and through it he being dead yet speaketh."¹ Sinner as he was, he believed in a Deliverer from God, and owned that he could only approach by a sacrifice. He therein confessed sin and death had entered, and that there was no way out of the evil but by a death of God's providing. "And Jehovah looked on Abel and on his offering; and upon Cain and on his offering he did not look."²

How could He? For Cain came before Him just as he was, impenitent and unbelieving; and why not? He could not avoid being a sinful man; he did his best. His gifts showed his work and skill. Of God and his curse, of sin and death, he never thought. He was doing his duty, and God would surely accept it. A self-righteous man, he was as blind about God as about himself; and he proved it by his furious anger, which drew out Jehovah's gracious remonstrance. But Cain had no ear for Him, and vented his spite on his righteous brother, as the world did on Christ.

O my dear reader, how do you stand before that same God, now fully revealed in His Son? And

¹ Hebrews xi. 4 ² Genesis iv. 4

you, are you not discovered in your need and misery, in your sins and ruin? For Christ is the True Light, Who, coming into the world, sheds light on every man. It is not only that man tried by God's law is a convicted transgressor, but that he would not have God come down and dwelling in love among men, but cast Him out and crucified Him. Such is the world's sin, of which you and I are by nature and in spirit and ways a part. If you are indifferent to it and to Him Who sees and feels it all as it is, you are going in the way of Cain. Woe unto such, says the Holy Spirit.

Let me beseech you to stop, ere it be too late, and judge yourself in the light of God, Who is longsuffering toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. You have not to bring the sacrifice. God has gone incomparably beyond the words of Abraham: not only has He provided Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering; He has given His Son to be His Lamb. The One Who knew no sin He has made sin for us, that we might become His righteousness in Him.¹ He laid our responsibility, yea, our iniquity,² on the Lord, Who suffered for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God.³

Oh! beware, lest you perish everlastingly. If you built a city as Cain did, it would not better

1 2 Cor. v. 21

2 Isaiah liii, 6

3 1 Peter iii. 18

your case. If you drowned care and conscience in music and art, in the witty inventions of peace or war, or in poetry and the refinements of life, it would only endanger you more, as we may see in Cain's descendants. The only safety, the only wisdom, the only happiness, is in receiving Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Confess what you are; confess Him, for indeed He is the Lord, Whom God raised from the dead, "and thou shalt be saved."

PEACE WITH GOD.

"**T**HE wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith **NO PEACE.** my God, to the wicked." Striking words indeed are these, and how divinely true!

God's pictures are always true; and the raging billows of the troubled ocean fitly express the ceaseless activity of sin in the unregenerate, and the entire absence of either rest or peace!

"The way of peace, have they not known," is God's own description of every unconverted sinner, for there are but two classes in the world to-day,—the unsaved sinner, perishing in his sins, and the child of God, who is on his way to heavenly glory. Which are you, dear reader, and

how do you now stand with God? The world of Noah's day, and the world of the twentieth century, are very much alike—at least in this, that “every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually.”

The false cry of “peace and safety” is, alas! but the immediate precursor of the world's doom. Judgment still lingers, but will soon burst on this Christ-rejecting scene, stained as it is by the murder of God's Son; and “sudden destruction” will quickly overtake every unsaved sinner, “as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.” Soon, very soon, heaven's door will shut, and you, dear unsaved reader, will be outside for ever! Having “no peace” now, your eternal portion will be found among those who “have no rest day nor night.”¹

Man's rebellion has not, however, hindered the wonderful outflow of God's saving grace, for “where sin abounded [as it surely did at Calvary's cross] grace did much more
PEACE MADE. abound.”² The more men hated Christ, the more He loved them; and the cruel rage of His murderers only brought forth, from the depths of a broken heart, the gracious prayer that let in the light to the dying robber's soul, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

1 Rev. xiv. 11.

2 Rom. v. 20.

Yes; divine love could not be quenched by all the malice of Satan; and, though forsaken by all, the Lord of glory, spite of the bitter taunts of soldiers, priests, and people, bows His head, in obedience to His Father's will, and dies for His enemies!

Man's sin surely reached its climax when the soldier's spear pierced the side of the dead Christ; but God's answer was the rich out-pouring of that precious blood which not only "cleanses from all sin," but which has, through grace, made eternal and unchanging peace. Yes; Jesus has "made peace by the blood of His cross."¹

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."² Such is God's way for the anxious, the weary, and the heavy-laden; and none can ever know this true and only way of peace, save those who have received it through faith in a dead and risen Christ. Death is the foundation, and resurrection is the top-stone of this solid and abiding peace.

Peace is the sweet and blessed outcome of the finished work of Jesus; faith in His glorious Person gives life eternal; faith in His perfect work gives lasting peace and joy. Faith looks back to Calvary, and sees a spotless victim, Who has "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and up to yonder

1 Col. i. 20.

2 Rom. v. 1.

throne, where He has sat for more than eighteen hundred years, as the everlasting proof that the believer's sins are for ever gone from before the eye of God.

Every claim of justice and righteousness has been fully and completely met by the cross of Christ; and, "being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."¹ "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."²

The very first words that fell on the ears of the trembling disciples from the lips of the risen Jesus were, "Peace unto you," and then "were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." His pierced hands and side were the precious witness to their hearts that a full atonement had been made, and that the Son of God had triumphed over all their foes.

Forty days after, He led them out to the Mount of Olives; and, "after he had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."³ "Peace with God," therefore, rests not on happy feelings, prayers, tears, good works, nor on anything that can be found in man, but simply and absolutely on a Person Who has been down into death, and Who is now "alive for evermore," even "Jesus, who hath delivered

¹ Rom. v. 9.² Heb. i. 3.³ Mark xvi. 19.

us from the wrath to come." Yes, Peace rests solely on this four-fold foundation :—

- (1) God is satisfied.
- (2) Sin (for the believer) is "put away."
- (3) Sin's judgment has been borne.
- (4) Christ has died and risen.

Therefore, "He [Christ] is our peace."¹ Reader, is He *yours*?

"POOR MAN."

I WAS lately visiting a man who was approaching death, and who had shown no evidence of repentance towards God, nor of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I spoke to him of the Saviour, dwelling much on His sufferings on the cross for the sinner.

Waiting for some response, I was astonished to hear him say, "*Poor man!*" of course referring to the Lord Jesus. Concerning himself he spoke with complacency of how he used to deny himself by staying at home on Sundays to read "the service" through to his crippled wife, who was unable to go to church.

Dear reader, can you discern this man's mistake? He did not see that *he himself* was the poor man, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was the One of Whom it is written that, "although he was *rich*,

¹ Eph. ii. 14.

yet *for your sakes* he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Fellow sinner, have you realised that you are a suitable object of pity? The absence of everything good in you qualifies you for becoming an object of God's grace. Your unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God to you, as nakedness commends clothing, and sickness commends medicine.

Be warned in time. Learn a lesson from the crucified robber, who there and then, when Jesus hung beside him, acknowledged Him, not as an object of pity, but as the dispenser of God's grace to ruined sinners.



"REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE."

LUKE xvii. 32.

So said the Lord of all. Have you borne His words in mind? How solemn the lesson!

Mercy visited the city of destruction before the righteous blow fell. Lot was rescued, and his two daughters who were with him, not those who were married any more than their husbands. Mercy thought of them and of any besides. But they would not hear. Lot seemed to his sons-in-law as one that mocked, when he said, "Up, get you out of this place; for Jehovah will destroy this

city.” They were neither shocked by the extreme lawlessness of Sodom, nor did they believe that ruin from God was at their doors. They perished in the awful catastrophe.

Do you know, my reader, that the Lord Jesus is now warning you? In the scriptures it is written indelibly. Be not deceived by such as say that He here (Luke xvii. 22—37) spoke of the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans. Of this He did speak in Luke xix. 41—44, and in Luke xxi. 20—24; and His predictions have been punctually fulfilled. But here He warns of that far larger judgement which He will execute on the living, when He returns in power and glory, as the Son of man in His day. It concerns all the inhabited earth.

“And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man: they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Thus shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed. In that day he who shall be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him like-

wise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose it shall preserve it. I say to you, in that night there shall be two [men] in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be let go. Two [women] shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other shall be let go. Two [men] shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other shall be let go. And they in answer say to him, Where, Lord? And he said to them, Where the body is, there also will the eagles be gathered together" (vers. 26—37).

By those two witnesses, one of universal ruin by water, the other of a more sudden though limited visitation by fire, the Lord speaks in mercy to you. Not a word of His was spoken in vain. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words" said Himself, "shall in no wise pass away." Do you believe Him? Are you taking heed to them? The time is at hand. It is quite as distinct from the judgement of the dead, as from the sack of Titus. There was no discrimination between men or between women when the Jews fell by the edge of the sword and were led captive into all the nations. There will be none abed or in the field, or grinding at the mill; no thinking of goods in the house, nor of turning back, when the great white throne is set up, and the earth and the heavens are

fled. There is besides an inevitable judgement of living man on the earth, to surprise the race in its busy life of every day, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling, planting and building, just as we see to-day.

How would it be with you? In the end of this age (*not* of the world) the Son of man thus comes. All for your soul turns on believing in Him now. Thus alone can a sinner honour the God Who sent His Son into the world, not to judge the world as He will in that day, but that the world, not Jews only, should be saved through Him. There is no other way. This way is not for a while merely but for eternity. He means that you should know your salvation now. "By grace have ye been and are saved through faith."¹ "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake."² "These things have I written to you, that ye may know that ye have life eternal—you that believe on the name of the Son of God."³ Thus honouring the Son you can alone honour the Father. If not, the wrath of God abides on you; and it is your own wilful unbelief, your own love of darkness and sin. You may join for a while those that escape. But "remember Lot's wife" who looked back, where her heart was, and had no real sense of either sin or grace. Have you? How blessed, if you believe God about His Son!

1 Eph. ii. 8.

2 1 John ii. 12.

3 1 John v. 13.

How wretched now and evermore, if you defy His word or only keep up appearances, to perish all the same for evermore !



SALVATION ALL OF GRACE.

AT this time more especially will we speak that by grace ye are saved through faith, because never was the maintaining this doctrine more seasonable than at this day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the increase of the Romish delusion among us. It is endless to attack one by one all the errors of that church. But salvation by grace through faith strikes at the root, and all fall at once when this is established. It was this doctrine that first drove Popery out of these kingdoms, and it is this alone that can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality which has overspread the land as a flood.

Can we empty the great deep drop by drop? Then you may reform men by dissuasion from particular vices. But let the righteousness which is of God by faith be brought in, and so shall its proud waves be stayed. Nothing but this can stop the mouths of those who glory in their shame, and openly "deny the Lord who bought them." They can talk sublimely of the law. To hear them speak

on this head might incline one to think they were not far from the kingdom of God. But take them out of the law into the gospel; begin with the righteousness of faith, with Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth; and those who but now appeared almost if not altogether Christians, stand confessed as far from life and salvation (God be merciful unto them!) as the depth of hell from the height of heaven.

There is no power in man till it is given him from above, to do one good work, to speak one good word, or to form one good desire. For it is not enough to say all men are sick of sin. No, we are all dead in trespasses and sins. We are all helpless, both with regard to the power and the guilt of sin. For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Who can raise those that are dead, spiritually dead in sins? None less than the Almighty. But on what consideration will He do this? Not for works of righteousness that we have done. The dead cannot praise Thee, O Lord, nor can they do anything for which they should be raised to life.

Whatever therefore God does, He does it for the sake of His well-beloved Son. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:" "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Here then is the sole meritorious cause of every

blessing we can or do enjoy, and in particular of our pardon and acceptance with God, of our full and free justification. But by what means do we become interested in what Christ has done and suffered? Not by works, lest any man should boast, but by faith alone. "We conclude," says the apostle, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of law." And to as many as receive Christ He gives title to become children of God; even to them which believe in His name, who are born not of the will of man, but of God. Except a man be thus born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. All is a free gift through the blood of Christ, and there is eternally the same reason to remember: He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readest these words, thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner, I charge thee before God, the Judge of all, go straight unto Jesus with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thine own soul by pleading thy righteousness more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving, and dropping into hell; thus shalt thou find favour in His sight, and know that He justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the blood of sprinkling, as an undone, helpless, damned sinner.

Thus look unto Jesus! Plead no good works, no righteousness of thine own, no humility, con-

trition, sincerity. No! Plead thou singly the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy sinful, proud, stubborn soul. Who art thou that now seest and feelest both thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord. I challenge thee for a child of God by faith. The Lord hath need of thee. Thou, who feelest thou art just fit for hell, art just fit to advance His glory, the glory of free grace, justifying the ungodly and him that worketh not. Oh, come quickly! Believe in the Lord Jesus, and be reconciled to God.

FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION.

“**W**E have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace.”¹

It is one thing for Israel to know that they had been *safe* from judgement on the night of the Pass-over, and quite another to have been *saved* out of Egypt. They *had been* slaves there, making bricks without straw. They *are* God's freed men, as they sing the song of Moses on the wilderness-side of the Red Sea. Here is where so many err. They are trusting in Christ as their only hope; they may know too that their sins are pardoned, but they go on all their lives through perhaps, crying out,

1 Eph. i. 7.

“sinners” or “miserable sinners.” Plainly they do not know redemption, or this they could not do.

Suppose that an Israelite, instead of singing Moses’ song of redemption, was crying out, because he found himself the same person still, “I am a poor slave in Egypt,” what would you have thought of his folly? Yet there are plenty of the people of God in no better state. How thoroughly dishonouring to the work of Christ!

Redemption is ignored in its true force; I do not say in words, for alas! this is one of the most successful plans of the enemy, to use orthodox words without their true import, and thus blind the souls of the people of God as to their real meaning, keeping them in darkness and uncertainty all their lives.

An Israelite who was redeemed was dealt with from that moment on an entirely new footing, never as a slave in Egypt again; but according to the new place and relationship in which he now stood with God: and so it is with the Christian.

HAVE FAITH IN GOD.

I WAS once in an awful storm at sea. We were for many hours tossed about in sight of dangerous rocks; the engines would work no longer; the wind raged violently, and around were heard the terrific roar of the breakers, and the

dash of the waves, as they broke over the deck.

All this dreary and trying time, while we lay, as might be said, at the mercy of the waves, I found great comfort and support from an apparently trifling circumstance; it was, that the captain's daughter was in the cabin with us. He had come two or three times, in the midst of his cares and toils, to see how his child went on; and it is well known how cheering is the sight of a captain in such a time of danger. As our situation grew worse, I saw the girl bending her eyes anxiously to the door, as if longing for her father's re-appearance. He came at last. He was a large, bluff, sailor-like man, and as he fell on his knees on the floor beside his child, he stretched his arms over her, but did not speak.

After a little while, he asked if she was alarmed.

"Father," the child answered, "let me be with you, and I shall not be afraid."

"With me!" he cried, "you could not stand it for an instant."

"Father, let me be with you!" she repeated.

"My child, you would be more frightened then," he said, kissing her, while the tears were on his rough cheeks.

"No, father, I will not be afraid if you take me with you. Oh, father, let me be with you!" And she threw her arms around his neck, and clung fast to him. The strong man was overcome; he

lifted his child in his arms, and took her away with him.

How much I felt her departure! As long as the captain's child was near, I felt her to be a sort of pledge for the return and care of the captain. I knew that in a moment of greatest danger the father would run to his child; I was certain that were the vessel to be abandoned in the midst of the wild waves, I should know of every movement, for the captain would not desert his child.

Thus, in the presence of that child, I had comforted myself, and when she went, I felt abandoned, and for the first time fearful, I rose, and managed to get on deck. The sea and sky seemed one; it was a dreadful sight. Shuddering, I shrank back, and threw myself on my couch. Then came the thought—the child is content; she is with her father; and have I no father? O God, I thank Thee! in that moment I could answer, Yes. An unseen Father, it is true; and faith is not as sight, and nature is not as grace; but still I knew I had a Father and a Saviour Whose love surpasseth knowledge. The thought calmed my mind. Reader, does it calm yours?

“Oh!” cries the trembling soul, “the storm is fearful; the sky is hid; we seem to walk in darkness, and have no light.”

“Be still, and know that I am God,” saith the Lord; then seek to know that God is thy Father.

“Fear not ; for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.” All things are under the dominion of Christ ; and all things, yea, even terrible things, shall work together for good to them that love God. Tempest-tossed soul, as the child clung to her father’s bosom, so cling thou to thy God ; in the moment of thine extremity He will appear, to be with thee or take thee to be with Himself. “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.”

HOW SHOULD MAN BE JUST WITH GOD?

THE world goes on the principle of sin being in it. Self-deceit is the will unbroken in the midst of the consciousness of sin. Those justified God who received Christ. The Pharisees complained because He ate with publicans and sinners ; but the publican can say, That is just what I want. The sinner justifies God in owning the sin and receiving the grace. A man never knows God until he gets to that point—“How shall a man be just with God?” Men are willing to contend with Him ; but what good is that ? says God. God does love righteousness ; but what avails that to me ? How many sins to-day, yesterday, and so on, have I committed ? It is no good pleading with God on that ground.

YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN.

THE rich man's superfluity was ordained to relieve the poor man's necessity.

A lady, on giving sixpence to a beggar, accosted him thus: "I have now given you more than ever God gave me."

To whom he replied, "No, madam, God hath given you all your abundance."

"That is your mistake," said she, "for He hath but lent it me, that I might bestow it on such as you."

The apostle wrote: "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

"GOSPEL GLEANINGS."

(AN ACROSTIC)

God's abounding grace we see
On the cross where Jesus died ;
Such the value of His blood,
Perfectly God justifies,
E'en the vilest sinner saves,
Liberates from chains of sin,

Gives to those who once were slaves
Liberty to enter in
E'en where Christ Himself hath gone ;
As He is, so now are we,
Near to God, His Father, too,
In the holiest, set free,
Now to worship and adore
God, our God, for evermore,
Saved for all eternity !

CHILDREN'S CORNER.

YOU will be expecting, this month, to be shewn the third portion of the picture giving us the early history of Rebecca, and perhaps you have already been considering what it would be like.¹

One may well imagine a glorious sunset, something like artists have brought back on canvas from their tours in Palestine. The sun is setting upon what was but just before a tired, travel-stained caravan, but what a change! Its wonderful rays have gilded everything with its reflected glory, and each eye has now brightened with expectation, and the weary journey is already forgotten. The reason is not far to seek. The travellers are nearing the home of Isaac, who has come forth to meet them. But there is one in this picture, spite of all this reflected glory, who is more than ever conscious of her own shortcomings, as she sees Isaac for the first time. One half had not been told her of the splendour of the home and surroundings to which she is approaching, and which she is to share as a bride, and like the Queen of Sheba, "there was no more spirit in her." A veil appears to her far more becoming than anything else under the circumstances, and this she dons, and so the no less happy bride is welcomed by the bridegroom.

¹ Gen. xxiv, 61—67.

All this, however, carries us a long way beyond where we left off last month. Rebecca had then only decided to take the journey; but when the party is finally arranged, we are introduced to another person who is to accompany them, and no doubt Rebecca was astonished, as much as you and I would have been, at all the care and thought displayed in the arrangements for her journey. She had been quite willing to take it alone with this stranger if it must be so, but another had been found willing to go too.

If we are left to wonder who first suggested that her nurse should accompany her, one thing is very certain, it could only have been with the entire approval of Abraham's servant. It was certainly a touching piece of thoughtfulness that she should not be deprived of this companion of her childhood, who was no longer to assert the authority which had previously been quite proper, but by counsel and advice to help her in conforming to all that was required by the one who had taken charge of them, and undertaken to see them safely through the desert.

And has not the Holy Spirit thought of us and our needs and loneliness, with infinite tenderness and compassion? He Himself is alone sufficient, and was so for the aged apostle John at the end of his pilgrimage, when in exile at Patmos. "Like as a father pitieth his children but he

GOSPEL GLEANINGS.

III

knoweth our frame.”¹ and how timid and shrinking we are as to the difficulties to be faced in going forth to meet the Bridegroom. He has thought of every weakness of ours, and our real strength lies in believing this, and trusting to Him to smooth each step as we take it. He was certainly no Stranger to the apostle John, who had had the high privilege of leaning his head on Jesus’ bosom ; but He has introduced us, who, to our loss, know Him so little, into the circle of the fellowship of the Lord’s people, and they, while bound upon the same journey, are of like feelings with ourselves, and are able to help and encourage us. Indeed, we are commended to their care expressly by the Lord.

But you note the one essential in her companion must of necessity be that she was taking the same journey. There may have been plenty of amiable and more naturally agreeable young people left behind, but the fact that they were not going the same way rendered companionship impossible. It may have been, that in the details of the journey Rebecca momentarily repined, or that the old nurse from force of habit may occasionally have sought to exercise authority over Rebecca, which set aside that of Abraham’s servant, but by a patient rebuke (not giving way to these shortcomings) all these matters were set right, and the journey was completed to the blessing of both.

1 Psalm ciii. 13, 14.

This incident of the nurse seems a faint illustration of that wonderful promise, "There is no man that hath left house or parents or brethren or wife or children [*i.e.* by whichever of these forms the heart has hitherto been kept away from God] for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time and in the world to come, life everlasting."² We may rest assured of this, we have most unworthy thoughts of God if we think He takes no care as to providing us with suitable companions nor cares for other needs by the way; and, in the spirit of this, Rebecca finds that in leaving all her kindred, it is already being made up to her. When we too respond to the Lord's "Follow thou me," He will more than surprise us; and shew how carefully He has thought out the journey for us and softened what seemed hardest! As has been said, "He gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him."

How many yearnings of ours are unanswered because they come from some source of worldliness. It is evident that certain things would be out of place in travelling, and we must not be surprised if the Captain tells us He cannot carry easy chairs for us. Nor should it be our aim to make things easy for ourselves, for how often have we proved that the beds we make ourselves are the hardest of all.

² Luke xviii. 29, 30.

“I HOPE HE WILL OVERLOOK THE PAST.”

SOME time ago I heard of the dangerous illness of a friend, and lost no time in going to see him. He had formerly moved in a good position of life, but had sunk down by degrees through drink, until he was compelled by force of circumstances to become a “sandwich-man,” carrying boards through the streets for a scanty livelihood. After a time his health failed him, and being homeless he was obliged to go to the workhouse, where I found him.

He was suffering from heart-disease, and knowing his former life, and seeing his feeble state, I felt I must deal very faithfully with him; and so I said to him, “You don’t require me to tell you that you are a lost sinner, and that you will soon be in the presence of a holy God. How are you going to meet Him?”

His reply was, “I hope He will overlook the past.”

To which I replied, “He cannot, because He is holy.”

I gave my friend a little time to consider this, and then I said, "God must punish sin ; but if He cannot overlook it He can pardon it ;" going on to speak to him of the way of salvation, to which he eagerly listened, and I trust he received Jesus as his Saviour. After prayer I left him. The following day he died.

My dear reader, do you know the way of salvation, or, like my friend, are you hoping that when you stand before God, He will overlook the past, and give you to share in the joys of heaven? If so, you are under a delusion. How could it be possible for a sinner and a holy God to dwell together? Listen to the words of holy scripture : "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

In spirit does not heaven begin below? Here it is that the Christian has sweet and blessed foretastes of that home to which he is hastening. Here he delights to commune with God through His word by quiet and patient waiting upon Him in prayer. Here it is that he forms those blessed relationships through Christ with God and His people, which will be renewed in a brighter and better world.

In spirit, too, it may be said, that if heaven begins below, so does hell. Who can tell the anguish of soul those experience who tread the paths of sin?

“The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Daily experience proves the truth of this.

My dear reader, it now remains for you to make your choice. There are two voices speaking to you—the voice of God, and the voice of Satan. To the former, it is your imperative duty to give heed; to the latter, your bounden duty is to turn a deaf ear. Up to the present, it may be, you have been following the desires of your own heart, heedless of your danger, and of the punishment that awaits the finally impenitent. If such is the case, let me affectionately urge you to lose no time in making sure work for eternity.

Let me therefore earnestly beseech you to make a wise choice, and to make it to-day. As the end of life draws near, you will wish you had done so. Let me remind you of the words of a godless man on his last birthday:—

“My days are in the yellow leaf; the flowers and fruits of love are gone; the worm, the canker, and the grief, are mine alone.”

This may be taken as a fair sample of the experience of those who give themselves up to a life of pleasure. How true are the words of holy scripture! “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.”

My dear reader, I must leave this matter with

you for deep reflection. Fain would I urge you to come at once as you are, and find rest, and peace, and joy, as you receive Jesus as your Saviour, and trust alone in that atoning work which He wrought upon the bitter cross of Calvary. Let the language of your heart be:—

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Guilty to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.”

JESUS PASSING THROUGH JERICHO.

THE Lord's last and memorable journey up to Jerusalem was from the city of Jericho, the place where Joshua entered to possess the land, on which the curse long rested.¹

He went up to Jerusalem in the name of Jehovah, presenting Himself as Israel's king and deliverer.² But their hosannas to the son of David, alas! were soon changed for the cry, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him.”

Yes, Jesus entered this world, and passed through, and departed. It had no room for Him. Not only was He rejected by His own people, the Jews,

¹ Joshua vi. 26. ² Zech. ix. 9

but He was delivered into the hands of the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and put to death. He was to them as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness. They saw no beauty to desire Him. He was despised, and rejected of men. There was but one Person Who estimated His worth; and He opened the heavens upon Him, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

There are two striking incidents which illustrate the Lord's purpose of blessing. As they departed from Jericho a great multitude followed Him, and two blind men were sitting by the wayside, who, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David." The multitude rebuked them, but they cried out the more. They knew their need; there was no occasion to tell them they were blind. They knew this, and realised the opportunity had come to be healed, and that it must be while Jesus was passing by. He was the only one Who could heal them, and He would not pass that way again.

Hence though the multitude rebuked them, they did not hesitate. To have done so would have been too late.

So the cry rings out over the multitude, reaching the ear of Jesus, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David." They were the only two in the whole crowd who seemed to realise Who was

passing by. They own His person and His title, and He answers to their faith. He stood, and commanded them to be brought. It is a king's right to command. Although the Lord came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many, He laid Himself open to meet the need of all who came. Listen to His gracious words, "What will ye, that I shall do unto you?" They say unto Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Jesus.

My reader, have you ever been in touch with Jesus? Can you say with the man who was born blind, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."¹ Have you beheld Him by faith, and felt His healing touch? Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Or are you going to let your opportunity pass? God says, "To-day is the day of salvation." It may never come again to you. The blind men would never have had another opportunity, for Jesus never passed that way again. Oh, do not risk being lost for ever, going into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

The next incident brings out how much the Lord desires to meet the sinner. Zacchæus sought to see Jesus, who He was. We are not told that

1 John ix.

he was conscious of any great need of the Saviour, such as the blind men had. Still there was a desire to see, and know Him, strong enough to enable him to overcome a natural hindrance. He might have argued that it would be useless to try, being so small of stature, but he did not stop to argue. He ran and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus.

The crowd did not hinder Zacchæus, any more than it did the blind men. Alas, there are always many difficulties to hinder souls coming to Jesus. But Zacchæus was in earnest. His opportunity had come, and he seized it.

And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said, "Zacchæus, *make haste* and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." And the publican *made haste*, and came down, and received Him joyfully. Blessed place, to be at the feet of Jesus; and Zacchæus found it so, but he had to come down to get there. Yet the joy and gladness makes up for it all, no matter to what heights we may have climbed, or what thoughts of our own goodness we may have to give up. *Come down we must.* It is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by His mercy and grace He saves us.¹

And when the multitude saw it, they all murmured, saying that He was gone to be the guest with a man that is a sinner. Well, why not? Was

¹ Titus iii. 5.

not that His errand? Did He not take that wondrous stoop from the heights of glory, down to Calvary's depths of unutterable woe, there to meet all that stood between God and the sinner, that He might fill the sinner's heart with His love, and take up His abode with him? The multitude may murmur, but it only drives to Jesus Zacchæus, who brings out, in self-defence, what was excellent in his character and ways. And Zacchæus stood and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." But he has to learn that neither justice nor generosity avails him anything for salvation. Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*."

Here we have the great secret: God's salvation was there in the Person of Jesus. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins."¹ "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."²

Admit Him, for the human breast
Ne'er entertained so kind a guest;
No mortal tongue their joys can tell,
With whom He condescends to dwell.

1 Matt. i. 21.

2 Acts iv. 12.

JOY THE FRUIT OF SORROW.

IF all our life were one broad glare
 Of sunlight, clear, unclouded ;
 If all our path were smooth and fair,
 By no pale gloom enshrouded ;
 If all life's flowers were fully blown
 Without the sweet unfolding,
 And happiness were rudely thrown
 On hands too weak for holding,
 Should we not miss the twilight hours,
 The gentle haze and sadness ?
 Should we not long for storms and showers
 To break the constant gladness ?

