

GOSPEL LIGHT.

THE CIRCLE OF BLESSING.

THE writer was asked by a young man in London to go and see a poor old man, who was lying ill of paralysis. He had been not only a careless, godless man, but openly wicked, and especially in profane swearing. Even at the age of nearly seventy he could scarcely speak of the ordinary affairs of his business without swearing.

The young man above referred to, hearing an old, grey-headed man using such language when at his daily work, ventured to speak seriously to him on the subject. Shocked with the oaths he uttered, and thinking on the fearful state of his soul, and on what his future must be if he died in that state, he got his address and called at his house. There he could speak more plainly to him. In the full sense of the word, he had lived "without God and without hope in the world" for nearly threescore years and ten.

Soon after this he met with a great affliction. The whole of the left side became paralysed, so that he was kept to his bed. And now, what an object of pity! Helpless as to the body, hopeless as to the soul, in the depths of poverty, and without comfort from any

quarter. Death reigned, we may say, alike in body, soul, and circumstances. One half of the poor body was already in the grasp of death, and how near, humanly speaking, was his soul to the depths of hell ! But " the God of all grace " is the God of resurrection. He often makes us feel that all is as death around us before He begins to work. It was truly so in the case of this poor palsied old man ; but God had mercy on him. Resurrection-life and blessing were on their way to him ; they were now near at hand. Hear how they came.

Two or three years before this time the youngest son of the old man enlisted. He was quartered in the Portobello Barracks, Dublin, when the father was lying ill. Happily for this youth (and for many others also, we doubt not) one of the officers was in the habit of preaching the gospel there. The young soldier was induced to go and hear him, and it pleased God in the riches of His mercy to touch his heart. He was convinced of sin, and fell, as he said, at the feet of Jesus, and found pardon and peace there. He believed that the blood of Jesus had cleansed all his sins away.

He was full of joy, and in the fulness of his new joy he wrote a letter to his father. And this letter, so full of zeal and love, proved to be God's message of mercy to that father's heart. We were privileged to read two of his

letters, and both were full of the most tender appeals to his father to repent, and believe in Jesus.

These letters, through the Lord's blessing, broke the father's heart; and little wonder. The sweet and touching way he spoke of the love of Jesus, and of His readiness to pardon the chief of sinners, ought to have been enough to melt any heart; but coming from a runaway son, from one who could use the expression, "O my dear father!" added their power, and produced the desired effect. He burst into floods of tears, and sometimes became quite excited, exclaiming, "O my dear boy!"

But God, we fully believe, was at work in his soul. In the fulness of his heart he believed what his son wrote; he followed his advice; bowed at the feet of Jesus; confessed his sins; cried for mercy, and found it.

He found mercy where all who seek it find it, and where none ever sought it in vain. It is full and free to all (blessed, for ever blessed, be "the God of all grace"!) to old and young; to the morally good and to the chief of sinners; to the child of tender years, who may never have done worse than say "No" to a parent, and to the hoary-headed sinner of threescore years and ten, whose history has been blackened by many a crime. Such is grace, the full, free, rich, sovereign grace of

God, to the sinner who believes in Jesus. Neither age, character, nor condition affects God in showing mercy. He acts on the ground of the finished work of Christ, which is eternally complete; and all who believe in Jesus rest on the work which He accomplished.

Is this the solid ground, may I ask, on which my reader rests—the finished work of Christ? If thou art looking to thine own doings for rest, or to thine heart for comfort, thou wilt never find them there. Happiness is not to be found in frames and feelings and doings, but in Christ and His finished work. As thou art, my dear reader; in youth or in old age; in the vigour of manhood, or palsied in every limb; the wild, roving youth, or the blaspheming old man, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; believe in the greatness of His love; believe in the riches of His grace; believe in the cleansing power of His blood; and thou shalt not only be saved but perfectly happy.

Look at the two extremes before thee. The burden of the young soldier's letters was the love of Jesus, and His readiness to forgive all who come to Him. Though we only read them once, and that with no thought of ever referring to them in print, yet we can remember how he entreated his father with great earnestness to come to Jesus. No doubt they bore the marks of his history and experience, but his heart was warm and earnest.

For the sake of others we give the following as the substance of these appeals. "O my dear father, come to Jesus; He will pardon all your sins, He died for us all on the cross. I believe it now, and I am quite happy. I went to hear Captain T—— preach, and I was brought to the feet of Jesus. I then saw what a sinner I had been, but He has washed all my sins away by His precious blood; and if you come to Jesus, dear father, He will wash all your sins away too, and then your soul would be saved. You know He died for us all, and He casts out none that come to Him. He will not cast out you, my dear father, oh! believe it. He did not cast out me, He has pardoned all my sins. Oh! come to Jesus, my dear father, come to His feet, pray to Him, and He will forgive all your sins."

We can never forget the bursting emotion of that heart, and the flowing tears, as we read these touching appeals by his bedside. They had been read to him before, over and over again, but they seemed as fresh as ever. In order to test the reality of the work, we suggested that there might be nothing more in the change which he had experienced than the natural feelings of a father for a son. But the moment he saw our suspicion he became very animated, and beating on his breast, looking up to heaven, he exclaimed, "Oh, no; it is the charity of Jesus to my soul, it is the charity

of Jesus to my soul; His blood, His blood has taken my sins all away.”

He was a foreigner, spoke with a strong foreign accent, and had been a soldier in his youth. When we spoke to him of the love of Jesus, and of the blessedness of being with Him in heaven, it was too much for him. He was overcome with emotion. He spoke with full assurance of his pardon and acceptance.

The Lord alone be praised. He who was the chief of sinners once, now quietly rests with the Lord, patiently waiting His coming.

Our main object in writing the above is to draw attention to what we may call *The Circle of Blessing*. We have often observed it in families and in wider circles. God is the fountain of all blessing; the risen Lord is the channel; the Holy Ghost is the power, and the truth is the means.

Take the example before us. God fills the heart of Captain T—— with love to souls; he can no longer be quiet, and enjoy salvation alone; he must preach the gospel to others. A meeting-place is found; the salvation of God is proclaimed; blessing flows down from the heart of God; a young soldier is converted, and grace flows on. A love for souls is now implanted in his heart; his first thoughts are his own family; God uses natural affection. His father, who is lying ill, is especially laid on his heart. He writes letter after letter, and

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thus he becomes a preacher of the gospel. His father is converted, and the grace of God that saves him now re-ascends to God in praise. A perfect circle is completed.

As it is in nature so it is in grace. The vapours that rise from the sea, and are carried on the wings of the wind, fall on the earth in dew and plentiful showers. The thirsty ground is refreshed and fertilized; the pools are filled with water; the streams and rivers flow, and carry back to the ocean that which left it in vapours. The sea has lost nothing, and all living have been richly blessed.

Thus should it be with grace and truth. Oh ! that everyone who receives the gospel would be faithful in his own sphere, and according to his own ability, in spreading the truth of God, the glad tidings of salvation ! Wide, wide as the circle of the Holy Spirit's action, would the blessing flow. May our Lord's own word to His disciples be our motto :—"FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE" (Matthew x. 8).

JESUS ONLY can impart
Peace of conscience, rest of heart;
JESUS ONLY can supply
Solid comfort when we die.

SUBMISSION TO THE SON OF GOD.

WE always find in the deliverances of God's people that God is also going to punish the world. He bears testimony against it, a universal testimony, and the Holy Spirit convicts it of sin, because they have not believed on Him Whom God has sent. Hence the gospel begins with treating the world as already condemned. God has made trial in every way of the human heart. The gospel supposes that this probation is closed, and declares all the world lost. Souls often desire to prove their own strength, and even converted souls sometimes try to commend themselves thus to God, but it is to dishonour the Lord Jesus and to deny their own condition as judged of God.

In Egypt God was content with the first-born of each house as a manifestation of His judgment. Pharaoh would not let the people of God go. When God demanded as a right that they should serve Him, the world through Pharaoh its prince would not yield. Signs and plagues were then wrought to arrest their attention and enforce the rights of God; but Egypt would not listen. Pharaoh was hard, then hardened, and at last becomes a monument of judgment for the instruction of all men. So it was in the days of Noah, and so it is now that the world once more is warned of the approaching judgments of God.

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The Lōrd Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and on them that obey not the gospel.

Meanwhile God demands a complete submission to His revealed will. He demands that the world should submit to the Lord Jesus; all those who will not shall be forced to do so when judgment comes, and then to their own confusion and endless sorrow. God presents His Son in humiliation in order to save the world; but without submission to Him all is useless, because this is what God requires and values. To believe in the Son is eternal life, is salvation; to reject the Son of God is judgment. God will have a surrender of the heart to Him as Saviour and Lord, a surrender to His own grace in Him. Thus is the heart and everything else changed, and all question as to good works is set aside. All here turns on receiving or rejecting the Lord Jesus. Zacchæus may speak of what he has been in the habit of doing, but that is not the point now; "This day is salvation come to this house." If the Lord Jesus is welcomed there is life; if He is refused, there must be vengeance by-and-by for those who do not submit. How happy for the poor convicted sinner that he has not to search in himself for something to present to God! If the heart is open, Christ is the grace and glory and perfec-

tion that is needed, and the moral effects soon and surely follow.

Still, the word of God presents the certainty of judgment. Satan has possession practically of the world, but God retains His rights. The unconverted are deceived by the enemy and are in his power. Satan does all he can to make the world believe that they are free and happy; that they are, or may be, righteous and good enough. But God has His rights. The world will not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and yet hopes to escape judgment. Satan, too, takes advantage of all that God would employ to awaken and bless the soul. Thus, with the unconverted in Christendom, natural conscience is ashamed of that which the heathen do even in their religion. But this is used of Satan to persuade men that they can present themselves before God and worship Him, because there is nothing in these lands so gross as among pagans. But God holds to His rights, and nothing is well if the Lord Jesus be not received in faith.