 If none were sick, and none were sad,
 What service could we render ?
 I think if we were always glad
 We scarcely could be tender.
 Did our beloved never need
 Our patient ministration,
 Earth would grow cold, and miss indeed
 Its sweetest consolation.
 If sorrow never claimed our heart
 And every wish were granted,
 Patience would die, and hope depart,
 Life would be disenchanted.

 And yet in heaven is no more night,
 In heaven is no more sorrow !
 Such unimagined new delight
 Fresh grace from pain will borrow.
 As the poor seed that underground
 Seeks its true life above it,
 Not knowing what will there be found
 When sunbeams kiss and love it,
 So we 'mid sorrow upward grow,
 And look and long for heaven,
 But cannot picture it below,
 Till more of light be given.

BOB'S CONVERSION.

WE were at Malta, on board H. M. S. "A——," when a Christian brother from the Berkshire Regiment visited us ; and as it was the evening for the prayer and praise meeting, we were soon assembled ; not however in the Whitehead Torpedo Room, the usual place of meeting, but in the flat, as some "Whiteheads" were under repair.

If boatswain's tanks, log-reels, small arm magazines, torpedo and electrical stores could only speak, they would be able to tell a joyful story. Praise indeed, and thankfulness to our God and Father were offered up, not only that evening, but on many a one, in the same corner. And on this occasion there was joy in heaven, and joy on earth, for a wandering sheep had returned, to trust the Good Shepherd, Who had given His life for him.

"Then sing of the Shepherd Who died,
Who died for the sake of the flock ;
His love to the utmost was tried,
But firmly endured as a rock."

That same night two of our number went to the topgallant forecastle, and although late, we lingered, sitting and talking of the many blessings the Lord had been pouring upon us. It was not long before we observed a shipmate come up and join himself to the sentry, who paced the deck in faithful service to his Queen and country.

Somehow—one can't remember how—a third person joined and paced the deck too, and shortly, our Royal Marine Light Infantryman (for such the private was) opened his heart, and confessed that he had come up there to inquire the way to heaven!

His mother's last request to him was, he said, "Robert, meet me in heaven;" and she was dying!

Down before the topgallant forecastle bitts we got, and asked God to shew this anxious, needy soul the way to heaven; and, after waiting some considerable time, Jesus as the way was made clear to him. Then we, very reluctant, but exceedingly happy, retired full of praise for the Lord's goodness and mercy.

That this narrative may point others to Jesus, "the way, the truth, and the life," is the earnest desire of the one who was an eye-witness to Bob's conversion.



THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.



A SHORT time ago, the writer met an intelligent young lady, who, nevertheless, thought it presumptuous on anyone's part, to assert that he was saved. She believed it was quite right and praiseworthy for all to live good christian lives, but very wrong and unbecoming in any to say

they knew that their sins had already been forgiven.

This lady being a school teacher, liberty was taken to ask her if she taught the scriptures to the young children attending her school.

She replied, "Oh, yes, I teach the little ones such words as these: 'Feed my lambs.'"

Without waiting to point out to her, that no one is in a fit state of soul to feed Christ's lambs, who is not consciously reconciled to God by the death of His Son, she was further asked: "Suppose a little girl came to you for an explanation of these words: 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake'; how would you explain this scripture to the child, without shewing that it assures those whom it addresses that their sins are already forgiven?"

Now, dear reader, it is most important that *you* should see that the "knowledge of salvation," "by the remission of sins," is not only attainable here, but is in fact one of the very *first* messages God sends to you in the gospel of His grace; and that no one can live "a good christian life" while the question of his acceptance with God remains unsettled. His word is express.

The forgiveness of sins is viewed in more ways than one in scripture. We learn there both the forgiveness of the sinner, and the forgiveness of the child of God. Those who have believed in Christ, and are therefore "the children of God by faith" in Him,

sometimes, alas! grievously err, and need to confess their sins to God, and to one another.

But all this is under God's government. They still continue to be His children, and He remains their Father. It is much to be regretted, that not a few who have really trusted in Christ, on finding they have failed, revert practically to the old ground of being lost sinners before God; instead of seeing that, while our wrong-doing must ever make us amenable to His Fatherly discipline, our christian relationship with Him is not destroyed, even by failure. God's children, if disobedient, suffer sometimes very serious consequences in this world: indeed they may even suffer loss in eternity through their careless walk here; but, having already "passed from death unto life," they do not "come into judgement" as lost sinners.

Reader! if you on the one hand, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but on the other, have slipped away from Him, and have, therefore, a bad conscience, do not give yourself up for lost, but come, and come *now*, to the Father in the name of Christ; and confessing your sins to God, while you sever yourself from all you know to be wrong, accept by faith the forgiveness which He assures you is given. "For if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But what is evidently in view in 1 John ii. 12 is

the forgiveness of sinners when they first believe. At once "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." In the first and twelfth verses of this chapter, true believers in Christ are all addressed as "little children," but in verse thirteen they are distinguished as "little children," "young men" and "fathers." In the twelfth verse, the words "little children" do not mean the newly-born into the world, but all those born into the family of God. Some persons reach manhood, or even old age before they thus become as little children. But it is certain that such "little children" have full divine authority that forgiveness is already bestowed.

My reader, would you not like to know that *your* sins are forgiven *you*? Such knowledge would work a wonderful revolution in the whole of your future life. Knowing that his sins are forgiven, the christian servant courageously goes forth to meet unknown perils in the service of his Master, and thus the christian sailor calmly faces the frequent dangers of the deep. This assurance of God's forgiveness is the secret of the christian mother's cheerfulness and patience in trying circumstances; the christian master's equality, justice, and forbearance to his men; the christian workman's faithfulness, steadiness, and joy in his work. Where redemption is known, religion becomes a

career of liberty, instead of a condition of bondage ; a state of reality, instead of a round of forms and ceremonies.

How many in singing hymns have thanked God for a salvation with their lips, which they have never believed in their hearts ! Have you ever pondered the sinful inconsistency of this ? But, when once we know God's forgiveness in our hearts, the Bible, which before was to us a message of condemnation and death, now breathes a spirit of reconciliation from cover to cover. And just as the man who has done no wrong is not afraid to meet a Justice of the Peace, even so, one who is reconciled to God, is not afraid of the awful hell revealed in God's holy word.

But a little child is a perfect picture of helplessness. Some referred to in the scripture we are considering were no doubt little children in the knowledge of God's word. They could not explain its far-reaching prophetic utterances, its profound doctrinal teachings, nor yet the many mysteries of life ; but ignorance of all these things, and many more notwithstanding, they are assured of a present forgiveness. The blind man, in the ninth chapter of John, had questions addressed to him which he could not answer, but he was sure on one point. He said : "One thing I know that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

Neither were those little children likely to have

been adepts at walking in the ways of God. A little child learns to walk by degrees. We hear God saying of old, "I taught Ephraim to go, taking him by the arms." In Matthew ix. the man sick of the palsy heard the Saviour first of all say, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." It was after this that Jesus said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The poor prodigal returned from the far country, received the warm kiss of his father's forgiveness, before there had been time to put shoes on his feet.

Moreover, these little children could not be expected to do much in the service of God. That would no doubt fall to the "young men," or the "fathers," who were, and ought to be strong. The little children are not expected to be like David's mighty men, one of whom entered a pit and slew a lion in a time of snow. If some were unfit for christian warfare, their sins were forgiven them *for His Name's sake*.

God and His great love has made known a reason for forgiveness outside the sinner himself. He has provided a substitute for the lost and helpless in the gift of His own Son. When God forgives the sinner, He has before Him the great atoning work which Christ wrought in His death. God is thus righteous in forgiving sins and in justifying the ungodly. Hence we read that "we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that

is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." We also read, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things."

Reader! will you not be one of the "all that believe?" And thus to-day be entitled, with us, to "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation?"

SAVED AT THE LAST.

IN a little town in the North of England, some time ago, I was asked to see a man who was dying of consumption, the scourge of stone-masons. I went, and he was pleased to see me.

I said, "Jack, I am sorry to see you lying there. How do you feel?"

He said, "Very ill."

"Do you think you will get better?" He thought there was no chance.

"Where are you going then?"

He said he did not know.

I said, "I would not be in your condition for a thousand worlds ; for you are lost."

He said, "I want to be saved."

I then told him that the Son of God died for

poor sinners like him and me ; that He loved me and gave Himself for me ; and that He bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and eternal life was mine by believing on the Son of God.

I mentioned that God took my sins, laid them on the Saviour, and justified me on believing.

Before parting for the night, I said, "I want you to think over Paul's words, 'The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me,' and tell me next time what you think of Christ." He begged me to be sure and come again. I went to him the next night, about ten o'clock. He said I had been long in coming ; in fact he had been looking for me since the morning. My first question was, "Well, Jack, what has Christ done?"

With tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "He has saved me." He afterwards said, "Last night after you left, I thought of the words you told me, and looking in that corner, (pointing with his finger) I saw the Lord Jesus, and what do you think He said? He told me I should be with Him at eleven o'clock to-night. How pleased I am that you came last night." It was then near eleven o'clock. He said, "Come here, John, and put your arm under my head."

I did so, and he then closed his eyes for a while. After a short time he opened them and said, "Do you see Him? He is coming. Look! He is yonder." Then he smiled and closed his eyes, never

to open them on earth again. He passed without a quiver into the presence of his Lord.

Dear reader, do not wait until your dying bed. Come to Jesus now.



AFFLICTION OF SOUL, AND NO WORK.

SUCH were the terms Jehovah enjoined upon the children of Israel¹ as their appointed part on the day of Atonement. This day, when atonement was made once every year for all their sins, was to be observed beyond all others.

He against Whom they sinned settled with Moses and Aaron the way and means of meeting His holy and righteous claims, as well as their need, by a victim that was slain and its blood sprinkled on and before the throne. The responsibility to carry it out rested entirely with Aaron; declaring, as it emphatically did, that by death and shed blood *alone* atonement could be made. To fail in this, the people and all connected with them must remain uncleansed.

Yet, when the victim was slain and the blood had been sprinkled on that memorable and unique day, there was the people's part, in order that a sabbath of rest might be enjoyed. Though the atoning work was purely outside and apart from themselves, God jealously took care that

¹ Lev. xvi. 29—31.

neither levity nor careless indifference should appear amongst those favoured to share the benefit of forgiveness and cleansing. If affliction of soul taught the nature of the evil involving death, which their state deserved, yet God would have them conscious that they must do "*no work*," but only and absolutely rest in the work of atonement done for them.

Surely in its full sense, this affliction of soul and no work will be solemnly fulfilled in the coming day, when Israel with true sorrow of heart will mourn for their sin, followed by a sabbath of rest in the enjoyment of forgiveness, after looking on their Saviour and Messiah, Whom they pierced.

Meanwhile it is important for souls to learn that atonement for sin is no longer set forth in type and shadow (much less in any ritual of to-day); for Christ has come, and by His death and shed blood made full atonement. He on Calvary's cross became the full and perfect antitype to the slain victim and sprinkled blood claimed by God. There the One Who knew no sin and did no sin was made sin, when He by the eternal Spirit offered *Himself* without spot to God. Alone on the cross, in the agony of His soul, He suffered as the true Daysman, sustaining and meeting what was due to the majesty and righteousness of God, as well as the sinner's deep need. Thus, and thus only, was atonement made.

Moreover, if Aaron entered the earthly sanctuary of the Divine presence with the blood of the slain victim, Jesus the Son of God entered heaven by His own blood, having obtained *eternal* redemption. Christ in heaven, seated on the right hand of God, is the satisfying proof that atonement is once and for ever made and accepted by God. This abiding fact, dear reader, was a settled reality between God and Christ, more than eighteen hundred years ago, and is made known in the gospel for your acceptance. Being so, have you made it your own? And what has it produced in your soul?

If Christ has perfectly done the work *for* souls, no less does the Holy Spirit do a work *in* souls, corresponding to "affliction of soul, and no work." "Ye must be born again" is a solemn, abiding fact, spoken by the Son of God. Everyone entering the kingdom of God, or going to heaven, must be born of the Spirit. This is His unalterable word. He, too, as the risen Saviour, told His disciples at the end of Luke's Gospel, that when they had received the Holy Spirit, they were to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name. This they did, as seen in Acts ii. 38, when Peter, filled with the Spirit, preached, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The result was that three thousand

passed through affliction of soul, received in faith the promised blessing, and were added to the new assembly formed by the Holy Ghost.

The apostle Paul declared the same truth, "Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."¹

Repentance, places the soul before God in the reality of its true condition, and faith in the Lord Jesus, give the benefits of His atoning work in enjoyed forgiveness and acceptance before God, in light, holiness, and peace. May the reader not rest satisfied with a mere *assent* to the atoning death of Christ, and formal admission of His shed blood, but in true affliction of soul, and faith without work, rest where God rests, in the atoning work of His dear Son. Thus the believer will enter upon a present sabbath of *soul-rest*, followed by complete abiding rest and glory with his blessed Lord and Saviour, the rest of God.

"IT IS FINISHED."

HAVE you considered this utterance of the dying Saviour? In John xix. 30 it is but one word (*telestai*): what other word ever said so much? It was the close of a life on earth with which none can compare. Who but Jesus had

¹ Acts xx. 21.

ever lived only to do the will of God? Who but He had never indulged even once in doing His own will? "I do nothing from myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone, because I do always the things that are pleasing to him. . . . Which of you convinceth me of sin?"¹ His life, here set out and in the face of all evil, was one unbroken course of obedience; a far more wondrous thing than all the miracles which studded His ministry. Thereby was the Father glorified in the Son, a man who sought not His own glory but the Father's, the manifest contrast with the first Adam and all the race. Adam, sinless, in a paradise where all was very good, listened through Eve to the tempter, and disobeyed unto death; Jesus in a world of sin and darkness, became obedient unto death, yea, death of the cross.

Yet all this moral perfection as man and Son of God tried to the uttermost could not have saved a lost sinner. Excellency in good presented as an offering, however grateful in itself to God, cannot efface sin. There must be an adequate sacrifice for all that is hateful to God's majesty, nature, and will. Who in all the universe could bear our sins, and bear them away? None but the selfsame Jesus. Therefore Him Who knew no sin God

1 John viii.

made sin for us that we might become God's righteousness in Him.¹

Thus was God glorified as God by the Lord Jesus. To be glorified by His willing and perfect obedience as Son was glory to the Father; but our iniquity remained undiminished, and all the more manifestly vile and inexcusable. Would the Holy One of God stoop to bear my burden, intolerable to me and every other when awakened to see its exceeding sinfulness? And how much more intolerable to Him Who hated all sin with an absolute separateness from it? Would He in infinite love for the glory of God and for guilty and lost man suffer for our sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God? This is what He Himself looking on to the cross says in John xiii. 31, 32: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God also shall glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."

Yes, "it is finished." All is finished for your need, as for God's glory. Oh, cast your soul on Him by faith. There is no other way: He is the way. All other ways of saving your soul are not only Satan's delusion but God's dishonour, deadly dishonour to His Son which He must revenge. Oh, submit to God's righteousness in justifying you, however unjust hitherto. God can afford to do it

1 2 Cor. v. 21.

through the blood of Jesus.¹ No sinner can be justified otherwise. Hear, and your soul shall live.

PLEASING GOD.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,
THIS month finds us still in the Genesis room, only another attendant is waiting to conduct you, this time to a very quiet looking portrait, for which you will find you will equally require the New Testament guide.

In case you should not have your Bibles at hand, I will quote some verses, about which I wish to have a little talk with you. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."² "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."³

So this is pronounced by the very highest decision, a pleasing portrait. Men may have thought otherwise, against whom he prophesied so solemnly, as we read in Jude 14; but can you think of any commendation higher than that he pleased God? Remember, it is not man's commendation, but God's, given to us by the Holy Spirit.

We are not told of any great thing that Enoch did, but it is certain he was a man of faith. Con-

¹ Rom. iii. 21—26.

² Gen. v. 24.

³ Heb. xi. 5.

sequently he was an obedient man ; and in the path of obedience he was not only in the path of safety, but on the road where he could walk with God.

In the prophet Amos, there is a verse which says, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"¹ So God's thoughts and his thoughts must have been the same.

You all know what a difference it makes, when you go for a walk, if your companion likes what you like, and dislikes what you do. You get on splendidly and the walk is enjoyment ; whereas, if your tastes differ, every moment is irksome.

Now I am sure you would like to please God ; but you say, How ? for we are not like Enoch. Well, dear children, Enoch's God is the same now, as then. The first step towards pleasing God is obedience. God prefers it to sacrifice. Samuel the prophet told Saul, the first king of Israel, that, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." And "without faith it is impossible to please him," for faith, or believing what God says, must be the foundation of all obedience.

Now when the Lord Jesus was baptised in Jordan, God spoke from heaven, and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." All through His life on earth, He was the obedient One, and the attitude of His soul was, "Not my will, but thine be done."

¹ Amos iii. 3.

Now I want to put you to the test of obedience. On the Mount of Transfiguration, God spoke through the cloud that overshadowed the Lord Jesus and the disciples, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." Now, dear ones, are you willing to hear Him, and so please God? Jesus said, "He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." Do you mean to hear and believe?

Again He said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Will you come? Just as you are, without any preparation, come and accept His gift of eternal life, without money and without price. Enoch could do nothing for salvation, only believe God. Neither can you; and if the Lord Jesus comes while you are still alive, and you are looking for Him, He will take you away without seeing death, just as Enoch was taken. And by-and-bye you will walk with Him in white, and see His face; and join in the alleluias of the redeemed, who have been washed from their sins, and been made whiter than snow. Walking with God here, means an eternity of joy hereafter.

TITLES AND HONOURS.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, No doubt from time to time you will be looking out for your special pieces; and

I hope you will enjoy the food prepared for you.

You see lambs cannot digest what sheep can ; and so some one kindly thought that food especially for the lambs should be provided. The Lord Jesus, you know, gave Peter a distinct charge, "Feed my lambs"—and He Himself called children to Him and blessed them, rebuking those who would have driven them away ; so that you are very dear to the heart of Jesus.

Since the war in Africa began, there have been grand titles given to the generals who have fought for Queen and country ; and you will be interested to learn that the highest of these, which has been conferred on the Commander-in-chief, carries with it the privilege of being addressed by his sovereign as, "Trusty and well-beloved cousin."

Very rightly these generals have been honoured for doing their duty so well. But just after reading a long list of V. C's and C. B.'s, etc., I took up my Testament, and in the Epistle of James, I read the words, "Abraham was called the friend of God ;" and it came over my soul with a rush of thanksgiving, that it was not for fighting battles, or for doing what the world calls heroic deeds, he got that title, but solely because he believed God.

Now, what is it to believe God ? Why, to take Him at His word. You would take the word of an upright, honest man who had never deceived you ; how much more should you God's word !

“HE’S GOT ’EM BOTH.”

WHILE visiting in a hospital a few years ago I became greatly interested in a man named W. J. P——. He had been a ship’s engineer, but consumption had marked him for its prey, and, though still able to walk about slowly from ward to ward, he knew that his days on earth were numbered.

During the first talk we had together I found that he had been religiously brought up, but that, never having *personally* had to do with God, his religion had melted away like the dew of morning; and he had finally run away to sea. A nicely-behaved, intelligent, thoughtful man of a little over thirty, he did not give one the impression of having sunk very deeply in sin; but his own account of himself was that he was “the black sheep of the family.”

He saw and owned his state as a sinner, and appeared interested as we spoke together of God’s way of salvation. But afterwards it seemed to me that he avoided any close talk on the subject; and when I was in his ward talking to a Swede who was dying of the same disease, he would manage to slip out of the way.

But one day, a few weeks later, he stayed in the

ward, and we had a long and serious talk in which he complained that his heart was so "callous," that though he knew the truth of it all, he felt so unconcerned about it. Being very anxious about him, I wrote a letter to him, begging him to come to the Lord Jesus just as he was, and telling him that his own callous state was one of the things he could bring and spread out before the Saviour; he could tell Him just how hard his heart was, and he would surely find that he would not be cast out.

On my next visit I met him in the corridor, and he said, "Your letter suited my case to a 't.'"

We went into the ward together, and I think it was on that occasion that he told me there was someone he had wronged, and he knew he ought to write and make confession, but was too proud to do so: did I think this had anything to do with his not finding peace? I told him that it probably had; that his salvation certainly did not depend on that letter, or on anything else that he could do; and yet that very likely the pride which prevented the fulfilment of a known duty was a barrier to his receiving the blessing God was ready to bestow upon him. And I begged him not to put off his confession any longer.

After that I was prevented for some time from paying my usual visits to the hospital; but I wrote to him again, and received a letter in reply which

led me to trust that poor P—— had indeed taken refuge in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour, though he could hardly be said to have “full assurance of faith.” He spoke of having in the past been “trying to work out a share of my own in the work, when *Christ* has completed it,” but he seemed to have now really cast himself upon Him alone for salvation.

I saw him again soon after, and he told me that the letter of confession had been sent off, and that he had received an answer. He now explained that it was to his parents he had referred in our previous conversation,—that for many years he had left them in ignorance of his whereabouts, and then had been too proud to write and humble himself.

Is the same foolish pride holding *you* back, dear friend, from confession to God against Whom you have certainly sinned, and to any fellow-creature whom perhaps you have wronged? *God* is the One to Whom, above all, confession is due, but confession to the wronged fellow-creature is also a clear duty.

Our poor friend's pride and neglect were not without their punishment, for he wrote too late to receive the forgiveness of one of his injured parents: his father had already been dead several years. However, his mother was still living, and assured him of her forgiveness.

Dear P—— was evidently now resting in the Saviour, though without any great manifestation of joy; and I felt comforted about him.

About this time I was called to pass through a great bereavement; P—— heard of it, and, though very weak and suffering, sent me a letter of sympathy. He began with the words, "My dear friend *in Christ*;" and, after referring to the trial that had fallen upon me, he said, "I don't think I will last a great while longer, I shall soon be at home with Jesus, where I shall meet my beloved father. God bless you and yours."

When I saw him again, he told me it had been proposed that he should take the Lord's Supper; but he said, "I don't feel worthy: it seems to me as if only elders and deacons of the church were fit to take it."

I tried to shew him that it is the privilege of the simplest believer thus to obey his Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of me;" but when I left him, he still seemed uncertain as to whether he might dare to do so.

However on my next visit, I had scarcely taken my seat at his bedside, when he told me that he had taken the Lord's Supper a day or two previously.

"It was all, and more than all I expected it to be," he whispered in his weak trembling voice, and he went on to tell me as well as he was able,

what joy he had had in connection with it. I knew that he was not looking at it as a sacrament, or means of salvation, and therefore I could but rejoice that the Lord Jesus had been so "known of" him "in the breaking of bread."¹

"I know now," he went on, "what poor A—— meant when he used to say, 'I'm so happy.'" (A—— was a Swede who, after years of backsliding, had been restored in soul when in the hospital, and who, by his shining face, and broken expressions of joy, had borne a bright witness for his Lord till called home to Himself).

By-and-by dear P—— whispered feebly, but in a tone of restful satisfaction, "*My Jesus!*"

Oh, what joy it was to see the change wrought by the grace of God in the heart not long ago "so callous," as he had himself expressed it.

I am not sure whether it was during that visit or the next that, seeing his intense weakness, I quoted to him the verse, "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand."

"He's got 'em *both*," he whispered in reply.

If there is one reading this little paper who is looking to the Lord Jesus, and yet afraid, yet doubting, I do beg you to ponder over these words from the lips of a dying man. P—— had hung back doubtfully; he could not give a very clear account of the way in which he had passed from

¹ Luke xxiv. 35.

death unto life, but, looking away from his own sins, and doubts, and everything of self, he could claim the Lord Jesus as *his own*, and thus knew that, feeble though he himself might be, his trembling hands were both held in those of the One Who is "mighty to save," and "able to keep."

Your salvation, dear reader, does not depend upon the *amount* of your faith, but upon its *object*. Don't be occupied with your own faith, but with your living, loving Saviour, the Son of God, Who loved you, and gave Himself for you; and, as you look at Him, your faith and joy will increase. Only don't make them your object: *Christ alone* must be that.

Dear P—— grew rapidly worse, and became so weak that he could not bear to be read or talked to; but I heard one more word of testimony from his lips.

"I am so weak," he said, "that I can't think, and I can't pray; but I look at Jesus on the cross, and I say, '*Lord!*'"

It was not at a crucifix P—— was looking; he referred solely to the vision given to the eye of faith: and cannot you too, dear trembling soul, look at Jesus dying for your sins on the cross, raised again for your justification, and seated now on His Father's throne on high: cannot you look, and from the depths of your heart say to Him, "*Lord?*"

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”¹

A few days later dear P—— left his poor suffering body, and went to be for ever with the One Who, even down here, had held “both his hands.”



THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

IN Egypt Israel became the object of controversy between God and Pharaoh, who represents Satan.

The enemy says God has no right to claim them, for they are sinners. It is true that they are sinners; and it is necessary that man should completely bow to the justice of God which condemns him.

If one is convinced of being lost, it is impossible that one should not seek salvation, perhaps blindly; still one seeks it every time that conscience is awakened. Without this, people content themselves with saying that God is good, that is, that He must take no account of sin. But ought God to make heaven like what the world is? And is not this just what would be if sin were to enter heaven? Could one give a measure to indicate up to what, and how much, people might sin? But our consciences also accuse and tell us that we cannot get rid of sin; and sin begets death.

1 Rom. x. 13.

God has already been dishonoured by sin, and it is in this world from day to day that God is yet dishonoured. It is here, on the earth, that the angels learn what it is that God is dishonoured. It is here that we see Satan degrade all the creation.

Jehovah says, "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgement: I am Jehovah. And the blood shall be unto you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."¹ This was not the deliverance of Israel, like the passage of the Red Sea, but it was the ground of it; and of the two the Passover was really the more solemn morally, though the Red Sea displayed God's saving power more gloriously on behalf of His people and against their foes. But on the paschal night it was a question how God could pass over the guilty, even though they were His people; the blood of the lamb sprinkled on Israel's doorposts declared that God, though expressly judging, could not touch those screened thereby. His truth and justice were stayed and satisfied before that blood. The destroyer was kept from entering. Not an

¹ Ex. xii. 12, 13.

Israelite perished within the blood-sprinkled lintels.

It was thus a question of arresting God's judgement here, as it was of destroying Satan's power in the type of the Red Sea ; but the blood of Christ laid the foundation for victory displayed in His resurrection.

Once the Red Sea is crossed, Israel are pursued no more, they are redeemed, they can sing. It was not so when they supped on the lamb in Egypt ; yet were they screened from God's judgement of their evil. Their deliverance from Pharaoh followed.

But must not I see the blood ? says many a distressed soul. It is well for me to estimate its value aright, and growingly ; but no person could have solid peace on this ground. Nor was it what God told His people. It was indeed a token to them ; but their assurance was built on this, that "when I [Jehovah] see the blood, I will pass over you."

The Israelite's business was not to look at it for his safety, but to keep within the shelter of the sprinkled blood to which God had thus pledged Himself. It is He Who sees the blood and passes over. God alone estimates perfectly the blood of the Lamb ; and faith means not our estimate of it, but our confidence in Him. The blood is the token which recalls to us the love of God, as well as His righteousness ; but what is shed for sin looks to God, and is for God to look on.

Christ thus presents God to us under three

aspects: His justice that strikes the substitute for us; His love that provides the Lamb for us; and His glory that has raised Him up when all was clear for us. There is thus entire deliverance. We are in Christ before God. The greatest expression of divine hatred of sin is found in His cross. The stroke of judgement fell; the thunder and lightning are exhausted; the sky is pure and calm for those who believe.

CONSCIENCE THE INLET OF FAITH.

PERHAPS no one ever read John iv. seriously without being struck by the singularity of the Lord's saying to the Samaritan, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither" (ver. 16). We adore Him for His grace, Who, though He knew as a divine person all her life of shame; showed her nothing but the saving grace of God. For His love delights in drawing the most guilty to Himself through the Lord Jesus, washed, sanctified, justified. But amazed as she was at that which was as much above Jew as Gentile, she was dead in her sins. How strange to her that God is a free giver, and that His Son humbled Himself to sit by the well, a man thirsty and wearied with His journey, deigning to ask of her a drink of water, that she might be awakened to ask of Him living water!

No ; she did not look beyond the horizon of her daily duties and her earthly life. She felt its monotonous burden. She was the more unhappy because of her reckless pursuit of the pleasures of sin for a season. Yet was her conscience insensible. She did not dare to weigh her sins before God. If she cried, and she was not without bitter tears, she did not cry with her heart to God. His pure and holy love in Jesus attracted her and inspired a sort of wondering confidence. But the light of God had not yet shone into her dark heart to lay her in the dust. She gave the Lord Jesus credit for meaning some great boon of which she could make out nothing. But was He greater than our father Jacob ? The Lord explained that He spoke of giving such water as should be in one a fountain springing up into life eternal. Still, dark as Egypt smitten of Jehovah, she perceived the truth in no wise, but begged this water only to get rid of her everyday toil.