In Him all that is perfect in God and man is presented to the conscience. The holiness of God is there, not condemning, but in perfect grace; but God will have an entire submission to Him. Nobody that comes is cast out. He is God in all His goodness to attract hearts, He is Man in all His lowliness to exer-

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cise no will, no choice, but to receive every one that comes to Him, for such is the will of Him that sent Him; but God desires submission to Him. If He, the Lord Jesus, is rejected, this is the conclusive proof that the heart will not have God in any way that He takes in presenting Himself to man. It is the evidence of man's heart, of his pride, his hardness and his levity. Nothing like these can stand in the presence of God, and the Lord Jesus manifested His presence in love.

Pride is ashamed of the cross. Vanity cannot go on before the Lord Jesus, despised and rejected of man. God searches the heart in this way, and man does not like it. He is bound to own himself a sinner, to submit his conscience and give up his will; but he won't do so. It is the joy of the Lord Jesus to seek the wanderer; but for man to return in his rags and show his wretchedness is most distasteful to his nature: grace alone can make him do so. His pride therefore makes him hate grace even more than law. The heart cannot endure to be laid completely bare; but if man is to be blessed, God, whose object it is to save the soul for ever, must search the heart. God acts according to what He is, and not according to our thoughts. If man will not believe in the Lord Jesus and will not submit to Him, God will manifest what He is by judgment.

J.N.D.

WORDS OF A CONVERTED JEW TO THE JEWS OF COCHIN.

“**I** AM one of your brethren, a child of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I believe in Moses and the prophets, who predicted that Seed of Abraham by whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and who shall be the glory of the children of Israel; who came in the fulness of time, and was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter for the iniquities of His people; who was cut off, but not for Himself; who was pierced for our iniquities, and of whom it was said, ‘Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man that is My Fellow.’

“Twenty years are now passed since I found Him to be my Saviour; and now for more than twelve years I have preached Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. And this is the sin which Israel sinneth until now: that they do not believe in Jesus of Nazareth, who was that angel in the wilderness who accompanied the children of Israel when they went out of Egypt; to whom, too, the Lord God shall give the throne of His father David; and who shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. He, Jesus Christ, shall be the ruler in Israel; He who came out of Bethlehem Ephratah.”

“FOR EVER AND EVER.”

I REMEMBER, when I was a boy, hearing a man preach from Revelation xx. 10, insisting from that passage of the word of God that those who rejected Christ would be cast into the lake of fire, and be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

I was greatly troubled, for fear that it would be my fate; in fact, I was more than troubled, I was terrified; and such was the impression left on my mind that it haunted me day and night for years.

Often in the midnight watch on deck I would think of those words, “For ever and ever,” and the terror of hell would present itself before me, and cause me to tremble with fright. But I would laugh it off, and for a moment forget there was such a being as God.

Still, those words would haunt me, in spite of all I could do to banish them from my memory, and I could see nothing but God’s wrath for me. I sometimes looked at my Bible, but could see nothing there but condemnation; and then I became an infidel and a scoffer.

I say “an infidel”; no, I could not make myself that. I *had* to believe there was a God, and that, if I were called to stand before Him, I should be cast into hell, and tormented for ever. I could not see the love of God in the gift of His Son to die for us; and seeing no-

thing before me but condemnation and wrath, I plunged into all sorts of sin and vice, took to strong drink, and in fact became so vile that at times I was an abhorrence to myself.

It is true that at times I would try to amend my life, and for a while would vainly think I was getting better; but then came temptation, and, having no power but my own, I was forced to yield, and go on in the old course of sin and folly.

Thus passed years of sin and misery. At length I gave up the sea, came ashore to live, and thought to do better. But I grew worse. And then I thought if I had a comfortable home I would serve God. And so I got married, and to all appearance was happy. Yet still those terrible words "for ever and ever" haunted me, and filled me with dread; and, although I tried to become good, I became worse and worse.

I can see now that, being at that time ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of my own, I did not submit myself to the righteousness of God.

At last God in His grace met me as a poor lost sinner, and brought me a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. I always had an idea that it must be through Christ I must come to God, but I had not the slightest idea how to come; and therefore I was always expecting some great thing to happen to me

at conversion. But now the time came when the burden of sin fell from me, and I was led to the feet of the Lord Jesus in thanksgiving and praise.

The Lord began to call His people out in the neighbourhood in which I lived, and when I heard of those that said all their sins were put away, I went to hear them, and they tried to point me to Christ as my Saviour.

“ Look and live,” said one.

Then I tried to fancy the Lord Jesus on the cross.

Later, a dear brother gave me a book called “ Instant Salvation,” which was, by God’s blessing, the means of opening my eyes.

In the silent hour of night, in the heart of a lonely bush, with none nigh but God, I “ passed from death unto life.” I read Rom. x. 8, 9 : “ The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith which we preach ; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

I knew then that God had spoken to me, and that I was born again. It was GOD’S word ; and as such I received it. And now all became “ joy and peace.” I often think of the words “ for ever,” but it is “ For ever with the Lord ” now. Yes, I, a vile sinner,

but a sinner saved by grace, the free, unmerited grace of GOD.

Are you, my reader, still in your sins, looking forward to that "day in which God will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained"? Unto you is this word of salvation sent: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 38).

Take God at His word, and live. The Lord Jesus finished redemption's work on the cross; He laid down His life for us. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Put your trust in Him. Let His blood be your only plea. Cease trying to do something for yourself. Christ Jesus must be *all* for you, or He cannot be *anything* for you. Oh, believe Him, trust Him, and all will be "joy and peace." M. A.

"A dying, risen Jesus,
 Seen by the eye of faith,
 At once from anguish frees us,
 And saves the soul from death.
 How gracious this Physician!
 His grace He'll freely give;
 He makes no hard condition,
 'Tis only, Look and live."

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

MY reader, let me affectionately ask you, Where will you spend eternity? It must be either in heavenly glory and happiness with God and the Lamb, or in darkness and misery with Satan and his angels in "the lake of fire."

Now, do consider the question which I again ask, Where will you spend eternity?

You may say, perhaps, I do not like to think of such things; it only makes me gloomy and sad.

Why is this? Can it be from any other cause than your having a guilty conscience? Look the matter fully in the face, I beseech you. If you knew that God had forgiven *your sins*, and that Jesus had gone into His Father's house to prepare a place for *you*, could it make you unhappy to think where you will spend eternity? Impossible!

Dear reader, beware lest you lose your own soul, lest your present trifling be suddenly stopped by the word going forth, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Only consider what God has done to save sinners; what wonderful love He must have for guilty, ruined sinners, to give His Son, His only begotten Son, to come into this world, and die upon the cross to save them. Yes, Jesus died for such sinners as you and I. Instead

of punishing us for our wickedness as we deserved, God loved us, and sent His Son to atone for our sins by His death upon the cross. So that, this work having been accomplished, God can now freely and justly forgive all those who avail themselves of the sin-cleansing value of the blood of Jesus.

Take refuge then, dear reader, in Christ Jesus, who once died upon the cross to save guilty and lost sinners, whom God raised from the dead, and has seated at His own right hand in the heavens. Consider that it is God, against whom you have so sinned, who says, "Through this man [Christ Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him *all that believe* are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

Oh, dear reader, why not believe? Why not believe NOW? Why not take God at His word NOW, who says that, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are justified from all things? Believe then, and rejoice, because God says that through the bloodshedding and death of Jesus *He justifies you from all things*. Then you will be able truthfully to say, I shall spend eternity with Him in heavenly glory.

"Where will you spend eternity?

This question comes to you and me.

Tell me, what shall your answer be :

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

Many are choosing Christ to-day,
 Turning from all their sins away ;
 Heaven shall their blessed portion be :
 WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY ?

Going the downward road to-day ;
 Scorning the strait and narrow way,
 What shall the final ending be :
 WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY ?

Turn, and believe this very hour,
 Trust in the Saviour's grace and power ;
 Then shall your joyous answer be,
 SAVED THROUGH A LONG ETERNITY !”

“ NO HEART-WORK.”

ROMANS X. 10.

A LADY visitor was one morning going the round of a military hospital in India. One of the patients had shortly before been brought in with an injured or diseased leg. He was young, but of a repulsive countenance, sullen and impudent in expression.

On the visitor's coming up to his bed, he exclaimed that he wanted no preaching, for he was not going to die ; and further, to deter

any Christian effort, he spoke and swore violently.

God's messengers, however, dare not be easily affrighted from their allotted ministry. The value of each soul is too highly appreciated by them to admit of personal considerations hindering efforts after it. This one, therefore, sitting down by the sufferer, talked to him of his secular concerns, his friends and circumstances, in order to pave the way for higher and holier themes by gaining his confidence.

An hour or more had thus passed, during which the soldier had unbended and chatted away, when the visitor rose, saying other engagements were then pressing, but would he not allow her, after such a long talk according to his fancy, to say the few words she wished?

With reluctance he consented, on which she said that she had no worthy words of her own, and therefore chose for the time to read some of God's words; but that, if he liked, he might choose which particular portion of them he would prefer hearing.

After thinking a minute, he replied, "Some part of Proverbs; that has only moral sayings in it—no heart-work."

The visitor, as she turned the pages of her Bible, very fervently prayed to know what passage she should choose, and was guided to the first chapter, which she read through.

Truly was this word then proved faithful :
“ The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart ” (Heb. iv. 12).

The look of contemptuous derision and indifference changed, after the tenth verse, to one of interest; after the twenty-second to one of awe and excitement; and before the close of the chapter the soldier was crying and trembling, exclaiming that he was one of the refusers and despisers at whom God would laugh, and that it was too late for him to be saved, he having mocked and spurned the truth too much and too long for pardon ever to be given to him.

The Spirit led him to Jesus, ; and the scorner became a loving disciple, giving evidence of the sincerity of the professed change. The “ book of morals ” was evermore a specially dear portion of the Bible to him, as that which had brought him to know the Lord and himself. The sinner turned at the reproof, and the reprover gave him the blessing.

“ He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy ” (Prov. xxviii. 13).

WHAT IS GRACE?

“**G**OD, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). Grace is the wondrous love of God in saving man, when a sinner, by the death of His only begotten Son. Man had been responsible for fulfilling the law, and man must obey; man had sinned, and man must be made a curse; therefore the Son of God became man. God sent forth His Son, made of a woman; not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh; thus the holy and Just One could fulfil and suffer, in the stead of the unjust and unholy, so as to bring us to God. Thus the grace of God brings salvation to the chief of sinners. Sin having been condemned in the flesh by the cross of Christ, God can justly pardon the sinner; and the Righteous One having fully obeyed unto death for us who believe, we are “made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. v. 21). Thus we see that grace was manifested in the cross, by God condemning our sin in His own Son, and making us righteous in Him Whom He raised from the dead, thus doing what the law could not do. The work of Christ’s cross, then, is the ground of our peace and confidence in God. It is in the cross we see that God is “the God of all grace,” and that Christ’s death is the ground of our life and peace (see Galatians ii. 20).

ADAM'S COVERING AND HIDING-PLACE.

GENESIS III. 7, 8, AND 21.

When Eve and Adam fell,
And brought about the curse,
Deluded by the Serpent's spell,
They went from bad to worse.
No longer pure within,
Their nakedness they knew,
And tried to cover o'er their sin,
And hide themselves from view.

But GOD, who knows and sees,
And every action tries,
Knew they had hid among the trees,
And saw through their disguise.
But, oh ! He loves to bless ;
So, though they shunn'd His face,
He sought them out in their distress,
And cover'd their disgrace.

As then, so sinners still,
Would hide their sin and shame ;
The purpose, heart, pursuit and will,
Of man remain the same.
The Serpent still deceives,
And by his art misleads ;
While unbelief contrives and weaves
A dress of human deeds.

A thousand vain pursuits
 Engage the sinner's mind;
 He seeks for nature's choicest fruit,
 Or pleasures less refined.
 The grace of GOD he'll use
 To hide the GOD of grace;
 His tender mercies e'er abuse,
 And flee before His face.

Yet GOD, in grace and love,
 Forgives as He forgave,
 And visits sinners from above,
 Their guilty souls to save.
 He strips them of the dress
 Of deeds which they have done,
 To clothe them with His righteousness,
 And hide them in His Son.

How great the grace of GOD,
 His only SON to give,
 That He for us might shed His blood,
 And die that we might live!
 Sinners He loves to bless,
 And seeks to hide their shame;
 Oh, then, accept His righteousness;
 Take refuge in the LAMB!

W. T.

**NAAMAN THE SYRIAN;
or,
GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION.**

2 KINGS V. 1-19.

IN many places in the Old Testament Scriptures we find very striking illustrations of the gospel, the narrative of Naaman being one amongst the rest. Let us see in what way this record shows the principle of the gospel.

In the first place we read that "Naaman was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria; he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper."

Leprosy is one of the nearest types of sin you can get, because it was as to all human efforts *incurable*; it was also contagious and contaminating. Seldom, very seldom, when once contracted, was it got rid of during the lifetime. Sin is as to all human efforts *incurable*.

You see Naaman was a *great man*, an *honourable* man, and a *mighty* man; but neither his greatness, honour, nor power got rid of his leprosy for him.

Neither will any one of these three things, nor yet all three put together, get rid of a single sin-stain.

It is well to be large-minded and large-hearted, to be strictly honourable, and possessed of power; but these things will not cleanse from sin. Some are trying morality as a cure for sin; but nowhere in God's word do we read that morality will save a single soul.

This is a vain attempt, then.

Sin is *contagious*, too. We cannot commit sin without both injuring ourselves and others. "For none of us liveth to himself" is a principle which holds good in this also.

It is *contaminating*. Wherever iniquity abounds the effect is bad. Sin is loathsome. If it is so to us, how much more to God, who cannot look upon iniquity!

We see, from the first verse of this chapter, that Naaman is a type of a sinner in his sins, without the known means of being cured.

Now comes the intervention of God in His providence.

Wondrous are the ways of God! He has not only provided a means for a perfect cure to be obtained, but makes that way known. He has shown clearly in the New Testament Scriptures that the only effectual way of getting cured of the plague of sin is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God often takes up the weakest instruments for the accomplishment of His designs. Here it came through a little maid. A little maid

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is to be the channel of untold blessing to that great man Naaman.

Here is encouragement for the humblest of God's servants. He condescends to work by means, but by means of His own choosing. This little captive maid, a slave in her master's house, perhaps the most despised under that roof, is used of God for the purpose of making known the means of remedy for her master's disease.

She waited on Naaman's wife. No doubt she had often heard her mistress heave a sigh, and mourn that her husband had so fearful a disease, and wished she knew of a cure. The little maid approaches her mistress, and says, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

She does not doubt her message. She has faith in God, hence faith in God's cure. God always honours faith. Unbelief dishonours Him.

The news gets to Naaman. It is wondrous news, too. So is the gospel wondrous news. Naaman tells the king. Just like poor, foolish man. He looks to the head of the realm; if anything is to be done, it must surely be through such a channel. Naaman has been awakened to the fact that a cure was to be had, and at once goes to the wrong place. So the poor sinner who wakes up to the fact that

he is a sinner often goes to the wrong place, too. He turns to creature assistance. Such will find it of no avail, as did Naaman.

What did the king say? "Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel."

Large gifts were also prepared to take to the king of Israel. "And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

This is just like man again, he wants to purchase salvation. But this will not do. Salvation is the gift of God. This is what man is so slow to learn.

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

'It is finished!' Yes, indeed,
Finished every jot;
Sinner, this is all you need;
Tell me, is it not?"

The king of Israel, upon reading the letter, rent his clothes, saying, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?"

This showed the desperateness of the case. In order to effect such a cure he would have to perform a miracle. The king of Israel was honest in this; he knew he could not do it. The man who pretends to absolve from guilt is not honest, be he priest or king. None can forgive sins, "but God only." He has provided the way through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Elisha the prophet now appears upon the scene. He hears that the king of Israel has rent his clothes, so he sends word to him, saying, "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

Just as Namaan would be ready to turn back towards home this message arrives. How welcome! "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha."

He had come now to the right place, but in the wrong way. He came with pride.

Elisha sends a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper."

The remedy the prophet gave was far too

simple; and another thing, if he was to be cured by washing in a river, Jordan was much too insignificant.

This justly pictures proud, depraved human nature. Says man, "Salvation simply by trusting in Christ! I won't have it; it is not reasonable."

Exactly so. You, dear reader, will not get near the truth at all by your reasoning. Reasoning is the opposite to faith.

"Behold, I thought." You see Naaman has a thought of his own. Man's thoughts and God's thoughts are very different from each other. God has said, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."

The consequence is, he, not being prepared to obey the word of the prophet, starts to go back, as far as ever from being cured.

Man's thought is almost invariably to *purchase* salvation in some shape or form. He is not prepared to receive the greatest blessing he could possibly have on God's terms, which are these: "Without money, and without price." It comes to this, Is eternal life to be obtained upon the principle of bartering, or upon the principle of grace? Thank God, it is grace, free grace. Is this wonderful? No. Look around at nature. The greatest blessings we have are given freely. The light and heat from yonder sun are free; the air we

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION.

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breathe is free, and, blessed be His name, eternal life is free too. How strange it is that people talk about their own thoughts on this point when God has spoken, and that plainly ! Listen to His voice through the prophet Isaiah.

“ Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else.”

What could be more simple than a look ? And again we read, in John iii. 14, 15 : “ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

How did Moses lift up the serpent ? He made a brazen serpent, and hoisted it on a pole that all might see ; and a look was a certain cure, because a look implied faith. Jesus is the Saviour, and not we ourselves. No one else could save. We may have the joy of it in our souls the more simply we lay hold of it by faith.

Abana and Pharpar were rivers of Damascus ; could Naaman not wash in them and be clean ?

No reply to this question is given. And so God having clearly stated the means of salvation in His word, no other reply will be given ; no, not even to earnest prayer. The only way to get eternal life is simply by taking God at

His word. Reader, have you done so? If not, why not?

Naaman turned and went away in a rage. It is always a bad sign when a person gets angry at hearing God's way of salvation. Some do. They are annoyed to hear so simple a way as that of "faith in Christ."

What a blessed thing it was for Naaman that he had good and wise servants, who advised him wisely! They tenderly, yet faithfully, touched the very point at issue when they said, "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?"

This is just what would have suited this great man Naaman, to do some great thing; and this is what would suit man's natural pride generally.

The same thing is true to-day. Man will put his body to untold tortures, if only he can by so doing purchase heaven. But God's word is plain, for it says, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Whether in the Scriptures it is put, "Look, and be saved," "Believe, and live," or "Wash, and be clean," the principle is exactly the same. Here it says, "Wash, and be clean." Disobedience brought sin into the world, and it is simple, obedient faith in a perfect sacrifice that absolves from guilt.

"Then he went down, and dipped himself

seven times in Jordan''; in other words, he obeyed the prophet's voice.

This reminds us of a parable of our Lord's we read of in Matt. xxi. 28-30 :—

“ A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards he repented and went. And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first.”

And so it was. Have you, my reader, been saying, I will not? Repent and go, then.

Naaman repented and went. He did God's will, and got the blessing; so may you. Give up false promises; for they are only Satan's delusions to decoy you away from the truth. Your badness is no hindrance, but procrastination may prove fatal. “ Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? ”

Notice also the *perfectness* of the cleansing, “ And his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”

What God does He does perfectly. Every act of His is a perfect act; and since this was God's cure the cleansing was complete, “ like the flesh of a little child.”

A little child's flesh one naturally caresses, it is so smooth and soft; whereas nothing was more loathsome than the leper's skin. What

a change! God views every child of His as without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, through the atoning blood of Christ.

“And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.”

After his cleansing he made this confession: he owned the true God. This should be the case with every Christian; it is not sufficient to get cured only, but definite confession of Christ should be made. With what confidence he made it too; said he, “Now I *know*.” The Christian should be equally sure. John could say, “We know that we have passed from death unto life.”

With Naaman it was not a matter of doubt, but a sterling fact. God had wrought this wondrous cure. A little while before he was covered with leprosy, but now it was clean gone. He now *felt* the difference; but mark, he did not get the cure wrought by feeling, but by faith.

It is like this in respect to salvation. People very often want to feel saved without first accepting the gospel by faith, and so they are continually in doubt about it. Of course they are; how could they be otherwise?

The knowledge of present salvation is by resting on God's word. This surely is as

good a foundation as you could wish to have.