It is neither the mind active, nor the affections moved, whereby the light of God reaches the soul. Through the conscience it must be ; for man is a sinner, and has to face God about his sins now by faith unto salvation ; if not so, for perdition by-and-by. Hence in the gospel repentance has its place as really as faith ; and no one laid both down more impressively than the great apostle in his address to the Ephesian elders. *He* certainly

testified, both to Jews and to Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. A faith without repentance is as dead as a faith without works. Where life is, faith means believing on the Lord Jesus, as repentance means judging oneself and one's sins, out and out before a holy and living God.

Hence our Lord speaks directly to her conscience. Abrupt as the turn may seem, it was the simple yet sure way to give God His place, and to put the sinful woman in her's, that she might be blessed for ever. Otherwise there is no reality in His sight; and the truth is made subject to man, instead of acting sovereignly with divine authority.

"Go, call thy husband, and come hither." Her answer was, "I have no husband," to which the Lord made the overwhelming reply, "Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this thou saidst truly." To this the woman bowed, under the light of God laying her bare. "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." God had spoken to her and of her; and she owns it. It is not all; but it is the condition of all blessing. It was God's search-light applied to her life. But she does not turn away from the light to renew her sins. She stays and would learn of Him Who had given her to judge herself before God. Nor does she leave Jesus, though she does leave her

waterpot, till He made Himself known as the very Christ that was to come.

O my reader, why should not you be thus brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light? No doubt, the Samaritan physically saw and heard the Lord; but the account itself proves that this avails nothing, till a sin-convicted conscience enables one to receive the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit witnesses Jesus to the sinner; but the sinner pays no real heed, till the sense of sheer need and guilt opens the heart to receive God's answer to all its wants in Christ and His work. What the inspired John tells you here is more than if you had been there. It is God's word to save your soul, if you repent and believe the gospel.



HEEDFUL HEARING.



“TAKE heed, therefore, how ye hear.” These are the words of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, when He was here, a Man amongst men. They may prove useful to some who turn over the leaves of this magazine, as a reminder that, in the sight of God, it is a matter of importance how one hears the truth.

One frequently notices the number of voices that readily join to sing that sweet familiar hymn, "I heard the voice of Jesus say," and the question arises, How have many of them heard?

Man, by nature being lost in sin, needs to hear the voice of Jesus speaking as the One both able and willing to save. The leper¹ required to hear in this way; and immediately he sought cleansing, the voice of Jesus was a voice of power to him. Have you heard Him so speak?

Again, one may say, man by nature lies dying with an incurable disease, and, like the impotent man in John v., needs to hear the voice of the great Physician. Take heed how He speaks to such! "Wilt thou be made whole?" Have you not heard Him speak thus? Unless you have in your need heard the voice of Jesus speaking to you as the Saviour, you cannot really have given heed to His voice.

To believers—those who have given themselves into the hands of the Saviour—Jesus speaks words of comfort and security; He speaks as their Shepherd. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."²

He speaks also as their Guide. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they

¹ Mark i. 41. ² John x. 27, 28.

know his voice.”¹ His voice should be heard by His own as their Teacher. “Learn of me.”² Again His claims should be acknowledged, and His voice heard as the Master’s. “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.”³

The faithful one who knows and rejoices in the safety of the Saviour’s side, who follows Him, feebly though it be, who sits at His feet and hears His word, learning from His own lips and owning Him as Master, enjoys that which lifts him above the trials and difficulties of this world whatever they may be.

“I BELIEVE: HELP MINE UNBELIEF.”

MARK IX. 24.

How many souls are more or less in the state of the distressed father of the sorely distressful son, who thus answered the Lord’s appeal! It was the mixture of unbelief with his faith which not only kept him unhappy, but delayed the deliverance of his child. He was preoccupied with the misery of his son, and afterward with the failure of the disciples. His eye was not single; he did not look away from other objects to Jesus only, the source and secret of all true enjoyment. Nor was his defective

¹ John x. 4.

² Matt. xi. 29.

³ John xiii. 13, 14.

faith without consequence even when grace gave the blessing.

It was different with the leper who, in the early days of our Lord's ministry, fell on his knees before Him, saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst cleanse." And then Jesus in his compassion stretched out His hand and touched him, with the words, "I will: be cleansed." The leper had no doubt of the power; but he rightly deferred to His good pleasure.

Here it was another case. "Teacher, I brought unto thee my son, having a speechless spirit; and wheresoever it seizeth him it teareth; and he foameth and gnasheth his teeth and pineth away. And I spoke to thy disciples that they should cast it out, and they could not. But he answereth and saith, O faithless generation, till when shall I be with you? Till when shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him; and when he saw him, straightway the spirit convulsed him; and he fell on the earth, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long a time is it that this hath come to him? And he said, From childhood; and often it cast him both into fire and into waters that it might destroy him. But if thou couldest do any thing, have compassion on us and help us. And Jesus said to him, The 'if thou couldest' is to believe: all things are possible to him that believeth.

Straightway the father of the child cried out and said, I believe: help mine unbelief. But Jesus seeing that a crowd was running up together, rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, Thou speechless and deaf spirit, *I* command thee, come out of him, and no more enter into him. And having convulsed and torn [him] much, it came out; and he became as one dead, so that the mass said, He is dead. But Jesus laid hold of him by the hand, and raised him up; and he arose.”¹

How painful the contrast, the manifestation of glory on the holy mount, and the disastrous unbelief of the disciples before Satan’s power at its foot! But this God reveals that we who believe may be forewarned and forearmed. The lowly but righteous Servant felt it deeply and all round. How abide with a generation so faithless! Had He not authority here to meet the direct need?

So He directs the boy to be brought, allows the spirit’s spiteful energy before their eyes, and enquires all particulars of the parent, who appeals to Him, but on the lowest ground: “If thou couldest aught, help us, have compassion upon us.” But oh! the meek grace of Him ‘Who was unwittingly so lightly esteemed. There was really no question of power or title. But practically all turned on faith: compare chapter vi. 5, 6. Believing touches the spring of power. All things

¹ Mark ix. 17—27.

are possible to the believer. How poor and short to say to Jesus, "If thou couldst?" to doubt His compassion? to ask no more than "help?" He Who came to serve God and man to the utmost was not repelled, but corrected an error of evil consequence; so that even the absorbed father in his measure, felt and owned the wrong, and said at once with tears, "I believe: help mine unbelief."

Oh! my reader, lay your sins, your misery, your unbelief, in faith at the feet of Jesus. He sees, hears, and compassionates you. If you look only to Him as you are, He forthwith gives all you need. It is you who fail, not He. But "help" is far beneath Him or you. You are lost; and He is the Saviour, now of the soul if you believe on Him, by-and-by of the body too, for an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in the heavens for you that are guarded through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

But if you mix up your feelings and experience, learn from this instructive account, that you only gain loss and further pain which the Lord permits for your good. For even at the last when the Lord rebuked and commanded the unclean spirit to leave the child for ever, the parent had to look on a fresh convulsion that left his boy as one dead, till Jesus laid hold of his hand and raised him up

“If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” What delays, difficulties, and sorrows, unbelief in one way or another makes for the believer!



WHAT CAN I DO ?



As a believer in Christ, He having washed away my sins in His own precious blood, what is there for me to do during the little time I am left in this world? Can I find in the Bible directions as to how I am to occupy myself?

Yes, there are many passages which shew how the believer ought to walk in order to please God, and there is one exceedingly plain, to which I would call attention. “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all.”¹

Let us be eager, dear fellow-believer, to obey these injunctions. Let us seek for opportunities of doing good. If we know of one straying from the right path, who is going “out of the way,” let us give a kindly word of warning. It may be that the misguided one may be induced to retrace his steps, and walk again as he ought to do.

Then, what a sweet privilege it is to comfort

¹ 1 Thess. v. 14.

those whose hearts are cast down! For He Who is the "Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" has comforted us "in all our tribulation that we may," by His divine comfort, "comfort them that are in any trouble."¹ Many there are who are weak in one way or another, let us try what we can do for them. The aged and infirm require literal support for their poor failing steps, and can we not give an arm to help? Some are weak through circumstances of poverty, and can we not do something to supply their need? Again, others have weak faith and are in want of a friend to point them to Christ, and impress upon them the fulness and completeness of His work, to shew them that He has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

"Be patient toward all." That indeed is something difficult to do, to be patient, with tempers unruffled in our intercourse with our fellow-men, and patient towards God when in sorrow, pain, or adversity.

No one can do any of these things without God's help. Let us seek it earnestly, and, going forth in His strength, endeavour humbly to carry out the exhortations of this remarkable verse. It contains a cure for our natural selfishness, a remedy for our natural indolence, and if we really long to do something for that blessed One Who

¹ 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

has done everything for us, let us warn, comfort, support, and "be patient toward all." Divine grace, divine help, we require from first to last in our christian course; none can do a right thing, nor say a right word, without that help. What a mercy then that God gives it to those who ask!

If we search the scriptures, we shall find many another passage, setting forth our duty as "pilgrims through this world below," for the whole of the word of God is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."¹

"REMEMBER."

I.—"DIVES."²

REMEMBER, oh! remember,
 The words that Jesus spoke,
 Concerning one who first in hell
 To his lost state awoke;
 Tormented in eternal flames,
 "Dives" deplores his fate,
 And cries for mercy when alas!
 Fast closed is mercy's gate!

Oh! may we never then forget,
 The answer Abraham gave,
 Remember, son, remember,
 'Tis now too late to save;

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. ² Luke xvi. 25.

GOSPEL GLEANINGS.

A great gulf fixed, which none can pass,
 For ever lies between;
 Remember, son, remember,
 Hell is no idle dream.

2.—LOT'S WIFE.¹

YET once again doth Jesus speak,
 In solemn words and true,
 Of her who, outside Sodom's gate,
 Near Zoar's city drew;
 But, looking back, in unbelief,
 Reminds us not in vain,
 Though almost saved, she yet was lost,
 And perished on the plain.

Lot's wife, remember, saith the Lord,
 Who on her way did halt,
 And, looking back, alas! became
 A monument of salt;
 Then, sinner, heed the Saviour's voice,
 Nor e'er Lot's wife forget.
 Remember her, and trust in Christ,
 Lest thou in hell regret.

3.—"THE DYING ROBBER."²

A DYING robber earnest looks
 On Christ, the sinless Man,
 Who on the cross lays down His life,
 In God's mysterious plan;
 Repentant, hears the Saviour's prayer,
 As at His side he dies,
 Rebukes his fellow, turns to Christ,
 And thus for mercy cries;

"When Thou shalt in Thy kingdom come,
 Jesus, remember me."

¹ Luke xvii. 32. ² Luke xxiii. 42.

"To-day with Me in paradise,"
 Saith Jesus, "shalt thou be."
 Then let us gladly spread abroad
 How Christ delights to save,
 Since he who cried "Remember me"
 Was ransomed from the grave.

SAVED BY GRACE.

ON a Lord's day evening recently, I spoke from
 Titus ii. 11—14, and God was pleased to use
 the word "grace" to a needy sinner who heard it.
 I was afterwards told she had been in an anxious
 state for some years and could not clearly see the
 way of salvation. But on the evening in question
 the truth of "the grace of God" struck her as it
 never had before. And on the following Friday
 she knew that salvation which grace brought.

A few weeks later I was rejoiced to hear from
 her own lips the story of her conversion. She
 spoke of it with no uncertain sound, for indeed
 she had been brought "from darkness to light and
 from the power of Satan unto God."¹ I found
 her eager to learn more of the truth, and I have
 lately heard that she now enjoys that blessed hope
 of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ for those
 who believe in Him.

What a complete change does the gospel bring.

1 Acts xxvi. 18.

about! In her former condition the thought of being in His presence could only speak of judgement because of her sins, but such is the salvation given to all who believe in Him, that no question of sin remains to be settled for them. Like the person of whom I write they find their rest in the work of our Lord Jesus on the cross, and are looking forward to meeting Him, as the One Who is even now the object of their hearts.

Has my reader yet learned that God is indeed a God of *grace*? If not, believe it now, and know the certainty and blessedness which it brings. Give up your thought of God as One Who is requiring your poor works, and learn that He has a delight in giving. God's grace is displayed in view of man's failure and lost condition. It was when we were "yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."¹

Look away from all your efforts to gain salvation and believe God's love in the gift of His Son for *you*. As I view that cross, I see as nowhere else what sin is, for I there see man crucifying the Son of God. I find too what God's estimate of sin is, for there alone did His Son utter those words, "My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?"² It was as the sinner's substitute that He knew the hiding of God's face. Reader, learn the grace of God as it there shone out, at such infinite cost.

¹ Romans v. 6.

² Matt. xxvii. 46.

See your every need there met, and thankfully accept God's salvation.

ON SAYING "NO."

"Now, my men, I want a word with you on the subject of saying 'No' at the right time;" so said a servant of Christ to a group of soldiers, who had gathered round him in the barracks at Portsmouth.

I was passing out at the time, and heard no more; but that one sentence has come back to me over and over again, and I have often wondered what fruit it bore.

Now, my dear young friends, I would like a little talk with *you* on the same subject; and may the Lord by His grace, give you each to realise how important it is to make a stand and say "No" at the right time.

Before going to God's word for the brave "Noes" that have been spoken by His people, I will tell you of a young officer in a very gay regiment, who would not be led into card-playing, and who had constantly to use the little word "No."

On first joining the regiment, he found, after mess, that the card-tables were put out as usual, and he was asked to play, but he quietly declined. Now, all young people like to be popular, and hate to be thought peculiar, so it must have been a

great struggle for the youngest man present to act in a way that showed he disapproved of gambling, when his seniors were playing.

He was asked over and over again, but each time he firmly declined. And though he had to bear a great deal of chaff about his stinginess and so on, he maintained his ground. By-and-by the worry ceased, and he was one of the few who escaped being deeply in debt, while at the same time he gained the respect of his brother officers. That "No" spoken at the right time saved him, and his loved ones at home, many a heartache.

Let us now look at a Bible "No." You remember when Abraham returned from the battle with the five kings,¹ that the king of Sodom offered Abraham all the spoil taken in the fight; but he firmly declined, because he thought it would be dishonouring to God to take a present from an idolater, who might have boasted that *he* had made Abraham rich.

Humanly speaking Abraham was giving up a great deal that was gratifying to the flesh; but mark the words which open the next chapter, and say if that brave refusal (or "No") to the king of Sodom was not amply repaid, by the God of heaven and earth saying to His faithful servant, "I am thy shield and exceeding great reward." Surely they cannot be compared in point of value.

1 Gen. xiv.

The second brave "No" I will refer to was spoken by Abraham's great grandson, Joseph. You will recall when he was sold as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, how he was subjected to the fiercest temptation by his master's wife, and how bravely he answered, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

A dungeon was the penalty of this pronounced "No;" but He Who neither slumbers nor sleeps was looking upon Joseph, and soon he was raised to be Prime Minister, or second to the throne. "Them that honour me I will honour."²

I must give you one more example, and refer you to Daniel. You remember they wanted him and his fellow captives to eat the same food as the Babylonians; but the Hebrews were under careful restrictions not to touch anything unclean: Daniel refused firmly and respectfully. Yet the result was that he was allowed the privilege, and moreover, won the love of the eunuch who had charge of the captives.

This act was the first to bring him into notice. Then God gave him wisdom about the king's dream. After this came the sternest test of his faith; all prayer was forbidden, save to the king. Again the brave bold spirit by its action said "No," and now the den of lions was to be the penalty;

² 1 Sam. ii. 30.

but God can shut lions' mouths, quench fire, and open prison-doors for those who fear and faithfully serve Him. So after the lions' den comes more advancement.

But God honoured him as well as man, for the angel said to him, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved."¹ Was this not enough to make up for all he had gone through? There is no such salutation in the Bible to any other man.

In each case, being true to God and saying "No" at the right time brought great blessing; and as all scripture is given for our example and instruction, God will be with you as with His people of old, when you stand firmly for Him.

We have no fear now of lions, nor of dungeons, but Satan's temptations are around us. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" are in the world, and only cleaving to the Lord can keep us, and strengthen us to say "No" at the right time.

Some of my readers may exclaim, "I cannot find that 'No' was said in any of the instances given." True; but think over it and see if the essence of "No" was not really there. When we decline anything, it is not with a blunt "No;" so Abraham, as a child of God, was courteous to a heathen king, and Daniel to the courtiers of Babylon; but in each case the refusal was firm and decided, and God owned and blessed it.

¹ Daniel x, 11

“SAVED, AND GOING TO HEAVEN.”

As I write, the howling wind outside reminds me of the solemn words uttered by the Lord from heaven—“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”¹ I am staying at the house, and greatly enjoying the fellowship, of a dear christian man whose history, as told me by himself in a simple manner, I now write, in the hope that God may use it as a means of blessing to others: and it seems a very good illustration of the text just quoted.

My friend lived near Brighton as a boy of eleven years of age, and his father managed a flour mill, the stairs of which this lively lad often climbed, to find his father in the loft or on the upper floor, upon his knees in earnest prayer to God. This parent was of the stern Anglican type, and very strict with his children in a religious way. Doubtless he was a God-fearing man, though (as his son now sees) not in the *happy liberty* and *full light* of the gospel. It is evident however, that a work of

¹ John iii. 8.

God began very early in the heart of the subject of this sketch, for he well remembers, whilst very young, looking down upon the "Brighton Levels" from his home on the hills above, and seeing the Fair of those days in full swing, with a feeling that he could not happily go there ; whilst often at this period he would slip away into a secluded nook formed by an elder hedge, and there pour out his young heart before God.

About this time some members of his family were seized with fever, and he was fearful of being attacked himself, when, one day, something seemed to say to him as he stood near a stile, which he had never attempted to jump, "Now, you run and try to jump over that stile, and if you succeed you won't have the fever." He made the jump and cleared the stile, and did not have the fever ; but he confesses to having been somewhat superstitious in those days.

Leaving school at an early age, Mr. T—— was employed as a miller's assistant ; and whilst thus engaged at Brighton in a steam mill, he became a teacher in a Sunday school, though he himself felt it was a case of *the blind leading the blind !*

Leaving Brighton, he removed to a remote and very lonely place for some years, and during this time, he seems to have been in a state of anxiety as to his immortal soul. Moving again, he became a most regular and very earnest attendant at church

—thinking *this* was the way to be *saved*, which was now the great desire of his heart. He tells me that at this period he most earnestly prayed, “Lord, have mercy on me *a miserable sinner!*” At this place Mr. T—— was made churchwarden, but he assures me that neither he nor the vicar had any sense whatever of the pardon of their sins, through the all-availing sacrifice of Calvary’s cross.

His next move was to the village of Y—— in Kent, as a baker and grocer, where the church attendance was still continued, though the soul was still in darkness as to God’s great and wondrous salvation in Jesus Christ. After the lapse of two more years of uncertainty and groping, a memorable day came. Mr. T—— was a very industrious, hard-working man in his business, but he did not “*forget God.*” One morning he was quite alone in his bakehouse at four o’clock, and having made his dough, was waiting the usual hour for it to “prove.” He little knew how very near he now was to proving, to his own soul’s joy, that he was *a sinner saved by grace*; but “the wind bloweth where it listeth,” and in that bakehouse there was soon to be one “*born of the Spirit.*”

My friend always kept a Bible in his bakehouse and he now took it down, as he had done many times before, for the purpose of reading some portion. On this occasion he opened, unintention-

ally, upon John v. and was reading the chapter, which he had often done before, when (as never on any former reading) he was particularly struck with the twenty-fourth verse, "*Verily, verily, I say.*"

He said aloud, "*Who is it speaking?*"

Answer seemed to come, "It is I, the Lord Jesus."

"Is it *Thou*, Lord? To *whom* art Thou speaking then?"

"Look at the verse, and you will see."

"Unto YOU." "What, Lord, art Thou really addressing ME? What is it then Thou wouldst say to me?"

"He that heareth my word,"—

"Yes, Lord, I hear Thy word, and this is the first time I have heard Thee. What next, Lord?"

—"and believeth on Him that sent me,"—

"Yes, Lord, I surely believe that God the Father sent Thee. What next, Lord?"

—"HATH EVERLASTING LIFE."

"*Hath everlasting life!* Thou sayest so, then I HAVE IT!!" and putting his hands together, and lifting them in the attitude of praise, he stood upon tiptoe and gave thanks to God for His "*unspeakable gift.*"

When re-visiting his former place of residence he called upon an old christian man who had known him years before, and rapping at the door, it was opened by the old gentleman, who did not

recognise him, owing to his altered appearance.

Mr. T—— then said to Mr. B——, “If you please sir, do you know anyone hereabout who is **SAVED** and **GOING TO HEAVEN?**”

The old man looked alarmed, and drew back behind the door, supposing he was being questioned by a madman, and saying, “*What? What?*” The question was repeated in a firm and sober voice, and was responded to by another, “Why do you ask such a question?”

Mr. T—— then made himself known, and told of his own assurance that he himself was saved by grace, and going to heaven. He was then welcomed into the house, where both knelt in fervent praise to God for “*the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus.*”

A. T—— is now just about seventy years of age, and has been kept by the power of God for many long years. He is sitting in my presence as I write this brief account of God’s way with him, “rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.”

My reader, do you realise that John v. 24 is a voice from the Lord Jesus Christ to *you*. If so, are you joying in God through Him, and happy in the assurance that, having passed from death unto life, you cannot come into condemnation? In short, are you one of the happy number, who, having believed in God’s word of love and grace, are “**SAVED AND GOING TO HEAVEN?**”

WHEN DO WE BECOME MEET FOR THE INHERITANCE?

How very wonderful is the grace of our God to poor fallen man! Truly it is as unlimited in its power and extent, as it is impartial in its application. And this is true, not only with respect to the forgiveness of sins; but, also, as regards the believer's condition, his position and privileges, as a child of God and heir of glory. And, surely, something of the magnitude of this grace may be gathered from a scripture in Colossians; "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."¹ In it may be seen (1) our present condition of meetness, (2) our translation into a new position, and (3) our privilege of thanksgiving for what we have received.

As to their condition, the saints at Colosse were said to be *made* "meet to be partakers of the inheritance." They did not always possess this meetness then. On the contrary many of them had been heathen, bowing down, probably, to idols of wood and metal, the work of men's hands. It is evident, therefore, they could have had no apprehension of the true God, nor of the holiness and

1 Col. i. 12, 13.

purity which belong to Him: and which He expects in those who approach Him as worshippers.

Thus we may gather that the moral condition of the material upon which God works is a matter of no importance to Him. He can take up a Magdalene with seven demons, or a Saul with a blameless religious life—a black sinner, as well as a white-washed one—and make them both meet for the inheritance.

Hence it follows, that all of good wrought in a man is from without, and is of God (no room for creature-boasting!) Looked at as dead, he is given a new life in Christ; as guilty, he is justified; as defiled, he is cleansed; as having offended, he is forgiven; and as lost, he is saved. In a word, he is a new creature in Christ; “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”¹

It is not, then, what a man is in himself, but what God makes him in Christ, which constitutes his fitness as to condition.

Moreover, as to the believer's position, there is a complete change also. He was under the power of Satan, the god of this world. Who wrought in him, causing him to be subject to his leading in rebellion against God. Dark he was, and in darkness—the darkness of this world, not owning the Saviour by believing on His name, and, therefore exposed to the abiding wrath of God.²

¹ 2 Cor. v. 17.

² John iii. 36.

But now, having believed in Jesus, the Father delivers such an one from all that in which he was held by the enemy of his soul; and transfers him to a place in the kingdom of the Son of His love. May we not say that the sphere in which the Lord's authority is owned now is the position in which the Father has graciously set every believer in Jesus?

Further, as looked at in this connection, every child of God stands before Him "accepted in the beloved." Each one is seen by God through Christ, as it were. Thus the graces of Christ are ours. For, "as he is, so are we in this world."¹ God has made Him to us, everything we need for His presence.² As we read, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace."³ Thus we are complete in Him, Who is the Head of the highest created beings. And we are therefore, as in Him, above them all.⁴ O wondrous grace! O exalted position!

And it is the privilege of *every* Christian to appropriate to himself all the favours we have glanced at; and to give thanks to the Father for the grace He has displayed in thus dealing with him.

Many Christians, however, seem to think it presumption to do this. Hence they remain lean spiritually—inmates of Doubting Castle continually. They are afraid to look up into God's face and call Him Father, because they are in doubt as to

1 1 John iv. 17. 2 1 Cor. i. 30. 3 John i. 16. 4 Col. ii. 10.

such relationship. They profess to be so very humble. But is it christian humility to doubt God's word? Is it not, rather, the pride and presumption of the flesh?

Let us then take what God has said respecting us with the simple faith of children and the thankfulness which become sinners saved by grace. And let us remember that scripture does not speak for the Christian of any need of *becoming* meet for heaven. The child of God is made that directly he believes in Jesus.

LEARNING TO FLOAT.

THERE is a story told of a young man who was seeking after the knowledge of eternal security and peace with God.

The friend to whom he confided his difficulties discerned very quickly that he was striving to attain everlasting life by his own efforts. He spoke of "sincere prayers," and "heartfelt desires," after salvation, but continually lamented that he did not "feel any different in spite of it all." His friend did not answer him at first, but presently he interrupted him with the inquiry, "W——, did you ever learn to float?"

"Yes, I did," was the surprised reply.

"And did you find it easy to learn?"

"Not at first," he answered.

"What was the difficulty?" his friend pursued.

"Well, the fact was, I could not lie still; I could not believe or realise that the water could hold me up, without any effort of my own, so I always began to struggle, and of course down I went at once."

"And then?"

"Then I found out that I must give up all the struggle, and just rest on the strength of the water to bear me up. It was easy enough after that. I was able to lie back in the fullest confidence that I should never sink."

"And is not God's word more worthy of your trust than the changeable sea? He does not bid you wait for feelings. He commands you just to rest in Him, to believe His word, and to accept His gift. His message of life reaches down to you, in your place of ruin and death, and His promise to you now is, 'The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"¹

"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."²



"THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS."

MATT. i. 21.

So was the Messiah to be called, the Anointed of Jehovah. Israel did not appreciate it,

¹ Rom. vi. 23.

² John x. 28.

though never was a word more evidently inspired to meet the faith of any godly Jew, to rebuke the unbelief of "the many." To an upright Israelitish mind the genealogy of this chapter was as necessary as unimpeachable. Messiah must be in the line of Solomon; Joseph was, who was husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ or Messiah. If Joseph had a living son by a former marriage, as some have dreamed, it would have destroyed the Lord's legal title, especially to a Jew. But God ordered all so that He should have every claim.

Again, the Messiah must be born of a virgin of David's house, according to Isaiah vii., truly man but as truly God, to justify His name Immanuel, God-with-us. Had Joseph and Mary lived together, and their son been born naturally, the prophecy could not apply, and there had been none born to verify that name. God if He pleased might deign to come of woman; if of man, the son could be only a man. Miraculously therefore did the eternal Word become flesh, and thus was but legally son and heir of Joseph, while really after the flesh of Mary, as scripture carefully proves.

But more than this, now was born the One Who gave to the name of Joshua, captain of salvation in his measure and day, its full significance. Jesus alone was Jah the Saviour. For Jah is the name of the Eternal God absolutely, as Jehovah is

His name relatively to man, that is to Israel in association with Him on earth. Jesus was the antitype of Joshua, the true Jah the Saviour, "for HE shall save His people from their sins." He Himself should thus save, not from Canaanites now, but from sins.

Oh what glad tidings for sinful Israel to hear! But being righteous in their own eyes they felt not their sins and were blind to see the Saviour from their sins. A Saviour from the Romans, a Saviour to subject to Zion all the nations, this was their cherished hope. It was all well for the heathen to find a Saviour if they could, to cleanse them from their manifold defilements. But were they not the chosen people of Jehovah? Did they not now at least rest on the law, and boast in God, a guide of blind men, a light of those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes? *They* need to be saved from their sins! They scorned the imputation. It might be well for publicans and sinners; but they repudiated any such humbling necessity for their souls, and rejected the only Saviour of the lost.

But you say that this Saviour is not for you, who are not of His people; and you cannot trust your soul to a vague or doubtful assurance, or to an inference which might be mistaken. Granted that, if this were all, a just question might be raised. But it is not all. The Jewish rejection of

the Lord Jesus opened the door, that the saving grace of God might appear to all men. When our Lord alive sent out His servants, they were expressly not to go into a way of Gentiles nor to enter a city of Samaritans. They were to proceed rather unto the lost sheep of Israel's house. But when He died and rose, He as expressly charged them to make disciples of all the nations, with Christian privilege and instruction. For the fall of Israel is the riches of the world, and their loss is the gain of the Gentiles. The gospel is now of God to every creature under heaven, on the ground of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and thus a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. Hence God thus revealed is not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also.

Therefore, dear reader, the word of salvation is sent to you, as surely as it was to Israel. There is no valid excuse for hesitation. God sends His message of peace and salvation to all indiscriminately. His righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ is "unto all;" and it is "upon all that believe." Certainly He looks for faith, without which it is impossible to please God. He commands all to repent and believe the gospel; and He assures all who believe that, as He is just, so are they justified by His grace.