After Naaman got cured, he returned to take a present to Elisha. This was natural; but the prophet absolutely refused to take anything.

Thus you see the principle "without money, and without price" was steadfastly adhered to throughout, and so it must be. God must have all the glory. He will deal in grace, pure and sovereign grace; no room will He leave for boasting on man's part, no, not one jot.

However, while God cannot receive anything for salvation, He is well pleased to accept a poor feeble sinner's thanksgiving consequent upon it. We have this shown us in the case of the ten lepers we read of in Luke xvii. 12-19: "And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"

The nine had forgotten to return and give thanks; but this should not be. If we have been saved, let us not forget to do this. God is seeking for spiritual worshippers (John iv.).

And the prophet said to Naaman, "Go in peace."

Every form of idol worship must be given up, or unrest, rather than peace, will be the result of a violated conscience; but to those who follow on in the ways of the Lord a peaceful conscience will be their happy lot. May each and every reader know the joy of this.

T. D.

The time is drawing near when Christ Himself will be revealed as the only Potentate, to whom everything must be brought into subjection; when all those who now despise His laws, and reject His blessed gospel, though perhaps prospering in the world, will be made to feel that He who once died on Calvary's cross is "Lord of all"; for "the loftiness of men shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." Now Christ calls chief sinners, and cleanses the blackest, foulest sins with His precious blood; but then He will judge righteously, and put all enemies under His feet. May God the Holy Ghost solemnly impress these truths on many hearts.

SATAN'S LIE, MAN'S CONSCIENCE, AND GOD'S REVELATION.

READ GENESIS III. 7-21.

THERE is a very wide difference between man's conscience and God's revelation, a difference well worthy of my reader's careful consideration. The scripture referred to above unfolds this difference in the fullest manner. Man got his conscience in and by the Fall. This one fact is sufficient to show the real nature of conscience. By the one act of disobedience man became possessed of that thing called *conscience*, which is simply "the knowledge of good and evil." Previous to that act man knew only good. He moved in the midst of a scene in which God had said that all was "very good." Evil had no place in that fair creation. The traces of "eternal power and Godhead" were visible on all hands. Every tree, every shrub, every leaf, every flower, every blade of grass, stood in its place, and gave evidence of the goodness of God. Every bird warbled its Maker's praise. There was not so much as a single element of evil throughout the entire sphere over which man was appointed to rule; and therefore man knew nothing of the difference between "good and evil" until he hearkened to the tempter's voice. In a word, he got his conscience in and by the Fall.

And what was the first effect of conscience? It told man that he was "naked." He had not known aught of this before. Conscience told him this. It could do nothing more. It could not point him to a covering. It told the one dismal tale of nakedness. It had nought else to tell to Adam, and it never has had aught else to tell to any one of Adam's guilty race. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." This was all that was gained by hearkening to the voice of the serpent. They had never thought of nakedness before. Conscience was at work. Innocence had fled, never to return; and conscience had come in, with all its startling powers, to make them sensible of their condition, and fill them with guilty fear.

And let my reader remark here that conscience had to do with their actual state. It did not tell them aught about God. It spoke from *within*. It brought them no glad tidings from without, no cheering accents from a source above and beyond themselves, in which their poor terrified hearts could find comfort. They had got their conscience by listening to Satan's lie about God; and it was therefore impossible that it could convey a single ray of light to their troubled souls.

It is only needful to see how man got a conscience, to know its effect upon him. Some there are who think that conscience, if left to

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itself, will assuredly lead a man to God. How could it? Did it do so in Adam's case? Surely if ever the true effect of conscience could be seen, we should look for it in the third of Genesis. Did it lead Adam to God? The very reverse! How was it possible that what had its origin in the belief of a lie about God could ever lead a soul into His presence? It told them of their own state, but could not tell them of God's character. The consciousness of my own state is one thing; the revelation of God's character is quite another.

"They knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God, amongst the trees of the garden." Conscience made them cowards, and drove them away from God. Satan had told them, in effect, that God was not kind in withholding the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In short, he made it appear that God would not give them an apple. He belied God; and man believed his lie. Here is the root of fallen humanity. Here is the old stem from which have shot forth the branches of a corrupted nature. The unregenerate man is formed and fashioned by the serpent's lie. It is not merely in his ways and words that

man proves himself a fallen creature. His secret thoughts concerning God, and his inmost feelings toward Him, are the lamentable proofs of his lost estate.

Reader, allow me to ask you one or two plain questions. What are your secret thoughts about God? Do you think He is a God of wrath? Would you be afraid to find yourself in His presence? Do you regard Him as an angry Judge Who is seeking occasions against you, holding above your head the sword of judgment, and only waiting to cast you into the lake of fire? If such are your thoughts concerning God, let me tell you they were the thoughts which caused Adam and Eve to hide themselves behind the trees of the garden. The serpent had falsified the divine character in their eyes; and the result was, they were afraid of God, and fled to hide at the very sound of His voice. "I heard Thy voice in the garden, and *I was afraid*, because I was naked; and I hid myself." Such was the source of all those dark, gloomy, suspicious thoughts which fill the human mind in reference to the blessed God, the eternal Fountain of all goodness, the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort, the Planner, Revealer, and Perfecter of redemption's wondrous scheme.

Let us now look for a few moments at God's revelation of Himself. No sooner had Satan's

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lie fallen upon man's heart than the LORD God came down to contradict it. It is well to look closely at this. Let us draw near and hearken diligently to all that passed in the garden. Let us ponder it deeply. Some would tell us that the LORD God came down to drag man forth from his lurking-place, in order that he might receive his sentence. Where do we find this in the inspired record? Let my reader examine attentively Genesis iii., and say if he can find any foundation for such an idea. Alas! it is to be feared that this thought springs from the same source as Adam's fear.

The human mind is sure to interpret everything in such a way as to make against God. Set the unrenewed mind to expound a text, or to interpret a providence, and it will be sure to do both the one and the other in such a way as to make against the divine character. Whence came the tendency so to do? From the enemy of God and man. Let there be no mistake about this in my reader's mind. The natural heart hates God. It is governed by Satan's lie.

Go where you will; take up whatever form of human religion you please; contemplate man in whatever condition you can find him, and you will observe a general rule, and that, too, without a single exception: the human heart has hard thoughts about God. "I knew thee, that thou wast an

austere man." Such is man's language with respect to God.

Now, when we come to examine closely the scene in the garden, we find that the LORD God really came down to contradict and confound the enemy, and to take up man as an injured being. True, man was a guilty being also; and God had, in the exercise of His moral government, to allow man to reap as he had sown. But then we must distinguish between God's *government* of the world and His *grace* to the sinner. It is very manifest that the same God Who first appears as man's CREATOR, appears again as man's FRIEND. He appears to interpose on the sinner's behalf, and to pass eternal sentence upon the serpent. It was the serpent who had done the mischief, and he must have his head bruised. He had injured man, and man must crush him beneath his feet. He had dared to meddle with God's creation, and of that creation he must lick the dust. He had said that God would not give man an apple, and God declares He will give His Son. In a word, "the LORD God," when He "walked in the garden in the cool of the day," appeared only as the sinner's FRIEND. He came to give a full and immediate contradiction to Satan's falsehood. He came to take up the controversy, to make it a question between Himself and the serpent; and from that, as we look down along the

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stream of time, as we run the eye over the page of inspiration, we find an unbroken series of acts on God's part, calculated to throw back in the enemy's face his foul and blasphemous lie against the divine character, acts on which faith sees inscribed, "in radiant letters, 'GOD IS LOVE.'" Thus it has been in the past; and when we look forward into the future, and see an eternity of glory, all resting on the one foundation, namely, "THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS," we can understand something of the difference between Satan's lie, man's conscience, and God's revelation.

All this leaves entirely untouched the great question of God's government of the world. The woman, as we know, had to hearken to the solemn declaration, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Adam, too, had to hear that which applied immediately to himself: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for

out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Thus much as to the old creation, and man's condition therein. Labour and sorrow, death and the curse, are the accompaniments of the old creation and of man as a fallen creature.

But there was more than this. There was God's revelation of Himself. It is one thing to gaze with solemn awe upon the “dreadful” wheels of God's moral government, and it is quite another thing to read the deep secrets of His bosom of love. The government of God may oftentimes be wrapped up in a dark cloud of mystery which the finite mind can never penetrate; but His love shines in living lustre all around. Now, faith bows the head to the former, while it basks in the light of the latter. We are not called to unravel the mysteries of God's government; but we are privileged to enjoy His love. We are the subjects of the former, but we are the objects of the latter.

My reader should seek a clear understanding of the difference between God in government and God in the gospel. The distinctness is not sufficiently attended to, and hence it is that many minds are confused, many passages of Scripture not understood, and many of the actings of providence entirely misconstrued. If we only look at God in His government we

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shall never know Him. It is when we see Him in the cross of Christ that we understand His love, and know Him as "a just God and a Saviour." Precious, saving, life-giving knowledge!

If we could only look forth upon a world of sin and misery, sickness and death, poverty and wretchedness, a world in which we see at times the upright suffering and the wicked successful, how should we ever know God? Impossible! It is "in the face of Jesus Christ" that God has revealed Himself to the sinner's heart. And, oh! who can utter the blessedness of finding oneself in the full blaze of divine revelation, after having groaned beneath the crushing burden of conscious guilt? For one who has endured the terrors and agonies of conscience to find himself in the embrace of redeeming love is surely heaven begun upon earth. To find God actually taking my part against Satan, yea, against myself, and opening His bosom of love to my guilty soul, and all this in such a way as to glorify Himself, imparts peace and joy unutterable.

Thus, in Adam's case, we see that CONSCIENCE terrified him, and drove him to hide. REVELATION gave him confidence, and attracted him forth from his covert. It is so in every case. Conscience could never tell a man what God is. It is the sole province of revelation to do this. Conscience has to do

with self: revelation has to do with God. The former turns the eye inward upon self, the latter turns it outward upon God; *that* terrifies me by telling me I am not what I ought to be; *this* tranquillizes me by assuring me of what God is. I am a sinner, and He is a Saviour. He meets me in Jesus, and all is eternally settled. Adam and Eve were not dragged forth by the hand of justice, but drawn forth by a heart of love. The LORD God was the first preacher of the gospel. Adam and Eve were the first hearers, and they were both converted. What a preacher! What an audience! What a result!

And let me here observe that the true attitude for a sinner to take, in the presence of divine revelation, is that of a *listener*. "I will *hear* what God the LORD will speak" (Psalm lxxxv. 8). To enter the place of a *doer* before you have occupied that of a *listener* is to reverse God's order, and throw everything into confusion. Adam tried this plan and found it a failure. He tried "works." He "sewed fig leaves together," but it was no use. He could not even satisfy his own conscience or remove his guilty fear. He had to listen to the voice of God, to hearken to divine revelation.

And what did that revelation teach him? That, after all, God was his Friend; that the very One Whom the serpent had represented

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as unkind was going to provide a Saviour for him, a Bruiser for the serpent's head. No marvel, then, that he was attracted forth from his hiding-place. The love of God gave him confidence, so that he could speak of Eve as "the mother of all living." Nor was this all. "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Adam got both life and righteousness by simply hearing and believing God's revelation. Could he have got these by the dictates of his own conscience? How could he? Where were they to come from? How was it possible for one dead in trespasses and sins to procure for himself divine life and divine righteousness? It was wholly out of the question. They could only come from God. Man could not find them; but God revealed them, and faith received the revelation.

May the Lord enable my reader to understand with distinctness the difference between human conscience and divine revelation. May he know the deep blessedness of resting, in child-like simplicity, upon God's eternal word.

C. H. M.

"He that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. xi. 6.)

IT MUST BE SALVATION OR PERDITION.

YOU may not neglect your honest duties; you may not neglect to say prayers; you may not neglect to go to church or chapel; you may not neglect to read the Bible; but, dear reader, do you not neglect salvation? Do you not neglect Christ, and refuse Him as *your* Saviour? What can be worse? Do you not know, therefore, that you are in the road to eternal perdition? Oh! that you may *now* acknowledge the rich mercy of God in giving His only begotten Son to die for poor ruined sinners like you and me, that whosoever (observe, "*whosoever*") whether rich or poor, profligate or moral; "*whosoever*," grey-headed or youthful, learned or ignorant; "*whosoever*" you are, or whatever be your history, condition, or character, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, He declares that you "shall not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.)

But if you continue to refuse the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, the time of terrible judgment will assuredly find you out. He will become your Judge. You will be speechless before Him, and He will justly condemn you to outer darkness "with the devil and his angels" for ever. "Flee from the wrath to come."

H. H. S.

THE BLOOD-SPRINKLED DOOR.

“And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door posts of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.”—EXODUS xii. 7.

THE blood on the lintel secured Israel's peace. “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” (v. 13.) There was nothing more required, in order to enjoy settled peace in reference to the destroying angel, than the application of the blood of sprinkling. Death had to do its work in every house throughout the land of Egypt. “It is appointed unto men once to die.” But God, in His great mercy, found an unblemished substitute for Israel on which the sentence of death was executed. Thus God's claims and Israel's need were met by one and the same thing, namely, the blood of the lamb. That blood outside proved that *all* was perfectly, because divinely, settled; and therefore perfect peace reigned within. A shade of doubt in the bosom of an Israelite would have been a dishonour offered to the divinely-appointed ground of peace—the blood of atonement.

True it is that each one within the blood-sprinkled door would, necessarily, feel that were he to receive his due reward, the sword of the destroyer should, most assuredly, find

its object in him; but then the lamb was treated in his stead. This was the solid foundation of his peace. The judgment that was due to him fell upon a divinely-appointed victim; and believing this, he could feed in peace within. A single doubt would have made Jehovah a liar; for He had said, "WHEN I SEE THE BLOOD, I WILL PASS OVER YOU." This was enough. It was no question of personal worthiness. Self had nothing whatever to do in the matter. All under the cover of the blood were safe. They were not hoping or praying to be so; they knew it as an assured fact, on the authority of that word which shall endure throughout all generations. THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND THE WORD OF THE LORD formed the foundation of Israel's peace on that terrible night in which Egypt's firstborn were laid low. If a hair of an Israelite's head could be touched, it would have proved Jehovah's word void, and the blood of the lamb valueless.

It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what constitutes the ground of a sinner's peace, in the presence of God. So many things are mixed up with the finished work of Christ, that souls are plunged into darkness and uncertainty as to their acceptance. They do not see the absolutely-settled character of redemption through the blood of Christ, in its application to themselves. They

seem not to be aware that full forgiveness of sin rests upon the simple fact that a full atonement has been offered—a fact attested, in the view of all created intelligence, by the resurrection of the sinner's Surety from the dead. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of the cross—but the devils know this, yet it avails them nought. What is so much needed is to know that *we are saved*. The Israelite not merely knew that there was safety in the blood; he knew that *he was safe*. And why safe? Was it because of anything that he had done, or felt, or thought? By no means, but because God had said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." He rested upon God's testimony. He believed what God said, because God said it. He set to his seal that God was true.

And observe, my reader, it was not upon his own thoughts, feelings, or experiences respecting the blood, that the Israelite rested. This would have been a poor sandy foundation to rest upon. His thoughts and feelings might be deep or they might be shallow; but deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with the ground of his peace. It was not said, "When *you* see the blood, and value it as you ought, I will pass over you." This would have been sufficient to plunge him in dark despair about himself, inasmuch as it

was quite impossible that the human mind could ever sufficiently appreciate the precious blood of the lamb. What gave peace was the fact that Jehovah's eye rested upon the blood, and that He knew its worth. This tranquillized the heart. The blood was outside, and the Israelite inside, so that he could not possibly see it; but GOD SAW IT, AND THAT WAS QUITE ENOUGH.

The application of this to the question of a sinner's peace is very plain. The Lord Jesus Christ, having shed His precious blood, as a perfect atonement for sin, has by His own blood "entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12), and God's testimony assures the believing sinner that everything is settled on his behalf--settled not by his estimate of the blood, but by the blood itself, which God estimates so highly that because of it, without a single jot or tittle added thereto, He can righteously forgive all sin, and accept the sinner as perfectly righteous in Christ. How can any one ever enjoy settled peace, if his peace depends upon his estimate of the blood? Impossible! The loftiest estimate which the human mind can form of the blood must fall infinitely short of its divine preciousness; and, therefore, if our peace were to depend upon our valuing it as we ought we could no more enjoy settled peace than if

we were seeking it by "works of law." There must either be a sufficient ground of peace in the blood *alone*, or we can never have peace. To mix up our estimate with it is to upset the entire fabric of Christianity, just as effectually as if we were to conduct the sinner to the foot of Mount Sinai and put him under a covenant of works. Either Christ's atoning sacrifice is sufficient, or it is not. If it is sufficient, why those doubts and fears? The words of our *lips* profess that the work is finished; but the doubts and fears of the *heart* declare that it is not. Every one who doubts his full and everlasting forgiveness denies, so far as he is concerned, the completeness of the sacrifice of Christ.

But there are very many who would shrink from the idea of deliberately and avowedly calling in question the efficacy of the blood of Christ, who nevertheless have not settled peace. Such persons profess to be quite assured of the sufficiency of the blood, *if only they* were sure of an interest therein—*if only* they had the right kind of faith. There are many precious souls in this unhappy condition. They are occupied with their interest and their faith, instead of with Christ's blood and God's word. In other words, THEY ARE LOOKING IN AT SELF, INSTEAD OF OUT AT CHRIST. This is not faith; and, as a consequence, they have not peace. An Israelite

within the blood-stained lintel could teach such souls a most seasonable lesson. He was not saved by his interest in, or his thoughts about, the blood, but simply by the blood. No doubt, he had a blessed interest in it; and he would have his thoughts likewise; but then, God did not say, "When I see your interest in the blood, I will pass over you." Oh! no; THE BLOOD, in all its solitary dignity and divine efficacy, was set before Israel; and had they attempted to place even a morsel of unleavened bread beside the blood, as a ground of security, they would have made Jehovah a liar, and denied the sufficiency of His remedy.

We are ever prone to look at something in or connected with ourselves as necessary, in order to make up, with the blood of Christ, the groundwork of our peace. There is a sad lack of clearness and soundness on this vital point, as is evident from the doubts and fears with which so many of the people of God are afflicted. We are apt to regard the fruits of the Spirit *in* us, rather than the work of Christ *for* us, as the foundation of peace. But it is the blood of Christ alone which gives peace, imparts perfect justification, divine righteousness, purges the conscience, brings us into the holiest of all, justifies God in receiving the believing sinner, and constitutes our title to all the joys, the dignities, and the

glories of heaven. (See Romans iii. 24-26; v. 9; Eph. ii. 13-18; Col. i. 20-22; Heb. ix. 14; x. 19; xiii. 20; 1 Peter i. 19; ii. 24; 1 John i. 7.)

It will not, I fondly hope, be supposed that, in seeking to put "the precious blood of Christ" in its divinely-appointed place, I would write a single line which might seem to detract from the value of the Spirit's operations. God forbid. The Holy Ghost reveals Christ; makes us to know, enjoy, and feed upon Christ; He bears witness to Christ; He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He is the power of communion, the seal, the witness, the earnest, the unction. In short, His blessed operations are absolutely essential.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, the work of the Spirit is not the ground of peace; for, if it were, we could not have settled peace until Christ's coming, inasmuch as the work of the Spirit, in the Church, will not, properly speaking, be complete till then. He still carries on His work in the believer. He is the sole Author of every right desire, every holy aspiration, every pure affection, every divine experience, every sound conviction; but, clearly, His work *in* us will not be complete until we have left this present scene and taken our place with Christ in the glory, just as, in the case of Abraham's servant, his work

was not complete, in the matter of Rebecca, until he had presented her to Isaac. Not so the work of Christ *for* us. That is absolutely and eternally complete. He could say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii. 4).