But when the Lord said in Mark xvi. 15, "Preach the gospel [the glad tidings] to all the

creation," He added, "he that believed and was baptised shall be saved; but he that disbelieved shall be condemned." Christ and His work bring in a final testimony, for God is there face to face with man. If I receive Christ, it is life eternal and salvation; if I reject Him, it is to my everlasting perdition. No one ever made it plainer on both sides than the Saviour. He that believeth in Him is not judged; but he that believeth not hath been already judged, because he hath not believed in the name of the Only-begotten Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light hath come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil.

Can any consideration be so solemn for your soul, for yourself to all eternity? The blessing is yours now if you believe God concerning His Son. He knows all your evil, and yet calls you in sovereign grace. To refuse is to be lost for ever; it is to despise the Father and the Son. God is not mocked. Be not deceived by the great enemy

TOO CHEAP.

A PREACHER of the gospel had gone down into a coal mine, during the noon hour, to tell the miners of that grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

After telling them the simple story of God's love

to lost sinners, man's state, and God's remedy, a full and free salvation offered, the time came for the men to resume work, and the preacher came back to the shaft, to ascend to the world again.

Meeting the foreman, he asked him what he thought of God's way of salvation. The man replied, "Oh, it is too cheap. I cannot believe in such a religion as that."

Without an immediate answer to his remark, the preacher asked, "How do you get out of this place?"

"Simply by getting into the cage," was the reply.

"And does it take long to get to the top?"

"Oh, no ; only a few seconds."

"Well, that certainly is very easy and simple. But do you not need to help raise yourself?" said the preacher.

"Of course not," replied the miner. "As I have said, you have nothing to do but get into the cage."

"But what about the people who sunk the shaft and perfected all this arrangement ; was there much labour or expense about it?"

"Indeed, yes ; that was a laborious and expensive work. The shaft is eighteen hundred feet deep, and it was sunk at great cost to the proprietor ; but it is our only way out, and without it we should never be able to get to the surface."

"Just so. And when God's word tells you that whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath ever-

lasting life, you at once say, 'Too cheap!' 'Too cheap!' forgetting that God's work, to bring you and others out of the pit of destruction and death, was accomplished at a vast cost, the price being the death of His own Son."

Men talk about the "help of Christ" in their salvation, that, if they do their part, Christ will do His; forgetting, or not seeing, that the Lord Jesus Christ by Himself purged our sins, and that their part is but to own their sins and the Saviour, and to accept what God has done in grace.

BORN OF WATER.

SOME men assume that "water" in the passage—
 "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,"¹—must be plain fact; but they overlook the mystic or allegoric style in which this Gospel abounds. What is the "water" Christ gives, of which we read?² Are the "rivers of living water," which should flow from the believer plain fact?³ Nor did the Lord then interpret the figure in these cases, any more than in His momentous teaching concerning feet-washing,⁴ founded on His previous action. But later He Himself gives a key to His meaning, if any needed one: "Already ye are

¹ John iii. 5.

² John iv. 10.

³ John vii. 38.

⁴ John xiii. 10.

clean by reason of the word which I have spoken unto you.”¹ We are expressly told that He baptised none;² but His words were spirit and life.³ They received Him, believing on His name, and were thus born of God.⁴ Water is here the figure for His word.

There is a difference discernible in the use of the figure in this Gospel. In chapter iii. as in xiii. it is “water” to deal with the unclean or defiled. In chapters iv. and vii. it is “living water” to drink, as the power of communion in the one chapter, and of testimony in the other, the gift of the Spirit to believers. There it is not new birth in its cleansing power on him who now only believes, as in chapter iii., or the grace of restoration founded on it, as in chapter xiii. To Nicodemus the Lord spoke of the purifying power of God’s word when received in faith, as we may also see in other scriptures.⁵ Hence “water” alone, figuring the word, needs the addition of “and Spirit” to convey the Lord’s mind fully as to new birth. The soul in bowing to Christ is born of water and Spirit. Had this divine work taken place in Nicodemus, he would have been by repentance a fit subject for christian baptism, the sign of identification with Christ’s death:⁶ thereby were we buried to His death. Christian baptism was instituted by the risen Lord.

¹ John xv. 3. ² John iv. 2. ³ John vi. 63. ⁴ John i. 12.
⁵ Compare Acts xv. 9; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. v. 26; 1 Pet. i. 22. ⁶ Rom. vi.

This is confirmed, as the genuine character of the birth here meant, by the earlier words of our evangelist. "But as many as received him, to them gave he right to become children of God, [even] to those that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."¹ The possession of spiritual life in this Gospel as everywhere hinges on faith.² What can be clearer than that the Lord attaches life eternal to faith in Himself without one word about baptism?

So true is this, that it is merely the effort of superstition to bring baptism into John iii. 3—5, as it does the Lord's Supper into John vi., with the utmost violence to both chapters. Indeed this Gospel is one which avoids outward forms expressly, so as to lay stress on Christ's person and the gift of the Holy Spirit—its grand topics. If we misapply John vi. 54 to the Lord's Supper, the inference would be that every partaker of it has life eternal, and shall be raised up in the blessed resurrection at the last day. It is therefore manifestly erroneous. Again, if one misapply John iii. 3—5 to baptism, the words must shut out from the kingdom every unbaptised person. But the Lord, in the most touching and effective way, teaches us the contrary on the most solemn occasion, by the converted robber—a sample of many souls since that day.

¹ John i. 12, 13. ² See John iii. 15, 16, 18, 36; v. 24, 25, 39, 40; vi. 27, 29, 32—35, 40, 47, 51, 53, 54; vii. 38, 39; viii. 12, 51; x. 9, 10, 26—28; xx. 31.

TRUST IN GOD.

GH, trust thy Father; though thou canst not trace
 The reasons for His discipline of love;
 He'd have thee here more fully know His grace,
 And train thee for His glorious home above.
 This should suffice, till faith is changed to sight;
 God's end, as now His hand, will then be seen:
 How wilt thou bless Him in that world of light,
 For every painful step and darksome scene!
 Hope still in God, dismiss all anxious thought:
 One loved so tenderly, and bought so dear,
 Led on so gently, and so wisely taught,
 Should hope continually and never fear.
 The God of hope, the very God of peace,
 God Who is love, delights in child-like faith:
 A little while, and all thy griefs shall cease;
 Till then, recline on all thy Father saith.

HEARING WITH MEEKNESS.

THERE are times when familiar passages of
 scripture come home to one with peculiar
 force, almost indeed as if we were listening to
 them for the first time. Not the least evidence
 this of the Bible being the word of God. Man's
 word is apt to grow stale, flat, and unprofitable by
 dint of too much repetition—except perhaps
 where it is based on what is of God. But even so
 the interval is vast between an intelligent ex-
 position of revelation and the scripture itself.

As an illustration of what I have said, I may

mention a verse that specially struck me the other day—"receiving with *meekness* the engrafted word."¹ The word "meekness" appealed with singular definiteness. When one weighs the expression, it is easy to see that no other mental attitude would be becoming. Creatures of the dust, as far as our bodies are concerned, how else could we possibly receive God's communication? Moreover, it is but a humiliating story we have to hear about ourselves. Well then may we receive it with meekness. We know indeed this is not a characteristic that favourably impresses men, at any rate not in excess.

Yet the blessed Lord was Himself, "meek and lowly in heart," and He was and is the perfect pattern. It has been remarked, however, that the Lord Jesus does not call Himself "poor in spirit," though He bids His disciples be so, and the distinction is probably a true and well-grounded one. And no doubt the "meekness" spoken of by the apostle James is with respect to God and His word; for there are times when too much meekness might be out of place; if for instance we were to sit with folded hands and in supine indifference when the occasion was one for the vigorous defence of the truth of God. Here of course we are apt, as is well known, to be led by our natural character, which may be combative or

1. James i. 21.

yielding. One only was perfect, even He, Who "when meekness became Him, was meek; when indignation, who could withstand His overwhelming and withering rebuke?"*

But now, in order to mark the profound accuracy of the scriptures, let us compare this passage in James with three other passages in the Epistles, which touch on the written word. And first we are told to "hold fast the faithful word."¹ Surely a most conclusive reason for so holding it. Man's word must often be held loosely; God's, with absolute and unqualified trust. When it comes to practice and when we are in trial, it is another thing, and we find it is far easier to talk about such things, than to practise them. Then, again, we are told to "rightly divide the word of truth."² Evidently the truth ceases to be truth for us practically, if we do not "rightly divide" it. And lastly, we are bidden to "hold forth the word of life."³ How exquisitely appropriate is the language of each injunction! The *engrafted* word must be received meekly, the *faithful* word must be held fast, the *truthful* word must be rightly divided, and, finally, the *living* word must be held forth. There must be meekness in the receiver, faith in the holder, rightness in the one who divides the truth, even as it is a living word that is

* Thus wrote long ago in the "Synopsis," in connection with the Meal Offering, the forcible pen of the late J.N.D.

1 Titus i. 9.

2 2 Tim. ii. 15.

3 Phil. ii. 16.

proclaimed to the sinner, and explained to the believer.

This is but a hint of the deep fulness contained in these divine verses. But even thus somewhat superficially compared, how they justify (if justification were needed) the Saviour's words, "Search the scriptures!"¹



"I DON'T HOPE—I KNOW."

"WON'T you go up and see mother? I am very uneasy about her." The speaker was a christian woman whose acquaintance I had recently formed, and gladly assenting to her request, I soon found myself in a quiet back room, occupied by a pleasant-looking old lady, eighty years of age, busily employed as I entered in making a patch-work quilt.

We soon became friendly; and she told me, pointing to a pair of crutches, how some months before she had been knocked down, dislocating the hip joint, and at her age could never expect to walk again.

Sympathising with her bodily suffering, I spoke of the soul and its needs, only to find, alas! that her daughter's uneasiness was but too well founded; for though a respectable, religious, church-going woman all her long life, Mrs. J—— was utterly in

¹ John v. 39.

the dark as to the condition of her never-dying soul. She had "done her best;" "had brought up all her children to Sunday school and church," though the wife of a publican; "had seen them all at the communion table with her;" but she had never seen herself a lost sinner needing a Saviour.

I spoke of Him, but there was no response: she was too occupied with herself to find beauty in Him. Still, as time hung heavily, she gladly accepted the offer of an interesting book to read; and that visit was the first of many, during which God's gospel concerning His Son was told her, and several volumes containing His truth lent her.

"The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." When the first ray of the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" penetrated her dark heart I never knew; but it did so, and gradually a deepening interest in hearing of God's love in the gift of His Son told that He was working in that aged heart, and leading her to find in Him a needed, a satisfying, and a glorious Saviour.

Her first definite confession of the change was made in the words quoted in the heading. We had been speaking of heaven, and I asked if she was going there. Force of habit led her to answer, "I hope so;" but instantly she recalled the words, saying, "No, I don't *hope* it; I may say I *know* it."

There was not far to search for the ground of

her assurance: it was Christ; and from that time her one theme of interest and joy was Christ. It is written, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, *that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*"¹

Nearly five years after my first visit, I entered that little room for the last time. Having removed from the neighbourhood some months before, it was long since I had seen her, and her daughter said I was "only just in time." She was passing away, only conscious at intervals, and scarcely able to speak, senile decay having made fearful havoc of that once active form.

"Do you know me, dear Mrs. J——?"

It was evident she did, for she tried to say something about "coming so far."

"And do you know the Lord Jesus?"

A great effort, for articulation was very difficult; but the answer came clear and distinct, "I do."

"And you are going to be with Him?"

"I am."

At this moment the daughter addressed me, and I turned to reply, but a movement recalled me to a sight never to be forgotten. The dim eyes were gazing upwards, and an expression of deepest love, adoration, and worship, passed over the withered, altered features, and thrilled through the tones of the feeble voice, as she addressed Him, "Lord Jesus!"

1 1 John v. 13.

They were the last I heard her utter. Shortly afterwards she was with Him.

Reader, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit,"¹ but "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."²



WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

There are few boys and girls who have not heard of the recent inventions and discoveries, by which people can now "write at a distance," as the word "telegraph" means, without the aid of wires, and is therefore known as wireless telegraphy. Certainly it is puzzle enough to most of us, how this can be accomplished even with the aid of wires; only we have become so familiar with the telegraph posts, that many of us have ceased to wonder, since we experienced our first youthful disappointments at being unable to see any faint pink papers flying along the wires! No doubt we all know better than that now, and realise that the message is the result of certain effects, seen or heard by a person who is *on the look-out for a message* at the

1 1 Cor. xii. 3.

2 Rom. x. 9.

terminus, as the result of the efforts of another person to communicate it, it may be, from a very considerable distance away.

.It would be beyond the powers of the writer of this letter to explain the "why and wherefore" of all this. But these new inventions have at least shewn us that the telegraph wires, to which we in our ignorance had attached so much importance, are the least important part of the whole thing, seeing that, under certain favourable conditions, it is possible to do without them ; and that what is most essential of all, and without which these wonderful inventions and discoveries are absolutely powerless, is that there should be someone *on the look-out for the message*, who, when the alarm bell has rung, is all attention, and someone moreover, who has a message worth sending.

It is clear, therefore, that apart from the sender and the receiver, all these wonderful discoveries would be useless, however we might admire the way by which it becomes possible to communicate.

Perhaps these considerations may set our young friends thinking of God's wonderful plan of salvation. The glory of devising such means that "his banished be not expelled from him," will ever be His ; but unless we are on the look-out for the message, the benefit will be quite lost to us.

Compared with the marvellous unfolding of God's love in the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, the

wonders of creation are as nothing ; and yet what a store-house of marvels is the universe, the secrets of which, the great scientists are only just beginning to obtain a peep into. Yet, believe me, some of the "lesser lights" are so proud of what they have been able to discover, that one would think they had invented the atmosphere itself, instead of having just learned how to make use of it ; in short, that that they had created the horse, instead of having only learned how to drive it !

The glories of God's creation pale before the surpassing wonder of the Creator God becoming man, to give Himself a ransom for Adam's guilty race.

Coming back to our telegraphy, one thing we have to note, and it is that those who make use of it require faith. So it is clear that if the apostle Thomas had not thoroughly learned the lesson the Lord Jesus taught him, after His resurrection, telegraphy would have been quite useless to him. He would have said, "Except I see the signature of the friend who has sent it, I will not accept the message," and by the time the properly signed letter had arrived, confirming the message, as is customary in business houses, the opportunity which rendered a telegram essential, would have gone.

No doubt the apostle Thomas' speech, as to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, sounded very wise :

and cautious; but I would like to point out that although he was allowed all the proofs that he asked, he was rebuked by the Lord Jesus, in a way that made him thoroughly ashamed of his heartless demands.

In the same way however, people are in this day acting so as to imply that they really doubt whether the God Who has created the marvellous facilities of speech, and means of communication with one another which we enjoy, has Himself actually spoken to us by His Son.¹ And although He has warned us that there is no way of escape if we neglect His great salvation, revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ,² it is a solemn fact that those who are neglecting the scriptures (God's writing from a distance) will realise the folly of their unbelief when too late—indeed, will as it were, receive the letter confirming the telegram, in hell “where hope and mercy never come.” There will be no doubts there; clear and tormenting will the lost opportunities continue their endless, agonising refrain.

We want our young friends to see, that all these doubts and misgivings cannot affect the fact, that God has in mercy sent a warning message to all, to “flee from the wrath to come,” and that He has raised up attendants, who are busy receiving and handing on His messages.

1 Heb. i. 1.

2 Heb. ii.

“I AM IN THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD, AND I HAVE NO FEAR.”

THE subject of the following sketch had been a soldier. I made his acquaintance after he had left the army, and remained on very intimate terms with him until his death, which happened many years after.

My old friend was not converted till the middle period of life, but at once began to serve the Lord, and continued an active worker until the home-call, which came very suddenly. It was his delight to stand in the open air and proclaim the glad tidings of God's salvation in the town where he had served as a soldier.

On one occasion a young soldier came and opposed him, not knowing, probably, that he had formerly served in the army. Presently an officer, who had been listening, drew near to my old friend, and said to him, “Shall I put that man in the guard room?”

The reply was,—“Yes, when God puts you in the guard room.”

My old friend had learnt the sweet story of the grace of God, and knew how to forgive rather than to punish.

Eventually he settled down to a blessed form of serving Christ, which he diligently continued almost up to the time of his death. He had large quantities of gospel literature sent to him in the form of tracts and booklets. These he carefully selected and stitched together, generally writing across them a few remarks of his own, or a few texts of scripture. With these he would fill his bag, and proceed to the Docks, and distribute to emigrants and others. Then, as opportunities occurred, he would speak to one and another. These portions of truth were carried far and wide, and, I doubt not, were used by God in blessing to many persons.

I think I never knew anyone who loved his Bible better than my old friend, and this he marked in such a way that it was quite an object of interest to look at. So familiar was he with his Bible, that in meeting one he would frequently ask how such and such a portion was with you, naming chapter and text.

At length the end of his pilgrimage drew near. He had been to a meeting early in the week, and took a chill which detained him at home. He was hoping that in a few days he would be able to get out again ; and so he employed his time, as he was able, in arranging his tracts and booklets for distribution. Little did he think that his work was done. As he grew worse a doctor was sent for,

who, on examining him, found that he was beyond recovery, and, as a faithful man, told him so. My old friend received the news calmly, and said, "I am in the hands of the living God, doctor, and I have no fear."

My dear reader, have you such peace in your soul that you can look forward to the end calmly, or does it alarm you? If the latter is the case, let me urge you not to rest until you know for a certainty that you believe in Christ Jesus. No rational man doubts for a moment the importance of attending to the soul's interests, but in large numbers of cases, it is thought that there is time enough to attend to this later on. Felix thought this as Paul reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come; but he was unwilling to yield, and said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The probability is that the convenient season never came, for we read that on resigning office, "Felix, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound." In the affairs of life it is felt to be of importance to attend to urgent matters without delay; trivial things we can afford to allow to stand over for a while. Hence the importance of attending to the Lord's call to your soul. The present time is the convenient season. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

“I CAN GO IN WITH THEM.”

I HAVE read of one who dreamed a dream, when in great distress of mind before God. He thought he stood in the outer court of heaven, and he saw a glorious host marching up, singing sweet hymns, and bearing the banners of victory. They passed by him through the gate; and he heard in the distance sweet strains of music.

“Who are they?” he asked.

“They are the goodly fellowship of the apostles, who have gone to be with God.”

He heaved a deep sigh as he said, “Alas! I am not one of them, and never shall be; and I cannot enter there.”

By-and-by there came another band, equally lovely in appearance, and equally triumphant, robed in white. They passed within the portals, and again were shouts of welcome heard.

“Who are they?”

“They are the goodly fellowship of the prophets.”

“Alas!” he said, “I do not belong to that fellowship, and I cannot enter there.”

He still waited and lingered, in the hope that he might yet go in; but the next multitude did not encourage him, for they were the noble army of martyrs. He could not go with them, nor wave their palm branches.

At last, as he walked, he saw a larger host than all the rest put together, marching and singing most melodiously, and in front walked the woman that was a sinner, and the robber that died upon the cross. He looked long, and saw there the Philippian jailer, and the like; and when they entered, he could see who they were, and he thought, "There will be no shouting about them." But to his astonishment, it seemed as if all heaven was rent with sevenfold shouts as they passed in. And the angels said to him, "These are they that were mighty sinners, saved by mighty grace."

And then he said, "Blessed be God! I can go in with them."

And so he awoke.



THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN.

LUKE XVII. 26.

DEAR reader, have you ever weighed these warning words of the Lord? Do you know that they concern you intimately? The Lord is coming, not only to judge the dead at the end, but the living at the beginning of His displayed kingdom. Are you a believer in Him, and ready to meet Him? If you cannot so say in truth, lay it to heart. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand, when sudden destruction comes on a

slumbering world, and they shall in no wise escape.

It is not merely death you may well dread, but death because after this is judgement in its inevitable time, and in its everlasting issue. The Lord admonishes you that His coming is as unexpected and unwelcome to the unprepared, as the nightly thief to the householder.

“And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed.”¹

Do you believe that these days hang over your head, and hasten to be fulfilled? They have never yet been, and therefore must be; for the mouth of the Lord has so spoken.

Oh, hear Him, while it is the day of grace. Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. Hear, and your soul shall live. For as He solemnly declared on earth, “Verily, verily, the hour cometh and *now is*,

¹ Luke xvii. 26—30.

when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.”¹ To hear His voice is to reject Satan’s lie, to distrust your own natural mind, and to believe the one True God Who sent His only-begotten Son, that you, receiving Him, may have life eternal in His name. It is God’s goodness which alone leads any one to repentance; as it was His infinite mercy which laid the iniquity of us all on the only One capable of being an unfailing sacrifice to God for us.

Oh, why should you perish in your sins, by turning a deaf ear to the only Saviour? What is all that Hindoos, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, or any others taught, but a religion of self, of fallen man? The Jews forgot the promises, and vainly tried the law which could but condemn the guilty. The gospel declares that Christ has accomplished the work to God’s glory, and the salvation of all who believe. It is not Yea and Nay; but in Him is the Yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God, through us.



SATAN is a great preacher of the pride of faith, and the humility of unbelief.

Two can walk together very well until they come to a certain point where two roads meet. “I go this way, and follow Christ,” says one. “I beg to be excused,” says the other.

1 John v. 25.

SUPERABOUNDING GRACE.

THE grace of God is very wonderful. There is nothing human that bears a real resemblance to it. If we would know what the grace of God means, we must learn from the scriptures, and not from a dictionary. And its character is such that it cannot be adequately illustrated by analogy.

I remember hearing an anecdote intended to shew what the grace of God is, which I will repeat as well as I can remember it, because it so excellently illustrates what the grace of God *is not*.

A royal personage happened on one occasion to be on board a ship which contained several prisoners. These prisoners were seamen in the Royal Navy, and were guilty of mutiny. The prince, hearing of them, desired to see them. While speaking to them he particularly observed one of the number, who was a bright, good-looking young fellow, on whom he took compassion. Eventually, through the influence of the prince, this young sailor obtained a pardon, and was reinstated in his former position in the Navy.

Now, this is a touching instance of human kindness, but it nevertheless comes far short of the grace of God. Indeed, it does not even touch it. Had the good prince chosen the oldest, most evil-looking, most hardened and hopeless of the

criminals, and done for him as he did for the young sailor to whom he took a fancy, it would have been more like the grace of God.

For, mark it well, reader, it was our moral ugliness that drew out the gracious, pitying love of God. He does not act in grace because there is something attractive in us, but on the contrary, the greater the ruin the deeper the grace. It was when we were sinners Christ died for us. It was at the cross, where man crucified the Lord of glory that man's sin abounded, and it was just there that God's grace superabounded; for by that death God made a way of life for every one that believes on Him.

There is a beautiful expression only to be found in God's word, namely, "the election of grace." I do not find this amongst men. I find election according to merit. If I desire to be chosen for a certain post, I must make myself fit and compete with others. A master never selects the very worst man he can find. God often does. This is "election of grace." God chooses the worst. The robber on the cross was one. Paul was another, calling himself the chief of sinners, and so magnifying the grace of God that could save even him.

Do you feel, reader, that you are not morally ugly, and that you have something about you that God should appreciate? If so, compare yourself

with the perfect Man, Christ Jesus, Who is the only One with Whom God has been well pleased. Remember that your own self-righteousness is worse than your sins in God's sight. He likens your sins to a garment, but your righteousnesses to filthy rags. If you are standing on the stilts of good works, you have no claim on God's grace, and will only stride the surer down to everlasting destruction. But take the place of being weak and worthless before God, and He will not only save you from the consequences of your sins, but all the love of His heart and the treasures of His house will be yours throughout eternity.



"THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERETH VIOLENCE."

MATT. XI. 12.

THE Jews looked forward to the kingdom of the Messiah; and they learnt from Daniel that it would be the heavens ruling, and that the Son of man would receive it from the Ancient of days. But all was so vague that they saw little more from its source and character than a kingdom of resistless power and incomparable grandeur, before which all kings and emperors bow down in abject servitude, if allowed to live. They expected for the chosen people an assured, perfect, and

indefeasible title, as sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yet neither law, nor Psalms, nor Prophets taught any such necessary claim to the blessing, but abounded in solemn warnings to sinners about their sins. Now we know, says the apostle,¹ that whatsoever things the law saith, it speaks (not to the nations whom they despised, but) to those in the scope and obligation of the law; in other words, to the Jews. The solemn denunciations throughout the Bible concerned them immediately. Hence all of Israel who were taught of God looked in faith to the Messiah for their souls.

John the Baptist came and announced Him and the kingdom as imminent, and baptised them on the confession of their sins. It was a baptism of repentance, that they should believe on the Messiah to come after himself.

But this very chapter shews us John in prison, a most staggering fact for the forerunner of Messiah; and his sending two of his disciples to enquire of Jesus, "Was He the coming One? or were they to expect another?" Jesus points to most irrefragable proofs as His answer, as He also bears witness to John's God-honoured place. But He explains the strange yet astounding truth of His own rejection, and along with it, that the kingdom in consequence would confer such a wealth of

1 Rom. iii. 19.

privilege and dignity, that the least in it is greater than John the Baptist, although none born of women had arisen greater than he. But it can be entered only by the force of faith, which breaks through all difficulties. Not even a son of David could enter it through his birth; nor would circumcision, though going up beyond law to the fathers, avail to give an adequate title.

A rejected and, as soon after appeared, a crucified Messiah is the object of faith. Even when the Lord spoke, the Jews were turning from Him; especially the leaders, the Pharisees and the Scribes. Still more did they revolt from resting on Him that died on the cross. To Jews pre-eminently it was a stumbling-block. What could be more opposed to their confident hope of a glorious kingdom to exalt them and overwhelm their enemies? But even as it was, their trusted guides were already saying within themselves, "This man blasphemeth." They believed not that the Man Who had not where to lay His head could be the predicted Son of man, and they could not endure His claim of authority on earth to forgive sins. They stumbled at the stumbling-stone; and the end was the cross, where and when He was the propitiation for sins by His blood.

Wherefore the call of God is to believe on the despised and rejected One; for He is the only

Saviour, and there was no other means of blotting out sins. It is not the easy-going that enter the kingdom. It is not those that trust in themselves that they are righteous who are justified, nor are men saved who confide in earthly priests or sacraments. The sinner needs a divine Deliverer, and a work of divine efficacy, yet by man. All is found in Jesus and in Him alone.

But the faith that receives Jesus breaks through every tie of flesh and the world. The believer abandons all he once valued. The kingdom is taken by violence, and violent men, as the Lord says, seize it. So does He teach elsewhere that, if one set not Himself before father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, yea, and life itself, he cannot be His disciple. Genuine faith is tested to the uttermost. At bottom this was ever true; but when Christ came, it was manifested fully. Hence He said in Luke xiii. 24, "Strive earnestly to enter through the narrow door." Conversion to God there must be, and, in such a world as this, breaking through all obstacles and opposition. Grace, sovereign grace, is on God's part; but on ours, the courage of faith that seizes what can only be taken by rupture with all present ties and hindrances.



OUR true growth is more known by our growing downwards in humility, than by all the outward things put together.

THE GLEANER'S CONVERSION.

As soon as the master of the field gave us liberty, all were in earnest, gleaning all we could. The corn was then thrashed out and sent to the mill; afterwards to be fed upon. Of course to have wheaten bread, we had to glean in the field where wheat had grown; or, however earnest we might have been, we should not have had such food to feed upon.

So is it with food for the soul. The bread of God is He that came down from heaven, and gave His flesh for the life of the world. There is all fulness in Him. All that God required to be paid in the matter of our sin against God, Jesus Himself has supplied at the cost of His own life-blood. God's justice was fully met, and He is satisfied in every way.

And now the same Christ Who is enough for God is for the poor sinner, whom sin had made afraid of God. For no sinner could ever approach Him without Christ.

In all the world then this gospel is to be preached; and what Christ is as Saviour for every sinner is to be made known to all, as God's free gift to poor starving, perishing souls.

I have before my mind a young man who used to glean in the Wiltshire corn fields, as above

described. When young, he seemed very anxious to do and be what he thought God would accept. But from all this he sank, until the very people who cared for his soul seemed hateful in his sight. But there were those in that village who had been gleaning from God's holy word, and who fed upon Christ as their Saviour, and who met for prayer together. On going home one evening, this young man found them at his father's house, for the purpose of asking God to stay his course. He was offended. But God was there, and as those people sang to God as their Father, and of Christ as their Saviour, he sank down before them under the sense of his guilt. The presence of God struck terror into his very being. For days even his godly father despaired of his life.

How those anxious friends left his father's house, he never knew. All seemed out of order, but yet their prayers were answered. They felt sure that God, then and there, was doing a work, and that the poor hardened sinner himself would find their Saviour as his Saviour, and become a gleaner in the same place where they gleaned so much. And so it came about; as a verse, afterwards written by him, clearly proves. His simple lines are as follow :

With Jesus my Saviour, I'm waiting for glory;
Grim death with its terrors no longer appal;
The blood of the Lamb ever speaks in my favour:
This proves that my Saviour is suited to all.

“BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED.”¹

WHO shall fathom the exquisite beauty of these five golden words, unfolding, as they so sweetly do, three grand and glorious realities?

1. God's grace.
2. God's salvation.
3. God's saved ones.

GOD'S GRACE.

Who shall measure the height and depth, the breadth and length, of God's amazing grace? Freer than the air, warmer than the sun, and deeper than the ocean wave, is God's grace; but, dear reader, what do you personally know of it? What is it to you?

Works of every kind are discarded, when it is a question of grace; the only works God owns are those that flow from life possessed in a risen and glorified Christ. Law, too, is set aside in Moses, in order to bring in “grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ.” Law can only curse and condemn, whereas grace supplies, in Christ, both life and righteousness. All human efforts are worthless in presence of God's grace; and, if righteousness come by the law, then Christ has died in vain.² It is the grace of God that bringeth salvation.

¹ Eph. ii. 5. ² Gal. ii. 21.

Just as the gentle zephyrs from the summer sea bring life and healing to the wearied heart and brain, so does the grace of God bring salvation to the heavy-laden sinner. Grace is for the lost, the helpless, and the guilty. Though all unmerited, it breaks the chains of sin and Satan, and sets the prisoner free.

Grace lays its sure foundation at the cross where Jesus died, and rears its top-stone on the very throne of God! It is the atmosphere in which God moves and lives; and a glorified Christ is the living channel through which it now flows out in righteousness to a lost and ruined world. Reader, if still in thy sins, cast thyself now upon this matchless grace, for it brings salvation even to thee!

GOD'S SALVATION.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."¹ Salvation is of the Lord; and in virtue of Christ's atoning sacrifice at Calvary, it is freely offered to all, without money and without price. Such is God's infinite satisfaction with the finished work of Jesus, that He has raised Him from the dead, and placed Him in the highest glory, "far above all principality and power, and every name that is named."

The glorious outcome of redemption's work is thus fully secured in Christ's resurrection, and this is the result to every believer:—

1 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Salvation from sin, and its dominion.
 Salvation from the curse of a broken law.
 Salvation from death, and its sting.
 Salvation from judgement, which is eternal.
 Salvation from hell, which is a reality.
 Salvation from the bondage of Satan.
 Salvation from the world, and its doom.

Yes, salvation is a full and complete deliverance from every foe, as well for the body as the soul. It brings the believer from darkness to light, from death to life, from slavery to liberty, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."¹ Reader, is this salvation yours; and if so, do you know it, and enjoy it?

GOD'S SAVED ONES.

Who are the saved ones; and is it possible that they may be quite sure they really are saved? To this question there can be but one answer, that if God says they are saved, they are. Saved ones, then, are those who once were lost; saved ones are those who, like Job, have learnt their vileness, and confessed their sins; but they are also those who have lost their sins through faith in Jesus' blood. Saved ones possess eternal life in a risen Christ; saved ones are children of God, and heirs of glory, yea more, God's Spirit indwells them,

¹ Titus iii. 5.

and they know it, because "the witness of God is true."

Are you then a saved one, dear reader, and do you know that you have "passed from death unto life?" God's word declares that all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are saved with an everlasting salvation, and being thus saved, God wants them to know it. "By grace ye are saved;" these are the precious words of scripture, and who will dare to doubt their veracity? Yea, "let God be true, but every man a liar." God, then, is the source of salvation. Christ is the divine and holy channel through Whom it comes. The Holy Spirit is the indwelling witness to every believer that he possesses it. And it is God's word which emphatically declares, "By grace ye are saved."

EVER REJOICING.

IN the sunshine of His presence
 I cannot silent keep;
 Let those who are in darkness,
 Sit down to sigh and weep.

He has promised to be with me,
 So I will ever sing;
 Let those be dumb and cheerless,
 Who do not know the King.

"In Christ"—this is my watchword,
 Well-spring of joy and peace;
 So as I travel homeward,
 My praises shall increase.

AN OPEN LETTER ON THE LORD'S DAY.

MY DEAR MR. ———,

Your question is of such interest and importance, that I set aside various other matters to give it immediate attention. You say, "The commandment ordains that the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, is to be kept holy; why, then, do Christians keep Sunday, instead of Saturday as the Jews do?" The answer to your question is that the Sabbath was instituted to commemorate the perfect and completed work of God in creation; and for anyone to work on that day, when God was resting from His work, would be the same as declaring that His creation-work was not perfect and complete. Just in the same way, the work of redemption was finished by the Lord Jesus on the cross, and He arose from the dead on the first day of the week, making that day the commencement of the first week after His redemption-work had been completed. The work being all done, it is written, "We which have believed do enter into rest," and we signalise that rest by beginning the christian week with the day of rest. Not doing as the Jews do, who work for six days, and then rest on the seventh, we begin our week by resting on each first day, which shews also that that rest is not the result of *our* work, but of His.

In view of this He said, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Before He died on the cross He confirmed this by saying, "It is finished," that all might know on the authority of His own words, that there was nothing more for anyone to do in order to secure his own salvation ; but the sinner was to rest by faith in the work done thus, then, and by Him alone and completely. On the night of His betrayal, the Lord called His followers around Him, and instituted His memorial feast of breaking bread and drinking wine, to shew forth His death until His coming again to receive them to Himself. "This do in remembrance of me," were His gracious words. Then He passed forth to His death.

His wounded body rested in the grave until the Sabbath was past, and then He arose, and on the same day met His disciples, and made Himself known to them in the breaking of bread, according to His appointment ; and again, later in the day, He met with another company of His followers ; and after another week with the same company once more. These were the beginnings of the keeping of the Lord's Day—the first day of the week—in displacement of the Jewish Sabbath ; and this practice had the sacred sanction of the Lord's own presence. The custom was continued until the day of Pentecost, when they gathered with one accord, viz., to break bread in compliance

with His request, on yet another first day of the week.

This was a memorable day indeed, for on this day, God the Holy Spirit came down from heaven, not only to mark divine approval on what they were doing then, but to dwell with them, and to abide in them as their glorious power for praise and work and patient endurance according to His will. Many years later we learn that it was the disciples' established practice to "come together on the first day of the week to break bread," that is, to keep the feast alluded to above.¹

The day thus dignified by the Lord's own glad resurrection, and sanctified by His personal presence at the feast ordained by Himself; the day thus confirmed by the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, in all its sweet and simple, yet sacred solemnities, and all its hallowed associations, might well displace and nullify the day that was principally connected, not with the manifestation of the *love* of God in giving His only begotten Son to die that we might live; but with His mighty *power* and marvellous wisdom as the great Creator.

All the shadows and symbols of the law found in His one perfect sacrifice, and in His glorious Being, their complete fulfilment. He is our rest. He is our true Sabbath, and on the day that the Lord made peculiarly His own, it is the Christian's joy to shew forth His most holy praise, and to

1 Acts xx. 7.

hear His most holy word, in remembering His death of shame and suffering in blest anticipation of the fulfilment of His most tender and loving promise, "If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself."

THE SUBSTITUTE.

ONCE when I was a teacher in a large school, I had to reprove a pupil for inattention and disobedience. My words failing to produce an effect upon him, I was obliged to resort to punishment, and accordingly I told him to stand for a quarter of an hour in a corner of the school-room.

As he was going to the corner, a boy came to me and requested that I would allow him to take the place of the lad who had offended. This request surprised me a good deal; however, I contented myself with observing that if I granted his request, he should pass the whole of the time in the corner, "and," I added, "a quarter of an hour is very long when one must spend it in punishment."

These words did not shake him. I then pointed out to him the disgrace which attaches to a child who undergoes punishment, telling him that to all visitors who might enter the school, he would

appear a naughty boy. Nothing, however, changed his purpose, and I allowed him to take his companion's place in the corner. When the quarter of an hour had expired, I released the little boy, and asked him if it was his companion who had induced him to take his place.

"No, sir," he replied.

"Do you not think that he deserved to be punished?"

"Oh, he deserved it."

"What then has led you to bear this punishment in his place?"

"Sir, it is because I love him."

The other children had listened with deep attention to this conversation. I then called the disobedient boy, and raised the question if I ought not to punish him, even though his friend had been punished.

In a moment there was almost a clamour of protestations. A multitude of voices cried out, "Oh, sir, that would not be right! that would not be right!"—"nor just!" added one.

"Why would it not be just?" replied I. "Has not your school-fellow disobeyed?"

"Yes, sir; but you have allowed Brown to be punished in his place; you should not therefore punish him."

"Does what has just happened recall anything to your minds?" I said.

"That the Lord Jesus bore the punishment of our sins."

"What would you call Brown, now?"

"A substitute."

"What is a substitute?"

"One who takes the place of another."

"Whose place has Jesus taken?"

"That of sinners."

"Brown told us that he wished to take his school-fellow's place and be punished instead of him, because he loved him. Can you tell me why Jesus wished to die in the place of the sinner?"

"Because He loved us."

"Tell me of a verse which proves that."

"Paul says, 'The Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'"¹

"Exactly, and it would not have been just for me to put the naughty boy in the corner, after having punished Brown in his place.

"We learn that God can never punish any sinner who believes in Jesus Christ as his Saviour; He will never do so, for the Bible says, that 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"²



FASTINGS and prayer are but the active goings forth of dependence.

1 Gal. ii. 20. 2 John iii. 16.

CHILDREN'S TERRORS.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Whether boys or girls, if you are old enough to read, I am sure most of you will understand what I mean by the title of this letter, "Children's Terrors," and it will recall the agonies some have gone through, and their intense reality. Some children dread thunder; others cower under the bed clothes when the wind howls wildly; and a great number are afraid of being alone in the dark.

Perhaps you have never talked of these terrors, for fear of being laughed at, but have dreaded each night as it came round with its horrors. Strangely enough, it is not the very tiny children who are scared by these fears, but those who are old enough to puzzle out many things for themselves, and have reached the age to know right from wrong. But then you see, knowing right from wrong means they have heard of God, and heaven, and hell, and their consciences being awakened, they know God cannot look upon sin without abhorrence, and knowing they are sinners, they dread the thunder, for it sounds as though God was speaking to them, and the howling wind as though some spirit was shrieking at them, and the darkness,—well, that is

worst of all, for it seems like being face to face with death.

Now, I will tell you of a little boy, who so dreaded being left alone in the dark, that he used to steal down quietly and sit on the staircase, so as to be within hearing of his father's voice, for then he thought he would be safe. He was about nine years old at this time, and being the child of godly parents, and often hearing them speak of the second coming of the Lord, he was terribly afraid he might be in his little room alone when Jesus came, and would be left behind, so he concluded the safe place was near his father and mother.

I wonder if any of you, dear children, think the same, that is, that godly parents will be a safeguard for you at the second advent.

Now, when the Lord Jesus comes again, it will be to take away *only* those who are His friends, those who have accepted Him as their Saviour, and are washed whiter than snow by His precious blood.

Do you think for one moment He can possibly make any mistake, and leave one of His own, or take those who are not His because they belong to His friends? Surely not, and so those who are not Christ's will be left behind. There will be no confusion. He knows His sheep by name, and says, His people are so precious to Him, that any one who touches them, touches as it were the

apple of His eye. One in a family will be caught up, and another left behind; and it will all depend on whether they belong to Jesus or not.

Can you think of anything more terrible? I cannot, and this is why I am always urging on you not to neglect salvation.

You all know what neglect can do. Neglect your lessons, and there is trouble; neglect your garden, there will be weeds, no flowers; neglect your pets, and they will die. Nothing very dreadful is done, only neglect; and if you neglect salvation, how can you escape? The little boy I told you of is now a man, and a servant of Christ, and he says the thought of being left behind so haunted him, that he came to Jesus when quite young. Now, will you follow his example, and come?

You do not want to be left behind, do you? If you come, just as you are, to the loving Saviour, there will be no more terrors for you. The thunder, or howling wind will not terrify you; and as He is the "Light of the World," you will not be afraid of darkness. For His loving arms will be ever round you, and whether He calls you away by death, or comes to fetch you, all will be well.

It is sin that makes us dread death, or meeting the Lord; but with sins blotted out by His precious blood, you will be happy boys and girls, and, if spared, useful men and women, looking for the Lord from heaven.

HOW A JEW AND HIS WIFE FOUND THE MESSIAH.

SOME years ago a Polish Jew, who had long desired to better his condition in life, said good-bye to his wife and children, and left his native village for America, promising himself and his family to have them with him as soon as he could provide for them. The voyage was uneventful.

On landing in New York, one of the first to greet him was a missionary, who handed him a New Testament. His Jewish fellow-travellers with muttered curses threw theirs overboard: "I'll look at mine before I destroy it," he thought; but not wishing to be ridiculed by his companions, he secreted it in his trunk, soon forgetting its existence.

Being strong and willing, he soon obtained profitable employment, and in less than three months sent for his wife and children, for whose comfort he had fitted up a neat little home. In

the re-united family all went well till the Testament was unpacked, and out of curiosity the father began to peruse it. He became interested, attracted, fascinated. If this is true, the Christians are right. Oh, to know for certain!

Missionaries whom he met tried to make the truth plain to him, but fear of the Jews kept him aloof from Christians. His mind was so troubled that he would rise in the night to read, but was soon discovered by his wife, who was so surprised and shocked that it was impossible to appease her. She burned that Testament and each succeeding one that found its way into the house; but she could not help hearing of the wonderful works of this Jesus whom she so thoroughly hated and despised.

Home was changed to the poor Jew; and, longing for rest of mind and comfort of heart, he wandered into a mission room where a faithful evangelist was preaching Christ as the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." "This must be what all our types have been pointing to," thought he. "Jesus suffered instead of me; God is satisfied; I am so thankful to Him!"

True conversion cannot be hid. His employers heard of it, and discharged him, refusing to pay to a heretic the wages due; his wife heard it, and spurned him in scorn and bitterness. His life

was full of trouble, but not his soul—his Saviour took care of that, and gave him patience to work and care for the family who were being taught to despise and hate him. His wife, the daughter of a rabbi, refused to be supported by one she could no longer reverence. After consulting a prominent New York rabbi, she decided to leave him and take her children back to the shelter of her parents' home, where they could be educated in the Jewish faith. Allow them to grow up Christians! Never!!

The rabbi would pay all expenses out of respect to her father; so the packing up was quickly done. Now for the expressman to take the luggage to the steamer. She dons her street attire, and starts to bring him to her rooms. She gets to the door, but cannot open it; past the threshold she cannot go: her limbs are paralysed. She is stricken so suddenly that she can only cry out. Her Jewish neighbours run to her assistance; but the water they offer she cannot drink.

"Your husband's sin, that is the cause. Send for an ambulance." Tenderly they lift the terrified sufferer and bear her away from her frightened children. But hospital doctors and nurses alike think it a serious case, and after hours of unsuccessful treatment, pronounce it hopeless, and have her removed to an isolated ward, where her screams cannot annoy other patients.

Her hours are numbered, and she is made aware of the fact. She prays to the God of Israel and bitterly reproaches Him, the Almighty, for afflicting her for her husband's sin.

"What if my husband should be right?" suddenly flashed through her mind. "He has borne all my harsh treatment, and everybody is against him; yet he clings to this Jesus who (he says) used to open the eyes of the blind and cure sick folks, even to a poor paralytic. Oh, if He would only cure me! Then I would know He was the true Messiah. I have only a few hours to live. O Jesus, if you are the Messiah, heal my body now, and I will believe upon you."

The prayer is half-sobbed, half-shrieked, but it reaches the throne of glory. Instantly there is a change; the pain is gone, the crippled limbs straighten, and in contrition she cries out, "Jesus, I believe on You. I'm sorry I hated You so bitterly. Make me see it all plainer." What a change in mind and body! Her husband's Saviour her's at last!

"The poor Jew woman is dead," the nurses exclaim, "for her screams have ceased."

They go to make sure.

She is not there, but giving a drink of water to another patient.

"What! walking around, when it took four of us to lift her on that cot."

Doctors are hastily summoned; they find her cured, but by what means? Then the whole story comes out, and doctors and nurses must acknowledge that Jesus, the "Good Physician," takes precedence of all.

In the morning her husband came and took her home, united at last in the truest sense, the prayers of months answered.

These are God's dealings with our Jewish brother and his wife, and are jotted down, hoping they may be used to cheer any who are passing through like trial.

"IN DUE TIME."

ROMANS V. 6.

THE "due time" was when man had been fully tried and found worse and worse. The nations had all along gone after false gods. The favoured nation, called to bear witness of the one true God, had proved more guilty than any, not only in rebellion against Him, but eager to follow any and every strange god. Having therefore one Son, His Well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them, a remnant brought back from Babylon for the purpose. Surely they would reverence His Son, their Messiah! But no: man, the Jew, after

all his experience, and in the face of the prophets, would not have God at any price, not even when He came as Immanuel among them. This is the Heir, said the husbandmen among themselves ; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.¹

This is the great truth for you, dear reader, if you have not already learnt it from God. You are no better than any. You are verily guilty, living in your sins, and in danger of dying in your sins, till you receive Christ. And here is the great sin which far exceeds other sins. For it means rejecting God when He came down in the person of His Son, deigning to partake of humanity to reconcile you to God, in compassionate love. But man would not be reconciled ; he scorned and hated Christ. It was not transgression of law only, but contempt of grace, when "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."² Jew and Gentile would have none of Him. On the contrary, the Jews, by hand of lawless men, the Gentiles, crucified and slew Him who came in light and love to bless them.

How are you treating the Lord of glory ? How have you till now requited the love of Him Who died for you ? For to this the grace of God turned His death. Instead of regarding it as nothing but

1 Mark xii. 7.

2 2 Cor. v. 19—21.

deadly affront to God and the worst sin of man, God made Christ, Who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become His righteousness in Christ. That is, God made Him to be the bearer of sin, in suffering its judgement at His own hand, that we might be objects of His justifying righteousness. Christ was identified with our evil to remove it out of His sight for those who believe; and we are identified with Him, Who from God is made to us righteousness as well as wisdom, and sanctification, and redemption.¹

How worthy of God that our time of evident and utter ruin should be the "due time" of His salvation ! When man was at his worst, God did, showed, and gave His best, in grace : His Son became not only a Man but a sacrifice, the only efficacious sacrifice, for men however vile and powerless. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."²

On the ground of man's righteousness, you have no standing, you are lost. Christ dead for you is the ground of God's righteousness, Who so values that one offering for sins that He can and does justify freely every soul that believes the gospel. Oh ! then repent and believe. Doubt not that God is by Christ's work just and the justifier of him that believes. To condemn even an ungodly

1 1 Cor. i. 30.

2 Rom. v. 6.

one who believes in Christ¹ would slight His work. This God never does ; yea, He justifies him. May it be your portion now and for ever !

TRUSTING THE LORD.

LORD Jesus, my Saviour, I am trusting in Thee ;
 Whose name shines victorious ; o'er death Who art free ;
 My soul Thou hast captured ; by grace I am Thine ;
 My precious Redeemer, I know Thee as mine.

Thou Friend of the friendless, Thy grace gave me rest ;
 A stranger no longer, by Thee ever blest,
 Thy kindness o'erwhelms me ; I know I am free
 To glean in the fields which belongeth to Thee.

Continue Thy kindness ; still comfort my soul ;
 In the midst of confusion, my footsteps control ;
 Oh, guard me, and keep me, and since I am Thine,
 Thy goodness and mercy around me entwine.

Still helpless and feeble, I rest on Thy word,
 My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour, my Lord ;
 Thine eyes of compassion surveyed my distress ;
 Thou hast saved me from wrath ; Thou wilt manage the rest.

“BLOOD RUNNING DOWN EVERY PAGE.”

MANY years ago, it was my happy privilege to know an aged couple living in a remote village in Leicestershire. At that time Leicestershire was noted for its mud walls and cottages ; and

¹ Rom. iv. 5

even now several of these are still to be seen standing.

My old friends lived in a cottage of this description. I think I see it now, though long years have passed away since the time I refer to. Its outward appearance presented anything but a cheerful aspect, though its whitewashed walls and cosy chimney-corner gave an air of comfort within.

The inhabitants were very poor, the old man at that time being employed on the road, and their fare was but scanty. Yet here were a couple who knew what it was to feast on royal dainties; for they communed with God.

It was a very great pleasure to me to visit that humble cottage, and one day in doing so I found the old wife alone with her Bible. The portion she was reading was Micah vii. and one verse seemed to have given her great comfort: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old."

After exchanging a few words, she said to me, "Some people don't like the Old Testament, but I do; for when I read it there seems to me to be blood running down every page." I was a very young man at the time, and her words impressed me, and I have often thought of them.

My old friend was one who had been taught of God. Poor and comparatively unknown, she had

been made wise unto salvation, and was rich in faith toward God. She had learnt that the Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New, contained the sweet story of the grace of God, the good news of God's salvation, and had embraced it.

My dear reader, have you, like my old friend, made this discovery? In reading your Bible, do you, like her, seem to see blood running down every page? It has been said, that in the Old Testament, the New Testament lies hid, and in the New, the Old lies open. In the Old Testament we have type, and figure, and shadow. This was God's method of teaching man, and all was pointing to the cross. Man learnt after he had fallen, that the only way of approach to God was by a mediator, and who could thus mediate but One Who was Himself divine?

"Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away its stain."

All that these could do was to point to the cross. When man fell he cut himself off from God, and thus forfeited that relationship with his Maker which enabled him to commune with Him. By sin came death, and as a consequence, sorrow in all its varied forms.

Hence it follows that man, if left to himself, could never have found his way back to God;

and yet this is what he has been trying to do since the fall. Cain made the first attempt, but it was a sad failure. He had not learnt God's way of salvation as had Abel his brother, and he presumed to approach God in his own way. In his sacrifice, fair as it may have appeared, there was no acknowledgement of a Mediator.

God has made it unmistakeably clear in His word, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. My old friend had learnt this; hence when she read her Bible, she seemed to see as it were blood running down every page. The story of the grace of God in the gift of His beloved Son is a very sweet one. None but God Himself could have devised such a plan of salvation as He has revealed in His word. Sin, which had come in and marred God's fair creation, had to be righteously dealt with ere man could be forgiven.

"Nature with open volume stands
 To spread her Maker's praise abroad;
 And every motion of His hands
 Shows something worthy of a God,
 But in the grace that rescued man
 His brightest form of glory shines;
 Here on the cross 'tis fairest drawn
 In precious blood and crimson lines."



HOLY liberty! but liberty *in* service, not *from* service. Not liberty to choose and refuse, but holy liberty *in obedience*.

FORGIVENESS PREACHED.ACTS XIII. 38.

How dull is the natural ear to scripture! How the eye glides over the words of life! How little it is known, even to such as read the Bible day by day, that "through this Man is preached unto you (to any and all indeed) the forgiveness of sins"! It is proclaimed of God that man may receive and enjoy it by faith.

Many a believer to this day regards forgiveness as a promise, and a promise so beset with holy conditions as to be rare and difficult of attainment. Therefore some often go for years, if not a lifetime, looking up to God with grief over their sins, and calling on the name of the Lord to intercede for them. Such souls in no way expect the present answer of assured peace. Their "mixed condition" is the excuse for not receiving it. They feel themselves altogether unworthy of such grace. Conscious of continual failure, they draw as their inference from it, that it is presumptuous to believe their sins forgiven, save (as they hope) when about to die, no longer exposed to further temptation.

But all this hesitation is their own thought, and

sad unbelief of the gospel. It dishonours alike the grace of God, the work of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit. For "by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God."¹ Again, "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,"² from every sin if from any. "The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."³ These texts are cited, and much more to the same effect might be added. Is there not already ample proof that you who believe that Jesus is the Son of God are now called to believe also that your sins are forgiven ? Why do you then doubt God's love, Who sent His Son to meet your ruin ? Is it not grievous sin to question His word ? If you plead that, being so great a sinner, you fear to take His assurance to yourself, let me reply in His name that, because you were "lost," He sent so great a Saviour. Not a single scripture sanctions a doubt. Forgiveness is not earned or won, but "preached." Every word of His encourages you to believe.

If you have been a great sinner, Christ is a greater Saviour. Only believe on Him. This will soon give you to know that you are far more guilty than you have as yet realised. How blessed, and how humbling, to learn our depths of evil in His dying for us ! This is what we find out when

¹ Eph. ii. 8.² 1 John i. 7.³ Heb. x. 15—17.

faith receives God's message, that "through this Man is preached unto us the forgiveness of sins." It is in virtue of Christ. Limit it has none attached to it, as it must have if it depended on you, me, or any other. It has all the worth and all the infinitude which He Who is a Divine Person, yet a man, can impart. God was glorified in Him, the propitiation for sins ; so is He also in sending out the glad tidings of forgiveness to every one that believes. You honour both the Father and the Son by receiving the forgiveness of sins through the Saviour. God gave and sent Christ for this end.

"Hear and thy soul shall live." Beware of doing despite to the Spirit of grace by refusing the message of mercy.



JUMBO'S CONVERSION.

ON one Lord's Day evening, we were listening to the testimony of dear Captain A—— (now with the Lord), from the Gospel by John¹—the three "musts"—

Ye *must* be born again ;
 So *must* the Son of man be lifted up ;
 He *must* increase.

¹ JOHN iii. 7, 14, 30.

In the course of the address, the captain told us the way in which the Lord saved him, and how he tried for two years previously to reform his life; he even left the army, thinking that he could not serve God acceptably in such a position, and thinking also, that by leading a good life, he would meet the requirements of a holy and sin-hating God. His eyes, however, were then opened to see that it was *the blood of Jesus*, and that only, which could make him fit for the presence of God.

This testimony produced a marked impression on the hearts of our shipmates, and many, when personally spoken to by our dear brother, made promises to come to Jesus. We committed them to our Father's mercy, and proceeded to another service. Shortly after, when enjoying the testimonies of our brethren in Christ, we were alarmed by three of our shipmates walking into the room in a frightened manner.

At first we thought the Holy Spirit had so convinced them of their sinfulness, that with breathless haste they had come to make confession of their sins—especially as one of them had been spoken to on board; but such was not the case. They were sent to inform us that the ship had been ordered to sea, and that we were to come on board at once.

Never shall we forget the face of the one who

came to deliver the message. If ever a sin-sick soul could be discovered by human eye, it was discovered in the face of that man. His life must have been a burden to him, for the weight of a thousand ills seem to have been resting upon his shoulders; and he would not, indeed he persistently refused, to have them removed.

Duty's call, however, had to be obeyed; but our unsaved shipmates, who came to warn us of the ship's sailing, were themselves warned of the judgement that awaits those who reject the Lord Jesus Christ, before they got outside the room.

It is well written that

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

For on the ship's return from Casablanca, after another service on board, these three men, with another, were found at the same place, listening to the gospel of God!

Our hearts leaped for joy, being perhaps over-anxious for their conversion; but although they were earnestly entreated to accept Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour, only one made any promise.

We were, I think, a little disappointed, which was of course unwise; so that we had to learn, ah! many a time, the lesson so lovingly taught the Lord's disciples, "Ye have need of patience."

However, the next night saw two or three there again, and while hymns were being sung after the

address, our friends appeared to be anything but happy. They looked particularly miserable; and, praise the Lord, with joy we relate that the following night, one of them, the biggest man in the ship (altering the words of the hymn),

“Came to Jesus as he was,
Weary, and worn and sad;
And found *in Him* a resting-place,
And *He* had made him glad!”

The whole ship was affected when “Jumbo” (as the sailors called him) was converted, as there were none so loud as he against Christ, His word, and God’s children.

His testimony, subsequently, proved that he had been our greatest enemy all the time; yet how wonderfully the Lord showed him his sinfulness, had mercy on him, and saved him. How full of praise and thankfulness to God he was for bringing him to Himself, and in his own words, that He had saved a wretch like him!

How is it with you, my reader? Are *you* a believer? Are *you* a Christian? If not saved, *why not?*



EVEN spiritual occupation can hide a man from himself.

WE are often referred to antiquity in these our days, and no child of God that loves his Bible can object to this; we only find fault that they do not go back far enough.

IS THE WORLD IMPROVING?

It is a common thought that things in this world are improving, that people are more enlightened and that there is a state of general progress. An intelligent man expressed himself the other day in the opinion that "every man ought to leave the world better than he found it."

But is this really the case? The only Man Who had power to bring about a better state of things here below left the world in a far more guilty condition than when He came; for it had added to its guilt and crime that crowning sin, the murder of Himself, the Son of God.

There are two great facts to which Satan always seeks to keep man's eyes closed: they are (1) his utterly guilty and lost condition, and (2) that God has but *one* remedy to meet his desperate case.

The fact is, that when Adam disobeyed and fell, the whole human race was involved in that fall. Man became a *fallen ruined* creature, and nothing could meet his need but a *Saviour* of God's own providing. This God's word teaches from the very beginning. But man is so slow to learn this lesson, and God in His great patience and long-suffering has allowed him to make trial under various tests, but in every case man proved a failure,

as He so well knew he would. But in due time God sent His own Son into the world: Him they slew and hanged on a tree. The world was fully represented at that cross, Jew and Gentile sharing in the crime.