Hence, therefore, the paschal lamb, as the ground of Israel's peace, is a marked and beautiful type of Christ as the ground of the believer's peace. There was nothing to be added to the blood on the lintel, neither is there anything to be added to the blood on the mercy-seat. The "unleavened bread" and "bitter herbs" were necessary, but not as forming, either in whole or in part, the ground of peace. They were for the inside of the house, and formed the characteristics of the communion there; but THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB WAS THE FOUNDATION OF EVERYTHING. It saved them from death, and introduced them into a scene of life, light, and peace. It formed the link between God and His redeemed people. As a people linked with God, on the ground of accomplished redemption, it was their high privilege to meet certain responsibilities; but these responsibilities did not form the link, but merely flowed out of it.

C. H. M.

“WHO IS HE THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD?”

I JOHN V. 4, 5.

THE first thing I have to know is what the world is; and in one verse this is summed up: “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world.”

Of course, if I do not know what the world is, I cannot know what I ought to be delivered from. The world knew not Christ. Whatever knows not Christ is the world, and whoever loves it, the love of the Father is not in him.

There are, I may say, four distinct ways in which one is delivered, or rather in which the *sense* of deliverance is made known to the soul, as well as the *power* of it.

1. The first is stated as a principle in the passage before us. “That which is born of God overcomes the world”; and therefore every divinely new-born soul does in some degree overcome the world. FAITH is the power by which it is effected, and THE SON OF GOD is the object for faith, by which the victory is consummated.

If I by faith have my soul set on Jesus as the Son of God, apart from and beyond the world, I receive the strength and sense of His victory over it. I am of good cheer, because He has overcome it. I am in His

strength, and with Him above it. I am not alone, buffeting the adverse activities here; but I see Him above them all, as having surmounted them, and from the very fact of my believing in Him, my soul is with Him, away and apart from all that is contrary to Him. I am above it in the very action of life, the result of faith in Him. If the world besets me, or hampers or baffles me in any way, the moment my eye rests on Him, the Son of God, I am above it. I may not see my extrication, but I am in victory over it; I have a place and power superior to it.

2. The second way or power of deliverance is that my true place now is with Christ in heaven. That is the *reach*, if I may so say, of the Spirit of God now. It is the place where the soul by faith enters into the great result of the love of God; that inner circle of His presence where the prodigal shares in the joys of God, and knows that he is in intimate nearness in his Father's house; where he is unencumbered and irreproachable and irreprovable in His sight. My citizenship is there, and if known and enjoyed there I must in proportion be dissociated in principle, taste, and interest from the world. A man happy with Christ in heaven as his own place could not be happy in the world as such.

3. The third is that I am dead, that God treats me as dead. Now, if I am dead, the

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world is nothing to me, because it is only as a man I could enjoy the world. A man really dead has no interest whatever in it.

The place of death, in which God sets us morally, effects varied blessings for us in respect to our deliverance from the world.

Let us note them *seriatim* in the Epistles.

In ROMANS, I being dead through the body of Christ am freed from the law, and therefore I am to present my body a living sacrifice as my reasonable service, not conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of my mind. How else could it be if I am freed from the law by being dead? What more grateful than to present it to Him who freed me from a world where I could only cry out, “ O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ”

In I CORINTHIANS, i., etc., the apostle shows how the cross of Christ sets aside the wisdom of the world; and therefore he determined to know among them only Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; for if there had been wisdom in the world, the prince of it would not have crucified Him, therefore the cross is foolishness to it. The cross, Christ crucified, delivers me from the wisdom of the world, as in 2 Cor. v. I am an entirely new creation; “ old things are passed away,” “ all things are become new.”

In GALATIANS, I find that, because I am crucified with Christ, the law has no place in

perfecting me; and therefore the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

IN EPHESIANS, I am on the other side, through Christ's death, and therefore above the prince of the power of the air; which otherwise I could not be.

IN COLOSSIANS, I am not like the Gnostics, trying to detach myself from the world by not touching or tasting; but through Christ I am dead to the rudiments of the world.

4. The fourth way in which I am loosened and detached from the world is by being impressed with the vanity and impermanency of it; but this is the lowest order of deliverance. It is only alluded to when there is distinct leaning of the heart to earth. Paul speaks of it in 1 Cor. vii., when writing on marriage; and again in Heb. xii.; but he never speaks there of their being dead, though he connects all their blessings with resurrection. James speaks of the world being a vapour which passeth away; and Peter dwells largely on the present heaven and earth being dissolved, and argues therefrom what manner of persons ought we to be?

Finally, John, in the REVELATION, judges, afflicts, and by terrible strokes crushes the whole of the present order of things (*cosmos*), so that there is not a shred left for nature to cling to, the wrath of God devouring it all.

A LOVE STRONG AS DEATH.

TWO Greek philosophers, Damon and Pythias, of the sect of the Pythagoreans, were united by a friendship so firm and constant that they were willing, if necessary, even to die for each other.

Dionysius the Elder, the tyrant of Syracuse, condemned Damon to death. The unfortunate man humbly entreated the prince to allow him to depart for a few days to visit his broken-hearted family, and to settle his affairs, promising to return by a certain day.

Dionysius consented, on condition that someone should remain in his place as surety for his return.

Damon's friend, Pythias, having been apprised of the conditions, did not wait for Damon to have recourse to him; he offered himself as substitute for his friend, and, having been accepted, he willingly repaired to the public prison, and Damon was immediately set at liberty. Everyone (the tyrant especially) waited with impatience for the issue of so uncertain and extraordinary an event.

The day fixed for the execution approached, yet Damon did not return. People blamed the folly of so rash a surety, and pitied his blind tenderness.

In the meanwhile the scaffold was prepared. Crowds had already assembled, and officers

were about to conduct the innocent Pythias to death.

Suddenly Damon arrived and delivered his generous friend. All Syracuse, astonished, cried out loudly for the pardon of the criminal. The tyrant granted it readily; and, touched with a fidelity so extreme, entreated them to receive him as a third participator in their virtuous friendship.

One hardly knows which to admire most, the devotion of Pythias, or the faithfulness of Damon. Each was willing to be sacrificed for the other to a tyrant's cruelty. Devoted to his friend, Pythias is a willing surety, and, if needful, is prepared to die for him. Faithful to his promise, at all cost to himself, Damon returns, that he who had stood surety for his life may be saved from a cruel death. The heart even of a tyrant is touched, and he desires to share in a union so true. But what is all this compared with the love of Him who

“ Did a servant's form assume,
Beset with sorrow round”;

who entered not merely a prison, but a world of sinners, where He endured the constant “contradiction of sinners against Himself”? Nor was He only *willing* to die if needful, but came on purpose to give Himself a ransom for many; *laying down* His life, which not all the power of man and Satan *could* have taken

from Him had He not "offered Himself"; saying, as they fell to the ground before Him, "If ye seek me, let these go their way."

Nor was it for a *friend* He died.

"Thou for Thine *enemies* wast slain;
What love with Thine can vie?"

And *such* a death! Not all the cruel mockery, nor all the torture of the Roman scourge, not all that the rage and malice of men and Satan could bring upon Him, could wring one resentful exclamation from *His* patient, suffering lips. Deeply as He felt it all, and all the more deeply because He *loved* men with a love no mere human heart can fathom or understand, all was as nothing compared with that awful moment when, the Bearer of our sins, He was forsaken of God, whose delight He had been from eternity. Then, and then only, is wrung from His holy lips that most solemn, significant and bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?"

Alas, why? Let those who love His name reply, and, in the presence of *such* love, ever "stand in awe, and sin not."

The heart of a tyrant could be touched by the love of Damon and Pythias; yet thousands have heard, and do hear, of the LOVE OF CHRIST unmoved. A tyrant could desire to have part in a union so admirable in his estimation, but a union which a moment might dissolve; while to thousands of men the offer

of eternal union in life with Him who is the "chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely," falls unheeded on the ear; "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life," the trifles of time, anything, everything is preferred before Him, nay, death itself is chosen rather than CHRIST; and the love that would have saved, instead of being the source of eternal joy, must become to those who have rejected it, a cause of intolerable anguish when, in "outer darkness," they recall its wondrous ways, its glorious offers, its gracious pleadings. Then hope can never more come to their relief.

J. L. K.

"Pray!" said a mother to her dying child;
 "Pray!" and in token of assent he smiled.
 Most willing was the spirit; but so weak
 The failing frame, that he could scarcely speak.
 At length he cried, "Dear mother, in God's
 book
 Is it not written, Unto Jesus look?
 I can look up; I have no strength for prayer:
 'LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED,' is there."
 (Isaiah xlv. 22).

THE TWO APPEARINGS OF CHRIST.

“ Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

“ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so

“ Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”—HEB. ix. 26—28.

THE blessed object of the Saviour's first appearing in our world, is here distinctly stated. “ But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to *put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*” He who had long been shadowed forth by Jewish sacrifices, appeared, in due time, Himself, to accomplish that which was impossible for them to do, namely, to make a full end of sin. The passage is most definite. It is the statement of Christ's own perfect work, *for the sinner*, on the cross. The sinless One died for sinners. Oh! what love, grace, and goodness! “ God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 8.) To these glad tidings, faith's answer is, “ That's me. That's just

what I am, *a sinner*. But God loves me, *a sinner*. Christ died for me, *a sinner*. God's word says it. I believe it. Then, oh ! then, I am saved, saved through death, and happy in God's redeeming love."

Surely this is not *presumption*. Oh, no ! Being included in the condemnation, "All have sinned," I am entitled to the work of grace *for sinners*. Hence, in place of it being *presumption*, it is God-honouring, Christ-exalting, soul-saving faith.

When the soul has been led to see in the light the hatefulness of sin, and by the quickening power of God's Spirit, it then, for the first time, gets a taste of sin's bitterness. It is a terrible thing for the soul to be searched by the light of the Lord, and at the same time to be in darkness as to the rich provisions of grace for all its need. Several cases of this kind we have lately witnessed. But, oh ! who could describe the agony of a soul in this state, especially when accompanied by the stinging anguish of self-reproach. The piteous cries of such sound long in one's ears. Oh ! what an evil and malignant thing sin is !

Should this paper fall into the hands of anyone who is distressed about his soul's eternal welfare, and anxiously inquiring, "Oh ! how shall I get rid of sin ?" we can only reply, that the text before us, and others of a similar nature, furnish the true answer to this import-

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ant question. Christ put away sin for us on the cross, by the sacrifice of Himself. It was got rid of there for us by Him, when He shed His precious blood, and we are forgiven through faith in that blood. "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name *whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins* " (Acts x. 43.) The moment you have faith in Christ as the Saviour you are forgiven. "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace " (Eph. i. 7.) This is true now, at the present time, of all them that believe.

The light of God having broken in upon your once benighted soul, you now see the sin for which the blessed Jesus died, and which He put away on Calvary. You are actually groaning beneath the burden of that which has no place in the sight of God, Christ by His one perfect sacrifice having put it all and for ever away. "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." On the ground of this "one offering," God says of believers, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more " (Heb. x. 14, 17.) Sins are forgiven and forgotten in the case of all who trust in Jesus. True, the Father deals with them as children, and chastens them about their sins; but they can never be judged as sinners, Christ having been judged for

them. Sin could only be got rid of by death; and the blessed Jesus, in the greatness of His love, died the sinner's death, and thereby made a full end of his sin.

This makes the matter quite plain as to how sin was completely abolished. It was by the work of Christ alone, by the sacrifice of Himself. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3.) Christ risen from the dead, and gone up on high, is the eternal witness that sin and sins, root and branch, have been put away according to the demands of the glory of God and the entire need of the sinner. This is God's answer to the question, and ought to satisfy every conscience, as to how sin is to be got rid of. It is done! Believe it, and let your heart be surrendered to Jesus in love, gratitude and praise for ever.

And now, observe, the only way for a sin-burdened soul to get relief is through faith in the work of Christ *for us*. There is now, blessed be God, a work of grace *in you*. But the only "true ground of peace" is the work of Christ on the cross *for you*. It is also the only ground of the work of grace *in us*, for how could the Spirit work *in us*, had not Christ died *for us*? Still, it is only through believing that the conscience finds rest and relief; through believing what Christ

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is to us, and what He has done for us. Nothing but the work of Christ will ever satisfy the conscience in the presence of God about sin. If the soul should slip into something like relief or rest on any other ground it will not be lasting. Its sorrows may return and be deeper than ever, because in such a case it may accuse itself of hypocrisy.

But although Christ has appeared, and appeared as the Putter-away of sin, as the Accomplisher of the great work of grace and love for man, nevertheless man is not forgiven, he is not saved, until he believes in the Lord Himself, and has faith in His finished work. The blood of Christ is the only remedy for sin. If that remedy be neglected, the two dark clouds of death and judgment hang frowning over the sinner's head. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Awful indeed will be the doom of those on whom they burst forth in their unmigitated fury, and hurl into endless woe. He who rejects the sacrifice mentioned in the 26th verse, falls back as a matter of course on the original appointment in the 27th verse. "The wages of sin is death," but after this the judgment.

Should death come to the sinner before he comes to the Saviour a still more awful death awaits him, called "the second death," or eternal banishment from the presence of the

living God, in the gulf of hopeless despair. But, oh! how changed and different everything is to the man of faith! He is associated with Christ, who has passed through death and judgment for him. He stands with Him on the rock of resurrection, in the power of resurrection-life. Death and judgment are behind him. In Christ, he has passed from death unto life. Nothing now fills the prospect to faith, but Christ Himself, and coming glory. "Unto them that look for Him shall He *appear* the second time without sin unto salvation."

Mark the expression, dear reader, in this verse, "Them that look for Him." Does not this passage clearly teach us that the true and proper position of the Christian is to be looking for the Lord Himself? Not, certainly, for natural death, or for any other predicted event that is coming upon the earth. True, death may come before the Lord; but we are not to be looking for it. Christ Himself is our "blessed hope." We should allow nothing to come between the heart and Him. Then mark the happy assurance which the word here gives to the heart, "And unto them that look for Him *shall He appear.*"

They will not be disappointed. He will certainly come *for them*, whether they *are* sleeping or waking, and He will *appear with them*. "I will come again, and receive you

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unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also " (John xiv.) Again, " When Christ, who is our life, shall *appear*, then shall ye also *appear* with Him in glory " (Col. iii. 4.) His first appearing was in lowly grace, as the obedient Servant, the Doer of His Father's will, and the Accomplisher of the great work of redemption. His second appearing will be in divine majesty, and brightest glory, and all His saints with Him. Then He will have nothing to say to sin, having made an end of it at His first appearing.

The Spirit of God here contrasts the future prospects of the man of the world and the man of faith. The former, alas! has nothing to look forward to but death and judgment. The latter is waiting for the full salvation of God. To which of those two classes does my dear reader belong? the world or Christ? Oh! solemn, solemn question! Let it have your immediate, your undivided attention. If a single doubt clouds your mind, rest not until it is removed. Be sure that you belong by faith to Jesus. Are you really resting on His finished, His accepted work?

Be not misled by mere appearance. So far as present appearances go, the difference between the two classes may be very little. They may live in the same house, sit at the same table, and often converse happily together on the same subjects. But notwithstanding all

that, there is in reality a wide difference between them, a difference as wide as heaven and earth. And were the Lord to come while that difference exists, it would be widened to infinity, and the separation would be eternal. The one would be caught up to Christ and glory, the other would fall beneath the crushing stroke of the terrible judgments that are coming on the earth, after the Church has been caught away. Overwhelming thought to the affectionate Christian now! And oh! who can tell at what moment the Lord may come? His own word is, "Surely I come quickly."

Oh! that the thoughtless, careless one may be led to think on these eternal realities, ere it be too late! Oh! that he may be led to receive the blessed Saviour *now*. To come by faith to Jesus *now*. He is still saying in love to those who are outside, "Come unto Me. . . . I will give you rest"; "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Oh! then, flee at once to Jesus. Take refuge in Himself. Delay not. Enter by the new and living way into the rest of God. You are welcome, welcome to the bosom of His love. He will rejoice over you with singing, and set you in His own presence, robed and crowned according to the perfect love of His own heart, and infinite dignity of Christ, the eternal efficacy of His sacrifice, and the boundless glories of His grace.

C. H. M.

“NONE OTHER NAME.”

“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. . . . Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv, 10, 12).

SWIFT as yon swallows fly,
Airy and light,
Glance the brief moments by,
Out of thy sight.
Broad as yon river flows,
Shining as fair,
All thy life-current flows,
Onward, but WHERE?
Think of ETERNITY,
Dear one, in time;
Birds have their voice for thee,
River and rhyme.
Waste not the sunny hours,
Golden and few;
Else when the tempest lowers,
What wilt thou do?
Art thou a child of day,
Saved by the blood?

Hast thou the right to say
 "Father" to God?
 Are all thy crimson sins
 On thee, or gone?
 "Peace" upon earth begins;
 Is it thine own?
 Oh, come to Jesus now!
 Soon, soon too late!
 Gladness shall crown thy brow,
 Love banish hate;
 All the old enmity
 Sunk into shame;
 Jesus thy joy shall be,
 "NONE OTHER NAME."

"I COULD CONVERT ALL THE HOUSE."

THOSE who are conversant with the north of England, and especially with some parts of Lancashire, will doubtless have been struck with the character of its scenery. The hills are lofty and bold. Sometimes at a great elevation there is an extensive table-land, chiefly moor and uninclosed, stretching out for several miles. The scenery varies into rugged and rocky defiles, leading into fertile meadows, which again give place to ruder features.

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I was called into a neighbourhood such as answers to the former description. The village was situated on the edge of a moor, which extended some distance. The country was wild in the extreme, and the population not a little like it. Nature had not been prodigal of charms to the locality, nor had civilization done much for the people. They were rude and rough, yet hearty. I had an “ open door ” to witness to the grace of God, and met with a willing audience. I was kindly invited to partake of refreshment at the house of a newly married couple, whose hospitality was as cheerfully bestowed as it was cordially received.

Whilst at tea, a young woman entered from the neighbourhood; and, as I was speaking of God’s grace to some others who were present, she said she had just left a dying person who stood greatly in need of it.

I need not say that I immediately volunteered a visit.

We went together, and on entering the house, found a poor woman propped up in bed. The impress of death was on her features, and it needed but little skill to discern that her days were numbered; indeed, her time could be reckoned by hours.

A very few words introduced my errand and myself.

Her danger quickened her apprehension,

and she asked imploringly if I could do anything for her soul. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "if I might but live, how different would I be in future! I have not done as I ought, and now I am dying; Lord, have mercy upon me!"

Here I found soil ready prepared to drop the seed into. The Spirit of God had revealed her condition; conviction was wrought in the mind. Would not God permit the balm to be applied to her wounds?

I sat beside her, and as simply as I could put before her the grace of God in the gift of a Saviour, and how JESUS was such indeed.

She listened with agonized attention, only interrupted by the occasional change of position to relieve her breathing.

After offering up a prayer, I withdrew for the preaching, which was to commence at six o'clock, and found the audience already assembled.

When the service was concluded, it rained in torrents, and I had the prospect of a twelve-miles' ride over the moors, before I should reach my abode for the night.

I could not, however, hurry away. This poor woman was laid upon my heart, and I again sought her cottage before leaving the neighbourhood. I found her pretty much as I had left her, as to bodily suffering. Inquiring if she had thought over what had been

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advanced in my previous visit, she replied that she had done so, as much as her pain would allow. “ But I want something more,” she said; “ I feel I am not prepared to die; Lord, have mercy upon me! Oh, if He would but spare me a few days, that I might repent! ”

“ My good woman,” I replied, “ days, months, or years, would not make your condition or salvation more secure. The Word is nigh thee; that “ if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved ” (Rom. x. 9).

Still the veil was over her mind. She groaned in very bitterness of spirit, “ I have neglected the chief thing for which I came into the world. O Lord, have mercy upon me! Cannot you give me any ease, sir? ” she said, appealing to me.

“ Yes, my good woman,” I replied; “ you know if you were travelling by the railway to any place, you must have a ticket to pass you. And now you are travelling from time to eternity, and there is a ticket that will pass you.”

“ Heigh! ” she exclaimed, “ do tell what it is.”

I briefly replied, “ The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“ Will that pass me? ” she eagerly inquired.

“ It will, indeed,” said I.