Need we be surprised to hear God speaking out plainly as to man's condition and how he stands before Him? It has been well "proved" that "both Jews and Gentiles" are "*all under sin*"—"all are gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable." "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God*"—"all the world . . . become guilty before him."¹ This is God's judgement of the whole human race.

But He in His great love has provided *one* remedy to meet man in this deep ruin. He offers a free pardon and the gift of eternal life, to all who truly acknowledge their helplessness and guilt, and who believe in His Son during this day of His grace. For be it known that He Who was crucified upon Calvary's cross is risen from the dead, and seated now on His Father's throne in glory, waiting till He shall come forth to judge this guilty world. That day is fixed, and He the Judge is ordained. The world, instead of getting better, is hurrying on to that judgement.

There is but *one* escape. The only hope set before the sinner is Christ; the sure Refuge for

1 Romans iii. 9—19.

all who flee to Him. Those who neglect this "great salvation" can by no means escape the coming judgement.

Let none be flattered and deceived by ideas of an improved state of things in this world (not in God's sight); but let them rather acknowledge the truth as to their guilt and irreparable ruin, and flee at once by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, for shelter, pardon and eternal life.

It is true that where God's word is acknowledged and christian influences have a place, things are indeed better; but this in no way touches the fact that man, as such, is a total wreck, and the world is filling up its measure of iniquity in readiness for the judgement. Reader, "Escape for thy life."



"SAVED FOR NOTHING."

"**Y**OU say, Mrs. A——, that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"Yes, sir; I believe every word that is said about Him in the Old and New Testaments."

"But I rather think you do not believe all that is there said about Christ."

"And why do you think so, sir?" Why have such a suspicion?"

"Because if you truly believe in Jesus Christ, and in 'every word that is said about Him in the

scriptures,' the result would be salvation, pardon, and peace with God; but it is quite the contrary of this with you. You are afraid of God; and this is evidence that you are not looking at 'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' You are mourning, repenting, and bitterly lamenting sin, and earnestly crying for mercy, and yet, you say, you 'have no sense of being heard, and that your prayers, like stones thrown into the air, only fall back upon you with terror.' Are you not trying to make yourself fit to meet God by your own repentance, instead of throwing yourself, just as you are, upon Christ? And this is the reason why conscience upbraids you; for, indeed, you are only increasing your guilt instead of taking it away. You are not truly believing and trusting in Jesus."

"Oh, sir, I tell you again, that I firmly believe in Christ, the Son of God, and that no poor sinner can be saved without Him, and I am striving and praying daily and hourly that He may save me.

"Well, Mrs. A——, you are praying and striving daily and hourly that He may save you; but are you willing to be saved without your praying and striving? Are you willing to be saved on His own terms, simply by faith in His atoning blood? You must know that it is 'by grace ye are saved, through faith.' You must believe and be saved; and then pray and strive because you are saved."

"But, oh, how can such a wicked wretch as I am be saved without fervent prayer, and striving to repent before God?"

"Your fervent prayers and repentance will never be accepted until you first accept Christ, as an all-sufficient Saviour. Now, Mrs. A——, I want you to think most seriously on what you have just said. You said you believed truly in Jesus Christ, and in every word that is said about Him in the Old and New Testaments. Then you must believe that Jesus Christ can 'save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him,'—even the chief of sinners, and that faith in His blood saves the soul."

"Yes, I do."

"And you believe in the value and efficacy of this Saviour's blood in putting away sin?"

"Certainly, I do."

"Then you believe it can save you?"

Here was a pause; at last the answer came, slowly.

"Yes, I do."

"Then your faith has saved you; has it not?"

Another long pause. Finally, she put the inquiry:

"And is that salvation in a Saviour's blood?"

"Certainly it is, if you truly believe, as you say."

And here came another most solemn pause. At last, lifting her eyes and hands towards heaven,

her bosom heaving with deep emotion, and her eyes filled with tears, she exclaimed :

“Oh! now I see it! Now I see it! Blessed be God, now I see that I can be saved for nothing! I believed, but never before did I see the completeness of that satisfaction, which Christ has made for my sin; that I have nothing to do for my salvation, but to believe! Oh! sir, let me say to you, that this moment, a burden has rolled from my soul. Blessed Jesus! and is this salvation in Thy blood? How blind I have been these many years, to imagine that, in order to be saved, I should have to pray so fervently, repent so bitterly, and keep myself so pure from sin. Now I see that simple faith in that atoning blood can save any sinner, and save fully and freely; that it can save me! Oh, I am saved—**SAVED FOR NOTHING!** Glory! glory to God for this!”



FRAGMENT.

How amazing the contrast between “I am the True Vine,” “I am the Living Bread,” “I am the Good Shepherd,” “Before Abraham was, I am,” of the Gospel, and “I am a worm, and no man” of the Psalm. Yet, as we well know, the 22nd Psalm applies to One only, in any adequate sense, even to Him, Who so absolutely asserts His majestic claims in the pages of St. John. We can only take

in a little of what the contrast conveys, but we know that it is because our Lord was, is, the great "I am," that He deigned to become "a worm and no man." On earth He was truly as an eloquent mediæval writer puts it, "the holiest among the mighty, and the mightiest among the holy." But there, and as such He abode alone. So He stooped to an ignominious death "for us even, and for our salvation."

DIVINE CERTAINTY.

SEVEN THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

- 1.—"We know that the Son of God is come."
(1 John v. 20).
- 2.—"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." (1 John v. 18).
- 3.—"We know we are of God." (1 John v. 19).
- 4.—"We know we have passed from death unto life." (1 John iii. 14).
- 5.—"We know we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments." (1 John v. 2).
- 6.—"We know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." (1 John iv. 13).
- 7.—"We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2).

EXTRACTS.

“BUT, O my God, how much cause have I for shame, that I impart so little of the glorious light of Thy truth to those around me. Perhaps some poor trembling sinner ‘has been glad when he saw me,’ hoping to hear something of the Saviour from my lips, and has found me straightened and cold and dumb. Oh! that I may be so ‘filled with the Spirit,’ so experienced in Thy heavenly ways, that I may invite ‘all that fear Thee to come,’ that I may ‘tell them what Thou hast done for my soul;’ so that ‘when men are cast down, they may say, There is lifting up.’”

HAPPINESS is the gift of God to those who truly believe the gospel, walk with God, and hold communion with Him. The blood of Christ cleanseth their souls from all sin. They are accepted in the Beloved; adopted to be the sons of God; have His Spirit dwelling in them to sanctify and comfort them; have a consolatory persuasion that all things shall work together for their good. They look back with humble gratitude, forward with joyful hope; and, inwardly supported by grace, are enabled to resign themselves to the present trial, and leave the unseen to-morrow to their God.

You say, “If a man so spend his time in his business, as to be doing his duty both to God and man,

this will as a moral duty, supply the place of continual prayer." First let me ask, where did a man of your natural sagacity pick up the strange notion of the performance of one duty compensating for the neglect of another? Not from the scriptures: for, if any keep the whole law and offend in one point, he is guilty of all. Not from the measures of human government: for, if you break one law, they do not inquire whether you have broken others or kept them, but condemn the transgressor of one. Not from your dealings with your neighbours: you would think him a poor customer, who should suppose that by paying for one article he compensated for defrauding you of another. Not from reason: for we can pay God no more than His due, when we do all that He commands. Even then we are but unprofitable servants.

"MAMMA, JESUS IS DEAD."

A FRIEND of mine used to have a class on Sunday afternoons at Chinkiang, a city which is built on the southern shore of the great Chinese river, Yang-tze, close to the spot where it is joined by the Grand Canal.

This little class was not for Chinese children (though there were schools for them too), but for the little foreign children, that is to say, English,

Americans, and others. For there are a good many white children living with their parents in China, and they need the gospel as well as the little black-eyed, dark-skinned, Chinese bairns.

And so do *you*, dear children, who have never been in China at all; for though you have never bowed down to idols of wood and stone, and though you live in what is called a christian country, you are just as much sinners as the Chinese children, indeed, more so. For think what advantages *you* have compared with *them*!

I knew some of the children belonging to this little class, for I sometimes took it for my friend, Mrs. W——, when she was away from home. However, I am not going to tell you about anything that was said and done when I was there, but about something that happened in connection with it after I had gone away to live in a city where there were no Europeans, and where we saw none but Chinese faces around us every day.

One afternoon, when class was over, and the children had dispersed, the wee ones no doubt being taken home by their “amaks” (or Chinese nurses), a tiny boy rushed into his mother’s room, crying in the greatest distress, “*Mamma, Jesus is dead!*” and it was some time before he could be comforted.

The teacher had that day been telling them about the death of the Lord Jesus; no doubt she:

had often spoken of it before, but the little fellow had not taken it in. He knew that Jesus was the kind and loving Friend of little children, and all at once he heard that He was dead, and the poor child's heart was nearly broken at the thought. Never more could he bring his little requests to Him, confidently expecting an answer, never more could he tell Him of His childish troubles and joys—no, *Jesus was dead*, and could never do anything more for him. So the poor little fellow thought, and if his thought had been a right one, there was reason enough for his sorrow.

But we know, thank God, that, though the blessed Saviour died, He rose again, and His own words are, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."¹

We will hope that the little boy at Chinkiang knows by this time that Jesus is *not* dead. No, He is a *living* Saviour. He died on the cross to blot out your sins, dear children: have you confessed your sinfulness to God, and trusted in His blessed Son as His sent Saviour? If so, then you can have the joy of knowing that He not only died, but rose again for you, and that He lives to keep and bless you while you remain on earth, and to take you by-and-by to His happy home in glory.

The Lord Jesus is a real, living, loving Saviour for every child who simply believes on Him.

¹ Rev. i. 18.

SEARCHING FOR THE MESSIAH.

DANIEL IX. 26.

I BECAME acquainted with a very intelligent Jew in the city of Montreal. His father, I am informed, was a wealthy banker in Germany. I heard this Jew relate his christian experience in a fellowship meeting, the substance of which, in his broken English, was this:—"The Spirit of de Lord take hold of my heart in my fader's house in Germany. He make me feel so bad, I could not eat my food or take my rest.

"My fader said to me: 'Why you no be happy? You mope round, just as miserable as can be. Plenty of money, why you no be happy?'

"I say: 'Fader, I find no place for my soul. De money won't buy a place for my soul. I lay down and die some day, and den what good de money to me, and where go my poor soul?'

"By-and-by I reads in a paper about one Dr. F., a Jewish Rabbi, in Canada, dat find Messiah. I says to myself; I go to find dat Rabbi dat find Messiah. When I come to Canada, I ask de first thing: 'Where is Dr. F.?' and dey tell me dat he live in de city of Hamilton. When I go to the city of Hamilton, he not at home. I no find him for two weeks. Then one man shew him me at a

public meeting, and I look at him till de meeting was out; and as he came, I say to him: 'You Dr. F.?'

"'Yes.'

"'You Jewish Rabbi?'

"'Yes.'

"'You find Messiah?'

"'Yes.'

"'Will you give me two lessons, and I pay you?'

"Dr. F. say: 'Come to my house, and I give you many lessons, and not charge you anything.'

"But I say: 'Oh, no, Dr. F.;' and he talk to me, and talk to me, and talk to me, but I no find Messiah.

"Den I go to de Catholic Church, and talk to de priest to find Messiah.

"De priest he tell me about de baptism and de holy water; and I say: 'Go away with your water; I want to find a place for my soul!'

"Den I go back to Dr. F., and he say: 'You Hebrew scholar? Now take your Hebrew Bible, and read what the ancient prophets say about de Messiah. Take your pen and write down de exact description dey give of Him, especially the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah: and when you get de prophetic directions how to find Messiah, you take your Greek Testament, and search, and you will find, as face answereth face in a glass, so de New Testament answers to de Old, and dat

everything de old prophets say about Messiah was fulfilled exactly in de person of Jesus of Nazareth. When your judgement be convinced, den bow down on your knees and pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and you find Messiah in your heart. He save you from all your sins.' So I follow de instructions that Dr. F. he did give me; and my judgement he got convinced, and I bow on my knees, and I cry: 'O Got of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Got of my faders; I pray to Dee in de name of Dy dear suffering Son, Jesus Christ; I be convinced from Dy holy books of de Old and New Testaments dat He be Messiah which Dow hast sent into de world to save sinners. Dow knows what a great sinner I am; but Jesus comes to save de chief of sinners. I trust my soul to Him; I believe He can save me. O Got, have mercy on my poor soul, and save me from my sins for Jesus's sake. I believe all Dow has say about Jesus, and I take Him as my Saviour.' While I pray, I feel more and more bad, and I tot my poor soul he must go to hell. Den I say, if Jesus Christ bore my sins in His own body, and redeemed my soul with His own blood, my soul he no need to go to hell. Den I give my soul to Jesus; I believe in Jesus, and just as quick as lightning, I finds Messiah. He save me from my sins. He fill my soul wid unspeakable joy. My soul he find a home in Jesus. He abide in Jesus now for tree

years, and I know Him more and more, and love Him with all my heart."

He proceeded to tell of some remarkable answers to prayer he had experienced, and such was the artless simplicity of his story, and the light and unction of the Holy Spirit shining through his broken utterances, that when he sat down, there were but few dry eyes in that large assembly.



LIFE AND PROPITIATION.

I JOHN IV. 9, 10.



THESE are the two deepest wants of the sinner. Grace, and grace alone, supplies them both in the Lord Jesus. Nor is there any other name but His, to which God points the needy and guilty soul. To Him the Holy Spirit bears this divine witness. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. For men are evil and erring, yet we believe them. How much more should we believe God, Who knows all things and is good, in that which concerns Him and ourselves, both for time and eternity?

They are also the manifestation of God's love, prone as man is to disbelieve it to his own unutterable loss. For who would be so mad as to slight His love, shewn in such infinite pity to our

evil and lost estate, if he heeded God's plain declaration of it? These are His words, "In this was manifested the love of God in our case, that God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. In this is the love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [as] propitiation for our sins."¹

For if we believe the Son of God, He testified² that we were dead morally, dead before God; and so said His apostle³—dead in sins. How deplorable such a death! How hopeless, save to Him, Who is the true God, and the life eternal!⁴ But for this express reason God has sent His only-begotten Son. None less could suffice. It was no assumption on His part to claim equality with God; but He emptied Himself to become man, a bondman; and He humbled Himself, becoming obedient as far as death, even death of the cross. He thus perfectly met God's glory and man's ruin; He only, and He thus: for a Saviour to the uttermost He came to be.

Hence, as He said, His voice sounds (in the glad tidings) to the guilty, and, Jews or Gentiles, alike alienated from the life of God.⁵ "The hour . . . now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those that hear shall live."⁶

¹ 1 John iv. 9, 10.

² John v. 25.

³ Eph. ii. 1, 5.

⁴ 1 John v. 20.

⁵ Eph. iv. 18.

⁶ John v. 25.

How wondrous the boon! How gracious the terms! The quickening power is in Him. He speaks the best news to man. To hear Him is to receive life, and, as He said just before (ver. 24), life eternal. Nor, to avail, could it be otherwise; for they had natural life, and needed nothing less than life eternal. "In this was manifested the love of God in respect of us, that God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." He gives to the believer life eternal; and the believer has it now, as now he needs it; for by this life only can one live to God, as did Christ. So the apostle Paul says, "Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."¹ The last Adam is a life-giving Spirit, and gives no life now but His own, as risen from the dead. This may not suit theorists or unbelievers; but it is the truth of God, and the manifestation of His love; and any that obscure, lower, or deny it, must answer for their evil teaching. They fight against God as well as man, and can be set on by none but the enemy of both.

But to have life, even life eternal, with one's sins unpurged, is to ignore the gospel, and the love that made it good and sent it to us. We ought indeed to have loved God, but nothing was

¹ Gal. ii. 20.

farther from us ; we were dead to Him. The law, no doubt, claimed it as the duty of man under His law ; but the law never got from him what was due, and could therefore be only a ministration of condemnation. And to that dire need God manifested His love in this deep way. If there was no love to Him, "in this is the love ; not that *we* loved God, but that *he* loved us, and sent his Son as propitiation for our sins."

Yes, *there* is the necessary complement of His love. It was much that, by the life eternal His Son gave us, we who believe live to God, as that life does and no other life could. But how distressing to find through that life the evil of our nature, the old life at work, the sin that dwells within us, to say nothing of being drawn into acts of sin when truly born of God ! His love has provided against this painful anomaly, and gives us to know by faith, that Christ as truly died for sins to blot them out for ever, as to give us that life eternal by which we love Him and what He loves, and we abhor our guilty selves and our sins and all evil everywhere else.

How blessed that the love of God was manifested in Christ thus richly ! And what a joy that the gospel of God goes forth in this twofold way of mercy to every creature under heaven ! Truly grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. It came that we who had no spiritual life might live

through Christ, and that He might die for us as propitiation for our sins. His life is essential as a present thing, that we might live to God, not only with all His affections as to God and man, as to good and evil; but also with a purged conscience and a true heart as we are forgiven all trespasses. For this is He that came through water and blood, Jesus the Christ, not by the water only, but by the water and the blood; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth.¹ He leads and strengthens the new life.

NAAMAN THE LEPER DIPPED SEVEN TIMES IN JORDAN.

WHAT does earthly greatness afford after all? A man may be ever so popular; he may prosper in business to his utmost cravings; or he may climb the highest pinnacle of political honour, or military greatness. Naaman was all this: but he was a leper. And the natural man, no matter what his position in this world, is a sinner. Ah, this spoils all; it makes every cup of this world bitter.

Leprosy was incurable. Still it spread, until the whole person was filthy, bloated, pimpled and

I I John v. 6.

scabbed—wretched picture of man's ruined, utterly ruined, lost condition, through sin. And, what is still worse, like the leper he finds every effort in vain to cure himself. The fearful poison spreads.

Oh, how loathsome is sin! My reader may have long hoped to get better, but have you not rather got worse? Not a physician in Syria could cure the leper. Not a remedy on earth is found for sin. Search all nations, man has found no cure for sin. The whole world is one great leper-house.

God hath chosen the weak things of the world. A little captive maid is God's messenger to this mighty Syrian. She says, "Would God my lord was with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would cure him of his leprosy." And I can say to my reader, "Would God thou wert at the feet of Jesus, He would cleanse thee from thy sins." The king of Israel had no such faith as this little maid: he only thought the Syrians sought a quarrel. He, thinking only of himself, said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive?"

"And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard," he sent for the leper to come to him. So Naaman came. Such gifts, such horses and chariots! And he stood at the door. But Elisha received none of his gifts. The salvation of God is not to be sold. The prophet sent a messenger unto him, saying, "Go, wash in Jordan seven times,

and thy flesh shall come to thee and thou shalt be clean."

He does not even come out to him; he sends a messenger. It must be by faith; not by sight, or by sign. God gives His bare word. He that believeth is saved.

Now Jordan was the type or figure of death. The ark had stood there, whilst all Israel passed over, dry-shod, into the land of Canaan. Most striking illustration of Jesus taking our place in the river of death. There was no cure for this great leper, but to be seven times dipped in the river of death. There is no means in the universe by which a sinner can be cleansed, but by the death of Jesus. His blood alone cleanseth from all sin.

This made the leper uncommonly, or rather commonly, angry: for it is the anger of the human heart against God's mode of cleansing from sin. Surely, the leper thought, there would have been some great thing done to him. And so with the sinner; surely, he thinks, God must do some great thing to me, or in me, by which I shall be saved. "Burial in Jordan; why this is contemptible! Besides, are not the rivers of my own country, 'Abana and Pharpar, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?'" And Naaman went away in a rage. So now, one poor leprous sinner will say, Are not the doctrines

of my own church better than this salvation through the death of Christ alone? My church tells me to fast; to keep the vows of my orders; in fact, to keep all the orders of my church. Is it not far better to wash in these rivers of my own religion, than to simply believe God about the death of Christ?

Well, try hard; wash, wash, wash: but find me one, out of all the millions who wash in man's own religious rivers, that is clean from sin. Find me one who knows even his sins forgiven by all his fasting, praying and order-keeping. No, there is not one who washes in the old man's rivers, who either does, or even can know with certainty, that he is saved.

Naaman's servants say, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" All bear witness what man will do (if doing would do it) to get clean from sin. "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

How beautifully, to be sure, this sets forth death and resurrection, the two great lessons of God! The death of Christ is the end of sin, the resurrection of Christ, the beginning of an entirely

new existence. The old leper goes down into death—burial with Christ. The new man comes out in all the freshness of a new-born child. Oh, how spotlessly clean is that new creation!

“And he was clean.” This is God’s only way of cleansing. “In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unrep~~ro~~vable in his sight.” Jesus went down into death. Every believer is dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him, perfect in Him.

Oh, to know the power of resurrection; being made conformable to His death! To leave poor old leprous self in Jordan! Ah, the old leper takes some dipping. Often, when we think we have learned the death of self on the cross, self still needs some dipping. Ah, you are occupied with the old leper still; remembering his sorry scabs and running sores. Oh, down with the leper, down, down, to Jordan! Down, down in death, is the only fit place for self. For its righteousness and its wickedness, the grave of Christ is the only place. Look away from the old leper, to the risen Christ. If Adam were full of the poison of sin, God hath made the risen Christ to be our wisdom, sanctification, righteousness, and redemption.

There is no leprosy in the risen Christ. And “as He is, so are we in this world.”¹ “For ever

¹ 1 John iv. 17.

perfected." "Clean every whit." Oh, my reader, hast thou learnt this wondrous lesson? Hast thou gone down into death? Art thou risen with Christ? Then set thine affection on things above. Every old spot of leprous sin is gone. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away, all things are become new, and all things of God."

THE TRAMP SAVED.

ABOUT ten years ago, a devoted sister (now with the Lord) was visiting some of the cottages in the lowest part of the town, occupied mostly by the depraved. In one of these she called to see a sick man who had been tramping the country for years, but who, on account of a serious illness, could do so no longer.

On going in, she found a second occupant sharing the pitiful meal in progress, and was told he was also a tramp, and being in utter destitution he had asked for shelter, until he could find some means of getting a few shillings together to start afresh.

After some conversation, during which she discovered that the new comer must have been in a very different position in his early life, she invited him to come to the preaching of the

gospel in a little room close by. Much to her joy he was there the next Sunday evening. His whole bearing, though dressed in the unmistakable garb of a tramp, and the ease with which he found passages of scripture and hymns, confirmed her in her first opinion of him.

Faithfully, from week to week, she visited the cottage, and read and prayed with the two men, pointing them to Christ for salvation ; and by-and-by, she had the joy of seeing one of them come regularly to the meetings, and, after a while, confess that he had accepted Christ as his Saviour.

Then came the testing time : for surely if he professed to be the Lord's, he could not continue the life of a tramp. His heart realised this, and though sixty years of age, worn out with the life of privation he had led for years, and unused to manual labour of any kind, he bravely set to work ; he started a wheelbarrow, and took to wheeling coke from the gas works of the neighbourhood where he lived.

Quiet, punctual, honest and civil, he won the respect and confidence of all. He proved a man of few words, but he lived Christ, and by his fruits he was known as a Christian.

For several years this living testimony to Christ was continued, and then the end came. He was ill for about a fortnight, and then he was laid to rest in the pretty little churchyard of ———.

"He came among us," as one said when speaking at his grave, "he came among us a lonely stranger, but he departs as a brother in Christ."

Oh, how wonderful God's dealings are. This man had been well and religiously brought up, had held a most respectable position, and had all that the world seeks for; but, like the prodigal, he wasted his substance in riotous living, and was in absolute want, before his eyes were opened to see the loving Saviour with arms outstretched to receive him, and his ears unstopped to hear His voice, saying, "Come."

Is anything too hard for the Lord? Surely not. His word can pierce the soul like a two-edged sword, and cause the despised and degraded ones to bring glory to His name.



THE POWER OF CHRIST'S WORD.

MARK I. 21—27.



THIS is the first of the miracles recorded in the second Gospel, a Gospel devoted to the Lord's service as Son of God among men.

"And they go into Capernaum, and straightway, on the sabbath, he entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as one having

authority, and not as the scribes. And there was, in their synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Ha! what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, having convulsed him and cried with a loud voice, came out of him. And all were amazed, so that they questioned together among themselves, saying, What is this? what [is] this new doctrine? because with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”¹

We are told elsewhere,² “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” This is a far more general statement of the truth, and concerns you deeply, my reader. For though not possessed by an unclean spirit like the man in the synagogue, are you not walking according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience?³ Such are all mankind: not the Gentiles only who worshipped demons, but the Jews who owned the written word of the true God. All alike were by nature sons of wrath, one as truly as the other. Outward privilege did not

¹ Mark i. 21—27. ² 1 John iii. 8. ³ Eph. ii. 2.

exempt from the awful path of ruin under Satan's power.

Look at your ways, as they are in the light of God's word. Have you not walked in known sin day by day? Have you, even this day, set out and gone on with doing God's will as a principle? Do you not know that it has ~~never~~ been so with you for an hour, nay, for a moment? Is not this living in habitual and conscious rebellion against God? Yet is He the giver of every mercy in the face of ingratitude and disobedience. Nor can you shake off the fact that you are part of the world, which, at Satan's instigation, rejected the Lord Jesus, hated Him, and crucified Him. You, like others, inherit that guilt, and can only get rid of it by receiving Him. If you truly repent and believe, you would tell Him (for He is the Judge of quick and dead, and hears all you say) of your inexcusable evil, and confess Him as the Saviour sent to save sinners.

The power of Christ's word is here vividly proved. Men were astonished at His teaching in the synagogue, where they used to hear the tradition of the Pharisees, and the arguing of the scribes. His word was with authority: God was in it and with it. The demoniac felt it deeply, and cried aloud, "What have *we* to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy *us*? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

Jesus rebuked the demon, saying, Be silent, and come out of him ;” and the unclean spirit, with evidence of his malice, and reluctant but enforced subjection, obeyed. The lowliest of men, the righteous Servant of God, is the Deliverer from the enemy’s power, and this through His word, to the amazement of all.

And you, who have read and heard these words of His, are you so blinded by Satan’s power and wiles, that you for whom the Saviour came, are more unbelieving than the demons? Bethink yourself how desperate and dangerous is your state before God. To you He sends the word of salvation. Despise it no more, submit to it, that you may be saved. Its efficacy depends on Jesus, God’s Son, and on the work of redemption He has wrought. God’s love and honour are alike and immediately concerned. Redemption in no way rests on the slightest worth of the redeemed (for in truth they have none Godward), but on the infinite worth of the Redeemer. It is of faith ; faith in His word, that it might be of grace. Thus is all boasting cut off, save in the God Who sent His Son to break Satan’s power, and save the lost.

Can any good news vie with the message of God’s salvation? Why then are you not earnest about a salvation now and for all eternity? The characteristic of the blessings of Christ is

that they are everlasting, and of heaven and for heaven, but proclaimed now to faith on earth. I beseech you, let not the word of Christ fall on hard and heedless ears. God is speaking to you in His Son; and what privilege for man greater, unless it be His commending His own love to us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us? God calls on you to believe Him, that you may be justified in virtue of Christ's blood, and saved through Him from wrath. If you make God a liar, by refusing His testimony, it must be to your loss and doom for ever. Your guilt is worse than a poor heathen's, and your lot must be far worse.



DEVOTION'S MOTTO.¹

1 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." *Phil. i. 21.*



YES, faithful witness of a loving Master.
 So sweetly tasting what His grace has done;
 Still pressing to the goal, with pace the faster,
 Like well-trained racers in the course who run.
 All needless weight away from thee now casting,
 Thy loins well girded and thine eager eyes
 Fixed on the mark to which thy feet are hasting,
 Where His own hand holds forth the victor's prize.

These words have thee sufficed,
 'Mid toil and pain,
 "For me to live is Christ,
 To die is gain."

In stripes and in imprisonment sustained,
 'Mid watchings, fastings, tumults, toils and tears ;
 By grace divine the victory thou hast gainèd,
 As poor, yet making many rich. 'Mid cares
 Which came upon thee daily, for the churches,
 Assaults and opposition on each hand ;
 His will to do, the aim of thy researches,
 While labouring night and day, by sea and land.

These words have thee sufficed,
 'Mid toil and pain,
 "For me to live is Christ.
 To die is gain."

O Lord, Who hast so graciously engagèd,
 That Thou unto hoar hairs wilt make Thy care
 Thy saints in service, be they young or agèd,
 Whose words are, "I have made and I will bear."
 Increase our faith, that we may more resemble
 Him who could say, "I the good fight have fought,
 Finished my course, and kept without dissemble
 The faith of Him Who me thus far has brought ;"

For whom these words sufficed,
 'Mid toil and pain ;
 "For me to live is Christ,
 To die is gain."

CONSCIENCE AND THE CROSS.

THE cross of Christ brings the Christian believer into the real possession of that heritage of blessing, which Old Testament prophets and saints could at best but look forward to, and greet from afar.

Of the many blessings Christ's death brings to us, not the least is the relief that it brings to the

consciences of believers. The conscience, being man's faculty of moral judgement, is a very important part of his spiritual nature, and exercises great influence in his experience. Its approval or disapproval of himself is that which contributes more than anything else to the happiness or misery of his inward life. Conscience has been called by some the voice of God in man; and by others, God's umpire in the soul. It can make the face of man turn deadly white, and anon blush crimson. A bad or a good conscience will make a coward of the sinner, or a hero of the saint.

The general tendency of the Jewish religion was to bring into activity the conscience of man, resulting in what is called a "conscience of sins"—a conscience enlightened as to the claims of God, and therefore, owing to man's fallen state, burdened with a sense of sin. Not only the moral, but the ceremonial law, even the very sacrifices which were offered, contributed to "the remembrance of sins." This of itself created a state of bondage, from which even a heathen man, his conscience being brutified, would be comparatively free.

Without the law man is in a certain sense alive, but under law his sinful nature revives, and conscience, true to its function, acts only to condemn.

It is deliverance from this condemnation that

the cross of Christ brings. The blood of Jesus purges this guilty conscience so perfectly, that there remains "no more conscience of sins." Reader, have you a conscience purged from every stain by the blood of Jesus?

The blood of Christ is efficacious not only for the complete removal of the conscience of sins, but also to purge the conscience from dead works.

When the claims of God and man are pressed home upon the human conscience, man resorts to various expedients to pacify it. Indeed the activities of men, in their attempts to relieve their own consciences in this unsatisfactory way, contribute a large part of the whole of Church history. From motives of fear, and with a view to merit, they have built churches, gone forth as missionaries, and been engaged in all kinds of religious enterprises. But in the light of the cross such efforts are fruitless. Our bad deeds are not to be atoned for by a corresponding, or even multitudinous, number of good ones. Nay, such efforts at self-justification before God are evil in themselves, and the extreme heinousness of such acts can only be purged from the conscience by the atoning blood of the Son of God. It is only after this cleansing that the conscience is fit to serve the living God. Before being cleansed, the motives are legal rather than Christian.

The conscience of Jewish worshippers was

imperfect, because imperfection was stamped upon all the sacrifices that they offered; but it is nothing less than perfection that the blood of Christ brings to the conscience of the Christian. The atoning work of Christ does for the conscience of the believer, that which, even in a divine way, could not be improved upon. Nothing can be added to the perfection of Christ's work. When He said "It is finished," He included in this wonderful expression, the divinely perfect relief which His propitiation brings to the sinner's conscience.

It must not be understood, by perfection here, that perfection of moral character which the *Christian will finally enjoy*. All the holy and heavenly graces, in all their variety, will ultimately be perfectly produced in us; for we are predestinated to be conformed, morally and bodily, to the image of God's Son. The mistake is, that men often aim after these things before they have settled peace. God does not begin with the character, He begins with the conscience; and in the enjoyment of the peace which Christ has made by the blood of His cross, the babe in Christ grows to christian manhood and perfection. Nothing but this peace can enable the believer to bear calmly the great responsibilities of christian life and duty. But the believer in Christ, the instant he believes, is immediately made whiter

than the snow, for God's presence and worship, because of the divine efficacy of the blood of Christ.

This perfection abides. The conscience does not need purging by the blood of Christ a second time. For while on the one hand, what Christ has done in dying for the sinner He has done for ever, on the other, the new relationship into which the believer is brought can never be broken. As a matter of fact, the Christian in his walk, though true-hearted, is not perfect. He needs the washing of water by the word. But through the blood of Christ, he remains "clean every whit," and "needeth not save to wash his feet."

It is when one forgets that he has been purged from his old sins (not when he remembers this, and adores God for it) that he is said to be blind, and cannot see afar off; consequently, there is lacking that fruitfulness in his life, which is reasonably becoming in the redeemed.

It is not meant here that no godly Jew enjoyed a good conscience. There were ever individual souls among the people who did what was right in the sight of the Lord, as suited to the condition of things in which they then lived. What, however, was fitting for the conscience of the Jew will not answer for the Christian. The conscience of the Old Testament saint was good, because of his moral condition, and by *looking forward* to

Christ; not from being perfected for ever by the offering of the body of Jesus.

The Christian now enjoys the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Can anyone say that any of the patriarchs or prophets had this?

The cross of Christ is divinely adapted to the conscience of the believing man. The enlightened conscience, so quick to judge between right and wrong, and therefore to excuse or accuse its possessor, in view of the death of Christ enters on a new realm of judgement, and is supremely satisfied with the perfect adaptability of the death of Christ to the deepest need of man. In view of that death, it is now as ready to justify the believer, as it was before to condemn him. Can anyone assert that the conscience of man will ever be satisfied with anything else? Is not the cross of Christ the outcome of God's wisdom, to supply that need? Will not the conscience of those who reject it be against them for ever, on that account? Will not the stinging, eternal reproach of the rejecter's conscience be, not only that he sinned, but also that he rejected, or neglected, the remedy which God, in infinite love, provided for his sin?

It is this purged conscience which makes the difference in view of death, which is seen to exist between the Old Testament saints and those of New Testament times.

Christ died, that by death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. David and Hezekiah were all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. This was not so with the apostle Paul. It ought not to be so with any Christian. The apostle was "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." With the "conscience of sins" gone, even in view of eternity and the immediate presence of God, there is nothing left to fear. Oh, my reader, will you not own that Christ died for your sins, and that you are cleansed by His precious blood "once for all?"



A SHOT FROM THE GOSPEL GUN.



EVERYTHING was in preparation for the gospel one Lord's day evening, on board H. M. S. ———, and many invitations had been given to our shipmates to come and hear the good news.

After waiting a little time a goodly number assembled, and while the service was going on they still were coming, until the sides of the upper deck and gun ports were full.

The glad tidings then rang out from Hebrews ii.

3—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And many an earnest appeal was made to our dear shipmates to embrace God's great salvation, for there was no escape if they neglected it.

Again and again they were invited to come to Jesus, and personally spoken to as to the welfare of their souls. One, at least, that night came to the brethren on the forecastle, and inquired the way to heaven.

The following evening two of our unsaved shipmates came to the meeting, and, praise the Lord, went away rejoicing. Both had been listeners on board the previous evening, and one not in the meeting, but on the bridge—a long way off. Yet, so marvellous are God's ways, that the gospel gun fired a shot far enough to reach William Henry ———, and without saying a word to any, he willingly went up (in his own language) "to get saved."

In his testimony he stated that the Lord, many times, had been drawing him to Himself, and often when he had seen the brethren assembled on the forecastle, he came near and listened, and would have liked to join us, but the fear of what his messmates would say, and the misgivings of his own heart, kept him back. But, thank God, He made him bold enough at last unreservedly to surrender to the Lord Jesus.

THE SHEPHERD'S LAMB.

A SHEPHERD was mourning over the death of his favourite child; and in the passionate and rebellious feeling of his heart, he was bitterly complaining that what he loved most tenderly, and was, in itself, most lovely, had been taken from him.

Suddenly a stranger of grave and venerable appearance stood before him, and beckoned him forth into the field. It was night, and not a word was spoken till they arrived at the fold, when the stranger thus addressed him.

“When you select one of these lambs from the flock, you choose the best and most beautiful among them. Why should you murmur, because I, the good Shepherd of the sheep, have selected from those which you have nourished for me the one most fitted for my eternal fold?”

The mysterious stranger was seen no more, and the father's heart was comforted.



GOD never acts below Himself. Man always does, regenerate and unregenerate—God never does.

YOU will find Him an unfading flower in a fading world,

WE must not lower down divine truth to comfort even the weakest believer.

TO A SICK FRIEND, IN CONCERN AS TO HIS SOUL.

MY DEAR ———,

I am greatly concerned to hear that you are so extremely ill, and pray you to look straight in the face at your present state before God. For, why need you fear, if you look to Jesus? If our meetness for salvation depended in the least degree on any one thing in sinners good or suitable to God, we might have just grounds for alarm; and just grounds indeed we have so far as *we* are concerned.

But how does *God* feel? And how does He act? It is a word of cheering comfort which He sends to the sinner who trembles because of the iniquity that presses on his soul. On the one hand He looks for nothing of us; He tells me there is nothing in me but what is evil. On the other hand He sends me this message to answer all such questionings of conscience: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."¹ It is His love that saves us by Christ Who died and rose again, not our love by our dying to evil in us. Yet as believers we died to sin with Christ.

1 Rom. v. 8.

It is true that the known love of God draws out our hearts in response of affection toward Him: "We love him because he first loved us." Still at no time is it true that my love to Him gives me peace or makes me secure. Blessed be God! He has given us a stronger foundation than anything within us. So far from being the ground of peace with God, what tries the true Christian most is the meagreness of his love toward One so unselfishly, so divinely, gracious as has been the Lord to us. Moreover in our love there is too often an admixture; for the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. Ever while we are in the body is there the presence of a nature thoroughly and irreparably evil.

Now salvation, in order to be God's sure salvation for a sinner, must rest on a perfect basis. Where can we find it? Nowhere but in Him Who died and rose again to this very end; nowhere but in the cross of Christ.

For even what the blessed Spirit works in God's children is constantly mingled with our imperfections and worse. This therefore cannot give peace, and was not intended by God to give it. But the peace of which God now speaks in the gospel is a peace already made. Christ made it by the blood of His cross.¹ Hence is peace with God for him who believes. May you believe

¹ Col. 1. 20.

in the Lord Jesus; and it is yours! Oh how wondrous His grace and ways! Who but God could have conceived the glad news that salvation hangs on the fitness, worth, and all-overcoming victory, not of the saved, but of the Saviour? All, all is God's free gift to the soul that believes in Christ. Thenceforward he may and ought to reckon himself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

That renewed affections and godly conduct characterise the Christian is clear; but it is by life in Christ the soul is furnished thus. With those you have nothing to do till you have the root, the only root, of all that is good, even Christ. Then assured of the great love wherewith God loves you, His Spirit keeping Christ before you will produce fruit acceptable to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Praying that God may give you to receive His glad tidings simply and thankfully, like a hungry babe its best food,

I am ever, affectionately yours,

* * * * *

THE OFFER OF SALVATION.

ROMANS V. 8.

THE word of God addresses two classes of persons—the saints and sinners, saved and unsaved—and to one of these classes you belong

dear reader. In that word God speaks, telling of your lost helpless condition, but also pointing you to His unfailing remedy, salvation through Christ, and Him only. Hence we ask you, Are you saved? And if not, why not?

God has provided a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord, and Christ has died, the Just for the unjust. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."¹ What greater proof of God's love do you want than this? The fact that Christ was here upon earth tells you that God loves you. The awful sorrows, sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus witness with trumpet voice to you, telling you that God hates sin and loves you.

In the scripture we read the wondrous story of God's love. Therein God Himself is speaking to you, not only telling you what you are (a sinner by nature), and what you have done (a sinner by practice); but He also reveals Himself as dealing with and judging sin, and providing for the sinner a Saviour and a salvation, in and through Christ, His beloved Son.

Again and again He is pointed to as the sinner's substitute, as the One Who took the sinner's place, as the One Who died in the sinner's room and stead. He, blessed be His name, became our surety; He undertook all our liabilities; and as

¹ Rom. v. 8.

our surety He had to smart, and He did smart.¹ But by faith we can say, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."² As our surety He paid the debt, even to the uttermost farthing. Therefore God can be just, and the justifier of all who believe on Him. A perfect salvation, a complete clearance, full deliverance, with no condemnation: such is the blessed portion of all who look in faith to God's dear Son.

Dear reader, do you believe on Him? Have you received God's testimony of Him? Have you set to your seal that God is true? The blessed result to all who do so is salvation, forgiveness, everlasting life, and glory with Christ for all eternity.

But to those who refuse, reject, or neglect this salvation, the awful consequences are blackness and darkness for ever and ever, instead of joy and peace; eternal woe and anguish, instead of the company of Christ and the redeemed.

Dear reader, again we appeal to you, Be warned and flee from the wrath to come. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."³

He bare on the tree, the sentence for me,
And now, both the Surety and sinner are free;
Accepted I am in the once-offered Lamb:
It was God Who Himself had devised the plan.

1 Prov. xi. 15.

2 Is. liii. 5.

3 John iii. 18.

“BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.”

LUKE XXIV. 47.

How unfailing is grace! “Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Who but Jesus would have said, “beginning at Jerusalem?” There He was crucified, betrayed by one apostle, denied by another, forsaken of all, delivered (by the heathen judge who had acquitted Him) to the will of the Jews; for the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed. Before then, yet knowing all that was coming on Him, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, “If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things [which belong] to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.” Judgement must befall it, “because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”¹

Nevertheless when risen from the dead, in sending out the gospel, His word is “beginning at Jerusalem,” as from the cross He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”² “Because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every

¹ Luke xix. 41—44.² Luke xxiii. 34.

sabbath day, they fulfilled [them] in condemning [him]. And though they found no cause of death, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.”¹

Yes, Jesus bade His servants begin at Jerusalem. It is grace most fully and expressly. It was to be preached among all nations; but “beginning at Jerusalem.” All that heard the gospel must know that there the guilt was foulest, there the hatred was deadliest. Yet there the crucified and risen Lord said the gospel must begin. Such is divine grace. The most opposed, the most rancorous, must first hear repentance and remission of sins preached in His name. And the one most honoured in preaching there was the very apostle publicly known to have denied Him! Oh, what grace! If the Jews took and crucified the Messiah by hand of lawless men, God’s determinate counsel and foreknowledge turned it to atonement and salvation for everyone that called on His name. The evil was man’s; the good was wholly God’s. This is sovereign grace. And the same day that Peter thus preached there were added three thousand souls.

Now the glad tidings are preached to you of the Gentiles. This is as truly of the Lord as that the preaching should begin at Jerusalem. Be not ashamed of the gospel; do not doubt it. It is the power of God unto salvation. If you believe it

1 Acts xiii. 27, 28.

not, you are yet more guilty than the Jew ; for you have the Gospels, and the other inspired writings of Christianity as the Jew has not ; and the great apostle of Gentiles makes this the chief boon that unconverted but favoured men can possess !¹ Have you received the gospel to the salvation of your soul ?

To receive it on its evidence to reason is not to believe unto salvation. Compare John xx. 8, 9. Believe the gospel because of your sheer need ; believe God Himself Who speaks to you in it as a guilty sinner ; believe on Jesus His Son Who suffered once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God. It is a question of testimony ; and what can match God's testimony to His own grace ? Oh, sinner, believe Him as to His own Son, Who died, not for the good, but "for the ungodly." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Life is in the Son ; and he that hath the Son hath life. If you believe the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.



GOD never gave you grace that you might live upon it, but grace that you might live upon *Christ*.

I have found that my sin bearer is my sorrow bearer.

To bear an evil name for Christ has put many a man's religion to the test, yet it is a yoke that Jesus requires all His disciples to put on.

1 Rom. iii. 2.

“REST AWHILE.”

I REALLY was “so busy” that I felt I could not stay
To rest “beneath the shadow of His wings” from
day to day ;

It is true I knelt before Him, and besought the needed strength
To do the work before me, but ne’er stayed for any length
“’Neath the shadow of His wings.”

Was it not thus right to serve Him when the work was
there to do ?

And were I to pass it over, with the labourers so few,
It seemed as if ’twould suffer, and not be done at all,
And so I went and did it, and answered not His call
To “the shadow of His wings.”

So as I was “so busy” that I really could not stay,
He laid His hand upon me and took my strength away ;
“My work can do without you, but *I cannot*,” He said ;
So He gently drew me to Him, and cast around my bed
The sweet “shadow of His wings.”

Could it be my wish displeased Him ? Did He not bid me go
And take abroad the message, giving me the seed to sow ?
Ah, yes, of *that* I’m certain ; yet He called me to His side,
And bade me for a season to rest, and thus abide
“’Neath the shadow of His wings.”

AMEN AND ALLELUIA.

THESE two words, “Amen ; Alleluia,” may, we
conceive, supply a suitable theme for
meditation to all who rightly appreciate the joys
and the sorrows, the conflicts and the victories, of

their earthly sojourn. They may be used as an appropriate motto to be inscribed on our records of the past, and as a becoming song in anticipation of the future. Let us carefully examine the words, and see what valuable instruction they suggest to the pilgrim amid the lights and shadows of his homeward career.

But let us first remark the wonderful condensation of heavenly worship, the marvellous simplicity of perfected intelligence, which throws eternity of love and infinity of thought into the two words, "Amen; Alleluia."

It would not be heaven if either were wanting; it must be like heaven where both are felt. For what is "Amen?" It is perfect acquiescence in the will of God. And what is "Alleluia?" The cheerful giving back of all praise under every circumstance to the bosom of God. "Amen" is the open breast to receive; "Alleluia" is the full heart to return the ray. "Amen" is passive in entire submission; "Alleluia" soars upward on its strong wing of praise. The one is the expressive device, setting on the seal of life the words,—"Thy will be done;" words "oft mixed with tears" in this world, and wrung with strong anguish from the lips of the Son of God Himself. But in heaven, where no tears are left to be wiped away, "Alleluia" will encircle "Amen" with a halo of glory and joy.

“Alleluia ; Amen”—gem-like words, condensing and reflecting the light of heaven.

For what is heaven?

It is a state of perfect conformity to the mind of God ; and, yet more, it is a state that triumphs and rejoices in that conformity,—which says Amen because it conforms, and Alleluia because it exults in the conformity to Him.

It would not be enough to be perfectly moulded, though this would be peace ; nor enough to be ceaseless in praise, though this would be joy. Heaven will be a universe where all are so harmonised with God that they delight in all His counsels and in all His works. Their eyes range over creation, and their thoughts move throughout the works of God. But it is not with them as it is with the most deeply subdued or gladly rejoicing of God’s children on earth. They do not place their Amen *here* in order to raise their Alleluia *there*. With them praise submits, and submission sings. All is unquestioning adoring love. The creature lives in the mind of God, and God receives His own mind again in the creature. His will is done, and He is magnified. He is the fountain from which all glory emanates, and the focus to which all returns. Ceaselessly do the redeemed in glory rejoice in the heavenly song, “Amen ; Alleluia.”

Now, if heaven’s bliss lies embodied in these

two words,—if heaven be not so much the possession of this thing or that, as the beautiful harmony of soul which can receive all from God with satisfaction, and render all to God again with adoration,—then we see clearly the great principle of all duty and all happiness in this present life. We must strive to catch the tone of this key-note of a higher state, and move among the varying providences of our God with souls ever attuned to the song, “Amen ; Alleluia.”

But here we must not forget our present circumstances. We shall be reminded at every step of our way how far the highest earth is from the lowest heaven. We must not forget that here our “faith, and love, and every grace, fall far below God’s word.” It is “when that which is perfect is come,” that “that which is in part shall be done away.” Our own hearts will tell us whether we have yet learned to make submission praise. According to natural temperament, or according as the hand of God has led us, we find our easier work, some in the one, some in the other.

This child of God is often lifted up, and soars away on his mercies: but his ardent spirit ill brooks the hour of trial, and he finds it hard to sit still and endure. He knows how to fly, but he has not learned to stoop. His Alleluia is better than his Amen.

Another, of different disposition, has learned to

acquiesce without a murmur in the Father's will. His head bows meekly to every passing breath. He can look up from the depth and utter a full Amen, but his depressed spirit never rises into song. He hangs his harp upon the willows, and is far from the land of joy. He has learnt his Amen, but does not reach Alleluia.

God knows—He knows far better than we do, for He sees the heart—how difficult it is for a man who has been borne along joyfully on the full tide of bliss, glorifying God in his prosperity, when suddenly arrested by some dark reverse, to make his mind as in a moment re-act, and when smitten and bereft, to say with meek submission, "Amen;" "Thy will be done." God knows how hard it is to raise the eyes to heaven when they are weary with bitter weeping. And shall the wounded heart, that has learned with so much difficulty to give the Amen, be required further to say Alleluia? How slowly came the Amen, the submission,—oh, when shall come the praise? Must I *sing* in sorrow? Rare and difficult is the union; but it is heaven's breath, and for every gift in glory there is a corresponding grace in the renewed spirit on earth. In gladness we must seek not to be grateful only, but subdued; and in trial to bend low, but only that we may make the higher elastic bound from the rock that we have touched.

“ONE THING THOU LACKEST.”

MARK X. 21.

AMIDST the ten thousand things which occupy and engross the human heart and mind to-day, how few, alas! there are, who are really interested in the “one thing” the rich young ruler lacked, the loss of which cost him his soul, and involved him in everlasting poverty and sorrow. That “one thing” was Christ, the Son of the living God. In all other respects the young ruler possessed many things the world thinks much of; for not only was his outward character blameless, but he was also rich, respectable, and religious. Spite of all this however he lacked Christ, and was therefore poor indeed! Reader, have you got Christ? And if so, is He really everything to you? All else is but “vanity, and vexation of spirit;” and this poor world is ripe for judgement, which will soon come.

Meanwhile it is with Christ, the great Searcher of all hearts, that we each personally have to do. It is no question of how we stand with our fellow-men, but of how we stand with God, to Whom all must “give account.” Oh! then, dear reader, may those four solemn words of Christ, “One thing thou lackest,” to which the young ruler was,

alas! so indifferent, find now an abiding place in your heart in this, the day of God's grace, lest perchance you hear them again, when it is all too late, at the great white throne. Doubtless there are many things you cling to in this world, but none the less are they so many weights dragging you down to eternal perdition, and so many hindrances to your coming out boldly on the Lord's side. The soul is ruined in so many different ways; and pride, deceit, flattery, fame, money, sin, business, pleasure, and the world's pomps and vanities, all alike contribute to bring it about; but perhaps man's own self-will is the greatest of all barriers to his accepting Christ as his Saviour. Hence the deep meaning of those four words, "One thing thou lackest!" Christ alone can save the soul, and Christ alone can satisfy the heart.

All earth's pleasures fade and wither,
 Christ alone abides,
 And the ocean of God's favour
 Knows no changing tides.

There are two things in connection with this ruler which are worthy of special notice. It is recorded (*a*) that "Jesus, beholding him, loved him," and (*b*) that "he went away grieved, for he had great possessions." Only a little while before there was apparently an earnest desire on the young man's part to possess eternal life, but when

the test came of surrendering all for Christ, and of following in the footsteps of the lowly Nazarene, his love of money gained the day, and his soul was left unsaved and unsatisfied. Though Jesus loved him, yet he "went away grieved." Oh! how true it is, dear reader, that Jesus loves you though you be still unsaved! How are you treating that love? And are you still content to lack the "one thing," even Christ Himself, Who alone can make you truly happy for time and for eternity?

Alas, alas! the young ruler came near enough to Jesus to get the blessing, yet turned his back on the Son of God, and preferred the "gold that perisheth" rather than the true riches, yea, the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Little wonder then, that he should go away grieved! Self and present advantage came first with this young man; is it so with you?

Oh! listen to the Saviour's voice once more, "One thing thou lackest," and let His words sink down deep into your heart, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

"Nothing counts but Christ" were almost the last words that fell from the lips of a much loved and honoured servant of God, long since gone to his rest, and oh! how true they are, whether for

saint or sinner; for all else is but "dung and dross," yea, "vanity and vexation of spirit."

"One thing thou lackest" if unsaved,
 'Tis Jesus Christ, the Lord;
 All other things, compared with Him,
 No joy can e'er afford.
 Then trust Him now, believe His love,
 And thou shalt surely be
 Possessed of all that love could give,
 Through God's eternity.



NONE NEED PERISH.

HAVE you noticed that the Epistle which deals with you as a responsible being before God, and proves that you have failed in that responsibility, is the very Epistle which reveals God come out, not to help you to fulfil your responsibility, but in grace to meet your need as having utterly failed, and as wholly unable to do any better?

It is in Romans we read that there is none that doeth good, and that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and that God, the righteous One, will render to every man according to his deeds; for there is no respect of persons with Him. And after the solemn summing up in the third chapter we might well expect a terrible pronouncement of judgement upon every man. Instead of this we find that God offers not only a

free pardon, but absolute justification for all, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Do you ask how you can obtain this wonderful blessing? It is not by works but by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, the One Whom God has set forth a mercy-seat.

Does it not alter your thoughts of God to find that though He could righteously condemn you for your sins, yet He righteously saves you if you have faith in the One He has set forth? It is not only that Jesus came to save you, but the Father sent the Son. Does it not touch your heart to find that you have been made the subject of consideration by the Father and the Son? As a result you may be saved from the consequences of your sins, and much more, you may be brought into the inmost circle of the Father's love to share His thoughts about the Son, and to share the Son's thoughts about the Father.

All this can be yours, reader, if you but take God at His word. What a God He is to have delivered up His own Son for you! What a wonderful Saviour Christ is to have come into the world to save you! They are surely worthy of your consideration, apart from the fact that your own eternal welfare is concerned.



THERE is as much faith in waiting *for* God, as in waiting *on* God.

PEACE MADE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST'S CROSS.

COL. I. 19—22.

ALL the Fulness was pleased to dwell in Christ, the Word became flesh. He had emptied Himself of the glory due to Him. He received a bondman's form. He took His place in man's likeness. Thus He was truly man among men, yet infinitely more than man. Grace and truth came through Him. God was in Him, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning to them their offences. Yet men, as ever, would not have Him at any price; but rejected Him even up to the death of the cross; whereon God made sin for us Him Who knew no sin, that we might become God's righteousness in Him.

Incarnation was not bringing any man to God; it brought God in compassionate love down to man. But alas! the more Christ declared God, and manifested Him as light and love, the less tolerable was He in men's eyes; and the upshot was the cross. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no other did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both

me and my Father."¹ Nothing but His most cruel and ignominious suffering satisfied their enmity. They were thereby proved God's foes, and lost; for they were the people who boasted that they were His peculiarly, and alone had a long history of His dealings on their behalf, with every divine institution, moral and religious, to instruct, warn, and guide aright; as He sent prophets when they went astray, and at length His Son the Messiah, blessing them in turning such from their wickedness. But the presence of the Son only gave the husbandmen in His vineyard the occasion to say to one another, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. Jews and Gentiles, high and low, the scribes and the priests, all conspired, and crucified the Lord of glory.

Such was the world's history; such the most favoured of men's doings, when tested as Christ put them fully to the proof. Man is demonstrated ungodly and lost. But God is a Saviour, and by their worst work of crucifying Christ He wrought His best work in saving His enemies, and making them His sons by faith.

"For all the fulness was pleased to dwell in him; and through him to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross—through him, whether things on the

¹ John xv. 22—24.

earth or things in the heavens. And you being in time past alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death."

Even the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Christ bodily did not in fact reconcile man to God. There was all readiness of love in God and in Christ. But man was evil and hostile and implacable. They hated both Son and Father. In vain came grace and truth through Jesus Christ: they slew Him on a tree. If any had apprehended such awful wickedness, they might well have dreaded the sternest judgement of God; and this He will inflict righteously another day. But now, wondrous yet most true, He answers man's unspeakable malice and blasphemy by richer grace still. Through the blood of Christ's cross He made peace for men, albeit His worst enemies.

It is not yet the day *to* reconcile all things to Himself, all things earthly and heavenly (*not* all men); that awaits the Lord's coming again. But now He reconciled such sinners as the Colossians then addressed. They were no better than others. They had been alienated in the past, and enemies in mind by wicked works; yet now He reconciled them, not even by Christ's birth, nor by His unequalled ministry, but "in the body of his flesh through death." Nothing short of Christ's death could make peace; but that did perfectly. Only

in His death was sin judged to God's glory. Only that He His own self bore our sins in His body upon the tree furnished an adequate sacrifice to God for us. Only His blood cleansed our sins; but it cleanses us from every sin: if it did not, it were in vain for us.

But the same Christ on the cross avails for any sinner on the earth that believes on Him. Therefore does God send forth everywhere the word of the truth of the gospel. So it was in all the world then known in apostolic days; so it is still. O my fellow-sinner, believe God's good news. Hear and know the grace of God in truth. Slur not over your sins; own them in all their deadly evil against God, Who is full of compassion and ready to reconcile you through the death of His Son. He calls you to believe Himself about His Son Jesus Christ the Lord. Beware of neglecting so great salvation: now is its day. Be decided by His word; cast yourself on Jesus and His precious blood. Nothing else can meet your case; that can perfectly and for ever, securing you the peace which Christ Himself made. This is the peace you need; neither you can make it, nor saints nor angels; nothing but the blood of Christ's cross.



THERE is a natural joy over spiritual things, and I pray you not to deceive your souls with it.

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

THIS question is a very short one, is it not? But, oh, what an important one! For on the way you answer depends an eternity of joy, or woe.

You are not asked what you think of High Church, or Low Church, Baptists, Wesleyans, or others, but “What think ye of Christ?” Most will answer, “He was the Son of God” or, “He is the Saviour of the world, Who came to suffer and to die for sinners, and all who believe on Him are saved.”

This is quite right. *He is* the Son of God. He *did* come to earth to suffer and to die for sinners, and all who believe in Him are saved; but this will be of no avail to you personally, unless *you* are of those who believe in Him from the soul. Can you say, He died for *me*? Can you look up and thank God that He sent His Son to save *you*, and that through His precious blood-shedding, death, and resurrection, you are saved by faith in Him?

Other questions fill your soul and occupy your mind, keep you awake at night and fill you with anxiety by day; but what of this all-important one? Do you think of it as much as your business, your food and your clothing? All such things

must be attended to, we know ; but they all perish in the using, while our immortal souls will live for ever. Where?

No one can understand eternity, for it is the life of God. If you were to count every star in the sky, every grain of sand on the sea-shore, every leaf in the forests of the world, you would only as it were have entered upon the borders of eternity. Then where will you spend yours? It all hangs upon what you think of Christ. If the whole world were yours, what would it avail you when death knocks at your door?

Some of my readers, I dare say, have gone through serious illness. What did the usual concerns of life matter to you when you were feeling so weak you could not speak, nor scarcely think? Why, you know outside things were just nothing to you. So it will be when death comes. Buying and selling, cares and worries, will be like a dream when your soul realises time is just over, and eternity beginning.

“What think ye of Christ?” Settle that question. Do not put off the answer. Jesus is such a loving Saviour that He is waiting to receive you. When you have bowed at His feet and told Him all about yourself and your sins, He will lift you up and say, “Son, [or daughter] go in peace; thy sins are forgiven,” and then for time or eternity all will be well.

But there is the other side, which I must put faithfully before you. If you do not settle this question *now*, you will never be able to do it, for by-and-by at the great white throne you will stand speechless, to be judged according to your works; and the loving Saviour Who now pleads with you, will then be your Judge. "What think ye of Christ?"



THE WORLD'S REPROACH.



"AGAIN, you speak of the reproach of the world. Rejoice in it. What, are you unwilling to be put upon a footing with apostles and prophets, yea, with your Master Himself? Can you be more highly honoured than by such reproach? The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. If you are reviled for Christ in this world, you shall be acknowledged by Christ with every circumstance of honour in another, before the assembled world, amidst applauding angels; while the wicked despisers shall wonder and perish, and gnash their teeth in envy, rage, and despair, curse their folly, and despise themselves to eternity, infinitely more than they now pretend to despise you.

"Pretend, I say; for, if you are consistent, and live like a Christian, they will reverence you in their hearts, and shew it by being under visible

restraint in your company, while they pretend to laugh at you.

“Further, as a man of business and a moral man, you have learned to despise the jeers of drunkards, and those unhappy wretches who, for momentary gratification, entail temporal disease and poverty on themselves. You see that their conduct is madness and folly, and that sobriety and industry are comparative wisdom. Now in the eye of God, and of the truly godly, the most worldly-wise man on earth is no less a fool and a madman, if not *rich towards God*. Learn to consider as such those who, for the unsatisfactory enjoyments and interests of time, (a very moment!) forfeit the pure pleasures and enjoyments of eternity: and the laughter of fools and madmen will excite your pity, and incline you to pray for them, rather than give you much uneasiness.

“I will in this respect assure you that this trial, though sharp at first, and a great snare to you, will, if you are enabled steadily to withstand it, soon be over. The world will be weary of despising you: and, if not, you will grow totally indifferent about it; yea, you will rejoice that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for Him, Who endured the cross for you.”



LET it never be forgotten by us that in every act of sin we prefer our will to God's.

WHAT A BLESSED COUNTRY.

MANY years ago a dear little English boy was sent home from India for his health and education, and when, after the weary sea voyage of six months, and the dreary coach journey of many days, he arrived in Edinburgh, and was being put to bed by his kind aunt, he turned to her and said, "Are there any jackals here?"

(They used to howl in packs round his Indian home at night).

"No, dear," she answered, "there are no jackals in Scotland."

"Are there no snakes, and no tigers?"

"No, dear, no snakes, and no tigers."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "what a blessed country!"

Dear little fellow, he was only six years old, and wild beasts and reptiles were all his dread, for he knew of nothing more deadly or dangerous. But the country with which he had fallen in love was not so exempt from terrible things as he thought, as you and I know full well.

If we have not the tigers, jackals, and snakes which he so much dreaded, lurking round our dwellings in England, there is the "roaring lion" of which scripture speaks, seeking whom he may devour, who cannot be kept out by bolts and bars.

And then there is the "king of terrors,"—death—
from whom no one can escape.

There is, however, a blessed country where
there is no devil to tempt, nor death to destroy,
and that is where Jesus is, and where He has gone
to prepare a place for those who belong to Him.

The little boy I have been telling you of
returned to India, and God in His goodness made
him a light for the Lord Jesus amidst the surround-
ing darkness. But he had found out that it was not
being in England which was blessed, but having
his name written in the "Lamb's book of life."

Now, dear one, is your name in that book? It
must be there, or you cannot be with the Lord Jesus.
Remember it will be your own fault if it is not.
You have heard many, many times of Jesus and
His love; you know quite well He came to die that
you might live; and He is now knocking at your
little heart; will you not open the door?

Every time a school-fellow dies, or some dear
friend is taken, it is the Lord Jesus knocking and
saying, "Be ye also ready."

The king of terrors is no respecter of persons, for
there are wee graves in a churchyard as well as large
ones. It is a fearful thing to be putting off coming to
the Lord Jesus till you are ill. It is as good as say-
ing, "The dregs are enough for Christ," though you
would hardly dare to put it into such words, when
you remember He gave His life for you.

APRONS OF FIG LEAVES.

CONSCIENCE being evil, every effort of the world is to hide from itself its nakedness before God.

It would remove from men gross and outward sin, drunkenness, murder and robbery. It seeks by law, and efforts of philanthropy, individual and co-operative, to blot out the open effects of sin in the world. Such are the aprons of fig leaves, which remove nothing at all, but serve for the moment to hide from ourselves our nakedness and our misery, to avoid thinking of the justice of the condemnation God has put from the beginning on the sin that dwells in us. Now that sin is between our conscience and God, one wishes at least that there should be something to hide us before Him. With this end in view, man employs what he calls innocent things. Thus the trees were so, but man used them to conceal himself from before God. God had given all to man in this world; but man uses it now only to deprive himself of the sight of God, and thus pretends to be innocent in employing these good things after such a sort!

When the voice of God awakens conscience,

people still wish something to hide them from Him ; but this is impossible. God says to Adam, "Where art thou?" There is no means of hiding any longer. If God said so to each of your souls, would it be your joy to be in His presence? God alone is our resource and refuge when we have sinned.

It is only God Who takes away guile from the heart, for He alone can pardon. Now if you hide yourself from God, where are you for your soul?

God had not yet driven Adam from His presence, till Adam fled from the presence of God. Conscience tells us that if we have sinned, no leaves or trees can hide us in His presence.

If there be a just God, man is wretched in his conscience ; he cannot be quiet in sin but solely on condition that there is no God. Every hope of unbelief is that there be no God, or, what comes to the same thing, that He be not just or holy.

Adam wishes to excuse himself, as if he had not lusted himself, as if he had not followed the voice of his wife instead of hearkening to God, as if he was not responsible for having failed himself. Now if there were not lust in us, sin would not be produced. In the midst of all God's goodness, Who has given His Son for poor sinners, you have no confidence in God, and this is a state of sin.

It matters little how it is manifested, it displays

ingratitude and distrust. Eve listened and believed Satan, instead of hearing and believing God. This man ever does: and he hopes for salvation and eternal life though he sins. All the efforts you make to be happy shew that you are not happy. Why the arts and pleasures of the world, if the world were happy? All that which would have been the effect of God's presence in your hearts and consciences would stop your pleasure. Therefore if all your pleasures are incompatible with the presence of God, what will they be for you in eternity? Will they carry you to the foot of the throne of the Holy and Just, to shew Him that you have spent many innocent hours far from Him?

There are disobedience, distrust, falsehood, which are sin: there is worse still—the state of soul which seeks to be light and giddy, far from the presence of God.

Man may withdraw himself from God's presence whilst grace lasts; but he will not be able when God shall judge him. Satan will help you, your best friends according to the world will also help you, to withdraw yourself from His presence, to deny and forget it; but this will certainly not go on longer than the time of grace granted to us. Therefore, while it is called to-day, if ye hear His voice harden not your hearts.

God knows that you are sinners: He knows the

iniquity of Satan, who would make man his prey ; but there is an answer to that which Satan knew, and of which man could have no idea : God makes a revelation of grace.¹ A promise is not given to those who are incapable of enjoying it. The natural man cannot enjoy what flows from grace, because faith is necessary to this, and confidence in God. The question thenceforward is wholly between the serpent and the Second man. God says nothing to Adam but words which shew the actual consequences of sin ; He says to the serpent what He will do. Thenceforth the only hope for lost man is in this promised Seed ; and even before he is driven from His presence, God reveals what Jesus will do to destroy the work of Satan.

There is not a single sign of repentance in Adam after his sin. He had shewn the dastardliness, meanness, and fraud of his heart ; but God only occupies Himself with His counsels and the answer He has in Himself. He announces the Seed of the woman, Whose glory and power are developed throughout all His word.

Now it is no longer an anticipation or promise of grace ; Jesus is come. Wretched man thought that God did not wish to give him something through jealousy of his happiness ; but this was the lie of Satan. God, Who seemed to refuse a fruit to man innocent, has given His Son to man, a

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

sinner. And the heart of man is so perverted that he has no confidence, though God has given His Son.

Jesus, instead of fleeing from condemnation, went to meet it; He took on Him the sins of His bride, instead of loading her with fetters. He has by death destroyed him that had the power of death. The effect of the death of Jesus is to inspire us with perfect confidence. The death of Jesus puts us in relationship with God without fear and without difficulty, because it clothes us when we are naked and miserable. There is nothing but grace for us after the judgement which has struck the Son of God.

Is your confidence in God? Do you believe that He gave His Son? that His love did so to save fully poor sinners? The confidence gives peace and obedience, because nothing is more precious than the love of God; and this love makes us prefer obedience and its consequences spite of all the difficulties. May God touch your heart, and give you to render Him glory by receiving all that His love has done for you!



It is our mercy to know that God, Who demands our all, and accepts our least when it is offered in simplicity in the name of Jesus.

Oh, the wondrous wisdom of using Christ for all the little emergencies of our everyday existence!

THE BRUISED REED AND SMOKING FLAX.¹

BEHOLD my Servant, saith the Lord,
 The One Whom I uphold,
 Elect according to my word,
 Whose goings were of old,
 Who doth His flock in pastures feed,
 And by still waters take ;
 He will not break a bruised reed,
 Nor quench the smoking flax.

Him Nicodemus sought by night ;
 At Sychar's well, by day,
 Samaria's daughter heard aright,
 The Lord of glory say :
 I living water give indeed,
 That thirst for ever slakes ;
 I will not break a bruised reed,
 Nor quench the smoking flax.

The leper sought a cure to find,
 Before Him as he lay ;
 One reached His garment's hem behind,
 And healed went away.
 Whom I make free is free indeed,
 He said,—the truth so makes ;
 I will not break a bruised reed,
 Nor quench the smoking flax.

O Lord, Thy love divine we own,
 The riches of Thy grace ;
 While myriads bow before Thy throne,
 And seraphs veil the face.
 To us the word is sweet indeed,
 And of Thy love partakes :
 Thou wilt not break a bruised reed,
 Nor quench the smoking flax.

¹ Is. xlii. 3.

THE AMEN OF SUBMISSION AND THE ALLELUIA OF JOY.

BUT let us look deeper into this sacred theme, feeling that our research is imperfect and incomplete unless it lead us to Christ Jesus. And what is Amen? It is simply the ratification of another's will. Christ is the great ratification of His Father's will. He perfectly performed it all; therefore Christ is the true Amen.

"Thus saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness."

God Himself in Christ performs to us all His promises. In Him they are "yea and amen." With this same word, because He delighted to ratify His Father's word, Christ was wont emphatically to commence His discourse—"Verily, verily," which is, in the original, "Amen and amen."

Thus man's truth comes from God's truth, and none can *truly* say Amen from the heart but he who has the life of Christ in his soul. Nothing can ratify God but Himself; and he who would truly say Amen, must have first the mind of Christ. Thus, he who desires to say a full Amen in praying must not only thereby understand that he asks, and appropriates to himself, all that his own lips have asked, but, far more than this, that there

may be a general agreement between his mind and the mind of God, so that whether the prayer be granted or denied, he may be equally ready to subscribe with the hand, and utter, a willing Amen; and that all the will of God, expressed or unexpressed, may be fulfilled, not as he likes, but as God likes, with him or without him, in him or by him.

Such is "Amen." And indeed, who can calculate what would be the peace of that mind which could write such an Amen on all the yet unread pages of life? Do not turn over another leaf of time till you have subscribed your Amen to the last. It is good to be earnest and importunate in prayer for what appears to us good and desirable; but when the event is fixed, and the mind of God manifest, then, though it may bring upon us a heavy cross, we should not even *wish* to remove it, but add our own verdict too, and say, Amen.

This spirit will teach you to let your desires not lead, but *follow* God, to look out for the indications of the road where His purposes travel, and to go after them with satisfaction. Dangerous it is for weak and foolish man to go *before* his God. His place of safety is always in the Amen, and thus to possess a mind that delights to throw itself into the mind of the Lord, and say, "Lord, do Thou choose; do Thou appoint; do Thou work: it is enough for me to add, *Amen*."

In order to attain any measure of such a mind as this, three things are necessary.

First, you must recognise all events as under Divine superintendence. In every little care, in every vexing word, in every ruffling breeze, you must be accustomed to feel, "This is permitted by God; and His will be done." This is what makes heaven the great "Amen." There the inhabitants see no middle links; they trace through no created thing; they behold only the almighty hand of God.

Secondly, you must acquaint yourself with the character of God. It is not enough for you to know it is the Lord, but you must learn, and that experimentally, what a Lord He is; how faithful, how good, how full of loving-kindness. For he who would be content with God's dealings must surely first be content with God Himself; and he who would always say Amen must not look upon the shadows of this scene, but upon the sovereignty, and the wisdom, and the love of Him Who shines for ever and for ever the same, the Sun of glory, joy, and peace.

Thirdly, you must not only connect the event with God, and God with love, but you must connect God and all events in one great scheme, of which you only see the outline. You must look into the grand result of all the complicated work. You must be much in the distant future, and *there*,

not in this preparatory scene but in that great development, you must engage your thoughts with the being, and the character, and the designs of God, till you are able to bring back with you to this darker world your firm Amen.

But let us pass on, and look for a moment, too, at "Alleluia." It is several times repeated in this chapter of the Bible¹ as the native language of heaven. But that it is known on earth too, David shews us, for in all those Psalms which begin with "Praise the Lord," the word in the original, so often in the margin of the Bible, is "Alleluia." Doubtless we shall pronounce it as a foreign word till we have learned the accents of our home.

But it is a beautiful word. Even here on earth we connect it with the noblest and happiest moments of a privileged existence. It is when no cloud comes in to obscure the light of God's countenance; it is when we feel His smile; it is when we enjoy His peace; when we read *all God* in the full and overflowing mercy; when we look out from the heights of hope upon the fields of promise, and feel that "this God is our God for ever and ever," it is then that, untaught, unprompted, the Alleluia sounds out gladly from the heart.

Had we to define "Alleluia" as it regards God, we should say it was admiration of God, affection to God, joy in God.

¹ Rev. xix.

Had we to define it as regards man, we should call it a present bliss with a future blessedness in prospect.

Would you desire to be in such a spirit that throughout your life your voice may often rise to the glad Alleluia note? Then you must become holy and pure in heart. None but the pure can rightly praise. You must accustom yourself to ascend often to the mount of contemplation. You must recognise your unspeakable dignity as a child of God. You must feel yourself a fellow, yea, far more than a fellow, with the holy angels. You must know that your robe is white and your crown prepared.

You must especially realise the love of God in the gift of His Son, and the application of His grace to your heart. God's free salvation is the true source of all praise, whether on earth or in heaven. Paul's highest note of triumph was when he sang, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."¹ So the sweetest harmony of heaven is when the innumerable company of the redeemed exclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and

1 Rom. viii. 38, 39.

wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Amen and Alleluia must both be learned at the cross of Christ.

We do not say which is the higher or the sweeter sound, Amen, or Alleluia: but do not so love the Alleluia as to forget the Amen. Sometimes the thought of past mercies will give the preparation of heart, and the Amen will grow out of the Alleluia. Sometimes trial will lead you into the experience of such blessed and hitherto unknown comfort, that the Amen of submission will swell into the Alleluia of joy. The more you unite them,—the more you submissively rejoice and rejoicingly submit,—the deeper will you drink into the spirit of Christ, and the more nearly will your voice approach to the tones of heavenly worship.

Life opens before us; but what awaits us in its course we know not. Let us remember our Amen and Alleluia, and on every passing circumstance try to inscribe them both. If Amen fail, let us try Alleluia; and let us endeavour to know nothing, to enjoy nothing, on which we cannot write these heavenly words.

Dear reader, it may please our God—and I pray it may please Him if He sees it good—to put into your hands the cup of joy. Take it thankfully. Hesitate not to drink all its fulness. Do not ask, "Can all this joy and gladness be fit for such as I

am?" Do not turn it into a cup of trembling by fears that poison lurks in the generous draught. Do not distrust Him Who delights to make His children happy, and Who will yet call you to enter into the fulness of His joy. Be not afraid to rejoice. Put your Amen to your Alleluia.

Nevertheless, if you would safely possess your joy in this uncertain world, hold it, hold all that you have, *except Christ*, as but a loan that you must be willing to return. Be prepared to see your fairest prospect clouded, your brightest treasure recalled from your grasp. Strengthen yourself in the Lord. Delight yourself in Him. Then, if it please Him to try you so, your happiness may be found to have centred, not in things He sent, but in Himself, and the joyful Alleluia will deepen into the firm Amen.

But if it should please Him—as I pray it may, if He sees it good for any of us—to put into our hands the bitter cup of woe; if we be disappointed of our brightest earthly hopes, or the desire of our hearts be removed from us; if our comforts are swept away, and the blossom of affection be blighted; if we should be called to pass through the dark waters of some keen affliction,—oh, in that sorrowful hour can we still be true to our heavenly motto? Can we attach our seal, our Amen, to the divine decree? Shall we not bow at the remembrance of His sovereignty, and strengthen our-

selves in the assurance of His wisdom, and reassure ourselves by the experience of His people, and rest in the certainty of His love.

Yes, I trust we may have grace to say our deep, our full, Amen to all the Father does.

But is it Amen only that should reach our Father's listening ear?

Oh, dear reader, in these hours of affliction shall we not recognise the portion of the saints? Are we not learning a lesson of sympathy with every member of the suffering church of Christ? Shall we not bear the token of our calling? And as we tread the rugged path of tribulation by which they climbed "who have washed their robes," and who worship before the throne, shall we not catch the glorious tones of rejoicing praise, and echo even here the song they sing—that wondrous song, which draws half its melody at least from a suffering state,—its Amen from earth, and its Alleluia from heaven.

Dear reader, let us be ready to "rejoice in tribulation." Let us not fall short of either the Amen or the Alleluia note, contenting ourselves with the utterance of one only. Let the language of our hearts be the union of both.



WE are not called upon to explain difficulties, but to believe verities!

THE ROBBER SAVED.

WE do not find, except during the three hours of darkness on the cross, that by any sorrow, weariness, or trial, the Lord Jesus was ever hindered from entering into the sorrow of others. None could put Him in a place, except when working out atonement, where He did not enter into human suffering: such unweariness of love do we see in Christ.

Still He was light; and the more we look into His history, the more comes out the terribleness of the heart of man. It was never manifested till then. There are amiable natures and unamiable natures; but we never learn what the heart of man is till then.

The thing that tries the human heart is, What is its object? not, What are its mere natural qualities? "There is none that seeketh after God." Man saw no beauty in God. There is nothing in the heart that looks at the Lord so as to find in Him an object and a delight. There is no root till the conscience is reached; there may be attraction, but until the conscience is in the presence and sight of God, nothing is done. It is like the morning dew which passes away. "The same is he which heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself."

Wherever the conscience is reached by God, there is some sense of goodness. Fear and terror may predominate, but there is attraction, and the heart cannot let it go. Faith always gets both. God is love, and yet He reaches the conscience. There is that which reaches the conscience, and that which inspires confidence, when the eye is on Christ.

On the authority of Christ Himself we have the certainty of salvation, that is, the christian state; and no other suits the Christian. It is the only real christian state which the word of God owns. The condition of the Christian is the effect of the work of Christ. It is not that there is no conflict, but that Another has taken the responsibility. My place before God is not the effect of what I have done, but of what Christ has done. Christ is the ground on which I stand before God. If it be so, what has He done for us? He died for our sins; that they must be put away. He is the Judge, but He cannot judge what He has put away. That we might walk with God in peace, He has sent the One Who is to be the Judge to be first the Saviour. Confidence is connected with righteousness now.

In the history of the robbers we have both sides. In the other malefactor taunting Christ, we see how the heart of man is enmity to God. It was the triumph for the moment of the first man and

of Satan too. It is sad to think what our hearts are if left to themselves. When the heart is let out, where will it stop? Satan is over us.

Here then we have the triumph of the wickedness of man over the goodness of God. We cannot get rid of Satan's power yet; we may bind it in a sense. The heart of man cannot bear the presence of God. There is not a vanity, not a bit of dress or money, that has not more power over the heart of man than all that He has done or is. You never yet found a man enjoying himself who would hear of Christ. The world would not have Him, when He came in grace, nor would it now; but it must have Him when He comes in judgment. Take the majority of the people in this city and suppose them let into heaven! They would get out as fast as they could.

In the repentant robber, on the other hand, we see grace. He was crucified on a gibbet; but no matter, gibbet or no gibbet, when God and the soul meet, we have the simple and immense fact that the soul is brought at once into His presence. When God has dealt with the conscience, we make no more promises for the future. Unlike the naughty child that says, "I'll be better to-morrow," the soul confesses sin to-day. "Dost thou not fear God?" is the word, not "Are you not ashamed of being a thief?"

Have you ever been brought into God's

presence? "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." If you have not been consciously in God's presence, wisdom has not begun for you. Before Christ you must be, and you must be there in truth: the difference is whether you are before Christ in the fulness of His grace, or before Him in judgement, "We indeed justly." He did not say that the world was guilty, but that he was the guilty one; it is not simply that sin is sin, but that I am a sinner. His thought is that he himself is justly there. It is a personal thing, not merely that God is holy, nor merely that the world is guilty, but that you are guilty.

JESUS THE WAY.

JOHN XIV. 6.

IN no part of scripture is the Lord presented so personally as the great object of faith, and withal so variously, as in the final Gospel. How strikingly this applies to the verse before us! "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Let us consider it.

Since sin came into the world, and man was driven out of paradise, the earth morally became a wilderness wherein is no way. When innocent, he needed none, as in fact we hear then nothing of the sort. The garden which the LORD God

planted in Eden was stocked with every tree pleasant to the sight and good for food; and a river went out of Eden to water the garden. There was man put, not to eat bread in the sweat of his face as when fallen, on ground cursed for his sake, bringing forth thorns and thistles to him, but to dress and keep it in its unstained beauty and unrestricted fruitfulness. A tree of life was in the midst of the garden whereof to eat and live for ever; but there was a tree forbidden him,¹ the tree of knowledge of good and evil of which he must not eat on penalty of death. It was the test of his obedience. Alas! he disobeyed, and all that primeval state of things ended. "So He drove out the man."²

But God revealed another, the Second man, and Last Adam. In Him was life: a truth distinct from, and far higher than, that all things came into being through Him, though this was so exclusive that apart from Him not one came into being which has come into being. In Him was life for the fallen and sinful, and the life was the light of men.³ They had departed from God and needed a way back to God through that dark and dangerous world where death reigned thenceforth. The old ordinance for man innocent was debarred to man guilty. There was no return possible to the tree of life. In fact man innocent never did eat

¹ Gen. ii. 17.² Gen. iii. 24.³ John i. 3, 4.

of it, and man fallen was precluded by the flame of a sword which turned on every side to keep the way of the tree of life.

To Him that should come, the woman's Seed, faith was directed. The bruised One, to come of woman distinctively, should bruise the serpent's head. Thus only could fallen man return to God, Who clothes the naked with a covering founded on the death of another.¹ On this Abel acted in the great crisis of his history. He took the way of grace and of divine righteousness, owning his ruin as a sinful man and his faith in a Saviour from God that should suffer but destroy the destroyer. By faith he brought, not of the fruit of the ground cursed for man's sin, but of the firstlings of his flock, a slain offering, for acceptance.² He did not go in the way of Cain, whose offering was of merely natural origin, with no sense of sin, and with no acknowledgment of Him that was to die for sinners, Himself the unblemished sacrifice rising up from the fire as a savour of rest to Jehovah. And Jehovah had respect to Abel and to his offering; but to Cain and to his offering He had not respect. To Abel Christ was the way. Cain took a way of his own.

Again, when Noah emerged from the ark, (he and his wife with his sons and their wives, and with every living creature preserved from

¹ Gen. iii. 15—21.

² Gen. iv. 4.

destruction therein), he built an altar to Jehovah, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean bird, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar.¹ Thus did grace work in Noah to begin the world that now is with his striking and solemn acknowledgment that salvation is of Jehovah, and that blessing hangs on a holy sacrifice acceptable to Him. Christ was the way, that Jehovah should not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, evil though the imagination of his heart is from his youth.

Then in Abraham the place of faith is clearly seen: the word of Jehovah came, and he believed Jehovah, Who reckoned it to him for righteousness.² That Christ is the way no less appeared in the only son provided as God's lamb,³ dead and risen as Hebrews xi. explains.

It is not otherwise when God redeemed to Himself a people, Israel, as we read in the book of Exodus.⁴ The paschal lamb is the basis of their exemption from divine judgement; the passage of the Red Sea is their manifest deliverance. Christ is still the only way; and there is none other. For these things happened to Israel by way of type; and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. The blood of the lamb, sprinkled on the doorpost of each house, alone screened them and their household; and the power

1 Gen. viii. 20. 2 Gen. xv. 6. 3 Gen. xxii. 2, 8. 4 Exod. xii., xiv.

of God thereon made the sea a path of life for them, and of death for the Egyptians who without the lamb's blood essayed it in vain.

No religious profession, no sacraments, can avail without faith in Christ, the Lamb of God. Therefore as a guilty sinner behold Him. Israel went astray no less than the nations. All sinned, each turning to his own way. Christ is the only way to God, Who is now revealed as His Father and our Father, His God and our God. None can truly say so but those that believe on the Lord Jesus; it is theirs to know it then and rejoice.

CHILDRENS' CORNER.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

Now that the days are shorter and colder, we begin to look for comfortable nooks and corners, and I feel I should like to gather a goodly number of the young readers of *Gospel Gleanings* in my cosy room round the fire, and have a good long talk with them, instead of writing what I have to say.

Talking is so much pleasanter than writing, isn't it? You can get an answer, or have a question asked, and so in ten minutes we should know each other better than through a dozen articles.

But when people cannot meet however much

they may wish it, there is nothing for it but to write; and as we cannot see each other "face to face," we ought to be thankful for pen and ink.

My home is in a quaint old Welsh town with a grim old castle, and beautiful trees; and as I look out I see the trees all turning red and yellow, and the wind swirling the leaves hither and thither; and without the feeling of chill in the air, I could tell that the "summer is past, the harvest is ended" and winter is near.

Do any of you remember those solemn words of the prophet Jeremiah, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, *and we are not saved.*" A very solemn verse, is it not? Just read it over once or twice very carefully, and ask yourself as before the Lord, Am *I* saved?

You see in God's word there are *two* sorts of people mentioned, *two* roads on which they travel, and *two* destinations for them to reach. *Two* sorts of people—saved and unsaved. *Two* roads—broad and narrow. *Two* destinations—heaven and hell. Now if there had been different grades of goodness and badness mentioned, we might all wonder which grade we belonged to, but goodness and badness are not named—only the *saved* and *unsaved*, so in God's sight you are one or the other; either on the broad or narrow road, and consequently, bound for heaven or hell.

Dear young friends, which is it? You have

perhaps seen ten, twelve, fourteen, or sixteen summers and winters, and each year has increased your responsibility. This summer is over, the harvest gathered in, and winter before us. Have you made your choice this year, to be on the Lord's side and to have Him as your Saviour, Master, Friend, or are you putting it off to a more convenient season? Has God told you you will have another year to live? If not, how dare you presume upon it? The command may go forth any day, "Cut it down," and you know all the money in the world cannot stay the hand of death.

It is only the spring of your life as yet, but if God spares you, summer will soon be on you, and remember that the work done in the spring is shewn in the harvest. Now would you not like to belong to Jesus early, and so by His grace give the best of your lives to Him, and bring home sheaves for His glory? Then if the reaper death should come for you, you will be gathered into God's garner, to the praise of Him Who shed His blood to save you; and then, instead of that bitter, bitter cry, "Too late," you will join in the Alleluias round the throne, and sing with the redeemed, "Unto him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in his own blood to him be the glory and dominion for ever and ever."