“Do let me learn it by heart.” And she endeavoured to learn this heavenly passport by heart, making such efforts to speak as her strength would allow until she could repeat it word for word. Strange as it may appear, this cost her some effort.

The rain beat in torrents against the window. The wind howled in the doorway. Nature was boisterous without, but this strange scene of a dying woman (in the very article of death) seeking to learn a text of God’s word, as a child does her catechism, absorbed all our attention.

I awaited the result. My dying pupil laid hold of the letter; might not God apply it in power by the Spirit to her soul? I prayed with her, and left her.

Her last imploring appeal was, “It will pass me, won’t it?”

Unhesitatingly I answered her that it would; for surely the Word of God presented before Him, the Holy Spirit’s testimony to the efficacy of the blood of JESUS would pass this poor sinner.

She died in two days afterwards; yet before she expired, the Spirit bore witness with her spirit that the blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed her from all sin. She felt, as she said, “it *would* pass her”; and as if the assurance of her safety might be really indulged, she said to those about her, “If the

Lord did but suffer me to live three months,
*I have gotten such hold of the truth, I could
 convert all the house."*

Surely she sleeps in JESUS.

A PRESENT AND PERFECT SALVATION.

IT is only the voice of Jesus that can speak peace to a troubled soul, and give full assurance of a present salvation. Only let the weary and heavy laden listen to Him, and it shall be so.

Turn with me, in the first place, to John v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." This is the Lord's own declaration as to the present condition of those who believe the gospel, the truth here presented. Nothing could be more pointed and solemn. He begins with a "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

"I say unto you." This is the voice of Jesus.

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me." This is the truth to be believed, "the gospel of the grace of God." It has its source in God, and "God is love."

It flows from the heart of God, the fountain of redeeming love, and JESUS is the channel of that love to us. It is elsewhere called "the gospel of God. . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. i. 1—3).

Every blessing to the sinner flows from the heart of God as its source, and comes to us in the Person and through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we truly believe this, we are drawn to God in Christ, as to the One who loves us, and sent His only begotten Son to die for us, that we might not only be saved, but brought to Himself, and made happy in His love for ever. This truth, when believed, wins the confidence of our hearts, and we trust in Jesus as our Saviour, knowing that God is glorified, and has His own joy in our salvation.

And now, mark the three grand consequences of faith in the word of Jesus.

First, the possession of everlasting life. It is a present reality. "*Hath* everlasting life." Not, observe, *may* at some future period have it, but "*hath*" it now, at this present time.

Secondly, "And shall not come into condemnation." The believer is *now* completely and for ever justified. He can never again even stand in judgment. He stands *in* Christ and *with* Christ. And he is just as safe as Christ Himself, being by faith *one with Him*.

Thirdly, "But is passed from death unto

life.” The state of the believer is entirely and for ever changed. He has passed from a condition of death in trespasses and sins, into one of life, forgiveness and complete justification. This is the present condition of every believer in Christ Jesus, without one exception.

Surely this is a *present salvation*, and an everlasting salvation. The life, standing, and condition of the soul are all completely changed. Christ Himself is the life, standing and condition of the believer in the sight of God. To know this is light to the mind, peace to the conscience, and joy to the heart. But oh ! my dear reader, hear it, learn it, believe it, from the lips of Christ Himself.

Turn now to Luke vii. 36—50. Here we find a poor, distressed soul at the feet of Jesus; the only right place for such. But Jesus is much engaged with Simon and his friends. Will He attend to this poor, disreputable sinner at once, and before them all? Oh, yes ! He will; He does. And His loving, gracious, tender heart is so filled with her case that He seems to pay no more attention either to Simon or his friends, save to show them how much He values her weeping love above all that self-righteousness can do. The poor woman’s tears and kisses were a richer feast, and more refreshing to His heart, than anything Simon had set before Him.

But mark especially the three blessings which He said were now hers.

First, "And He said unto her, thy sins *are* forgiven." It was not, you perceive, something *yet* to be done, but something *already* done. It was an accomplished, a present reality. "*Thy sins are forgiven.*"

Secondly, "Thy faith hath saved thee." She was already *saved*. It was done. "Thy faith," thy confidence in me as thy Saviour, "hath saved thee." Not, observe, her tears, her kisses, or her ointment, precious as these were to the heart of Jesus; but her "faith." This is encouraging; for *such* humility is often wanting. Few come up to the measure of this poor woman. But blessed be God, wherever there is *simple faith*, there is a *present salvation*.

Thirdly, "Go in peace." All is now peace to the soul, and peace with God. The voice of Jesus speaks peace to her. Everything that was against her has been put away on the ground of the sacrifice of Christ. Such are God's ways of wondrous grace with every sinner that falls at the feet of Jesus for mercy.

But someone who reads this paper may say, "This is just where I am, I know. And none but the Lord Himself knows the depths of distress I have passed through in my soul, and the tears I have shed. But I cannot feel that the heavy burden of my sins is removed,

and I am still an utter stranger to peace. Why is this?"

Only one reason, beloved reader, can be given for the continuance of such a state of soul. And that is, you are not listening to and believing what Jesus is saying to you. You are listening to the suggestions of your own mind, and guided by the feelings of your own heart.

Shut your ears against every voice but that of Jesus, and you will soon be happy. You have yet to learn this all-important principle, namely, *that you must believe a thing before you can feel it*. You must *believe* that your sins are forgiven before you can *feel* it. You must *believe* that you are saved before you can *feel* it. You must *believe* that you have peace before you can *feel* it.

If, as you say, you are at the feet of Jesus, in earnest about your soul, and looking to Him alone for salvation, then, believe, oh! believe His word. He is saying to you, as plainly as words can say anything, "Thy sins *are* forgiven; thy faith *hath* saved thee, go in *peace*." "Only believe," and you will be quite happy, and rejoicing. How could you be otherwise, if you believed His word? But how can you expect to find rest to your soul, before you believe the truth that declares you have peace? And let there be no half work; believe it fully; allow no doubt or question to

arise in your mind. Hear Christ Himself saying these precious words to you. What would you have thought if, when Jesus, in such love and tenderness, said to this poor woman at His feet, "Thy sins are forgiven," she had said to Him, "Well, I hope they are." Could anything have been more wounding to the heart of Jesus?

Well, and what have you been doing all this time? And what are thousands of His dear ones doing? Though it may be in ignorance, and in much tenderness of soul, still they are wounding His patient, loving heart, with their unworthy doubts and fears. Surely when *He* says, "Thy sins are forgiven," you ought implicitly, and with all your heart, to believe it, and doubt no more for ever. His word never changes, and your position never can in His sight. You may experience many changes of mind and feeling within yourself, but your life and position in Christ are, like Himself, unchangeable.

May your soul get a firm hold of the precious words of Jesus in all their divine fulness and simplicity, and rejoice before Him in the happy assurance of your own *present and perfect salvation*.

“THOU’RT A GRAND LAD.”

IT pleased God to bless the preaching of His Word in a manufacturing village not far distant from the place where I lived; and whilst many souls were awakened to eternal concerns, some few were brought savingly to realize the value of the work of Christ.

Connected with this movement, there came before me an incident of no little interest. A young man, the son of one of those whose conversion I have mentioned above, was taken seriously ill. He was a fine-looking youth, about nineteen years of age, of steady moral habits, and a great comfort to his parents. He had taken a violent cold, accompanied by fever.

After being confined to the house a fortnight, he was able to go out a little for fresh air. It was early in the year, and the wind was piercing and cold. Whether he was too lightly clad for the season, or was premature in exposing himself, it would be useless to speculate upon; but he returned to the house, complaining of being chilled, and shivering. He retired to bed early, but was attacked by violent pain in the abdomen, which was followed by confirmed inflammation of the bowels.

His sufferings were acute. Prompt remedies afforded no relief. His parents sought

comfort in prayer; and a precious sight it was to see the poor father earnestly entreating God's mercy on behalf of the soul of his child, who, until lately, had been unconcerned about his own. Others, too, of his acquaintance, united in supplication and sympathy.

I saw him after his medical attendant had given up all hopes of his recovery and I found him ready to listen to anything I could bring before him. He was all eagerness to realize the blessing of sins forgiven, and was but a very short way from the kingdom of heaven in that respect.

On appealing to him, after some minutes' conversation, as to whether he had understood me, his answer was conveyed in striking, yet intelligible language.

"I think," he said, "I am much in the same fashion as you have described."

We united in prayer, and parted.

Two days afterwards, his end approached. The sun, on which his eyes were so shortly to close, now shone in at the window. His father, mother, and grandmother stood weeping around him. Two or three Christian friends were also there.

After much suffering and prostration, he rather suddenly exclaimed, "I think I shall soon be off," and he looked to his mother particularly.

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She, poor thing, could scarcely contain for weeping. “ Ah,” she said (using the dialect of her neighbourhood) “ it goes hard to part with thee. Thou’rt a grand lad.”

“ Mother,” he said, “ the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; and you must say, Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Turning to his grandmother, he said, “ I have always loved thee, and thou hast loved me ; but I fear thou art not concerned about thy soul as thou should’st be. Promise me thou wilt go with my father to hear the gospel where he goes. I should like us all to meet in heaven.”

He looked at his father earnestly and affectionately ; held out his hand, and asked them all to shake it ; then calmly bade each one good-bye, as if leaving for a visit to the country ; stretched out his arms, calling upon the name of JESUS, and breathed his last.

J.W.

It is the Man Christ Jesus who is our Mediator ; none so near, none who has come down so low, and entered with divine power into the need, and all the need, of man. The conscience is purified by His WORK, the heart is relieved by that which He WAS, and which He is for ever.

SAUL OF TARSAUS.

IN contemplating the character of this most remarkable man we may gather up some fine principles of gospel truth. He seems to have been peculiarly fitted to show forth, in the first place, what the grace of God *can* do; and, in the second place, what the greatest amount of legal effort *cannot* do. If ever there was a man upon this earth whose history illustrates the truth that "salvation is by grace, without works of law," Saul of Tarsus was that man. Indeed, it would seem as though God had specially designed to present, in the person of Saul, a living example, first, of the depth to which a *sinner* can descend; and secondly, of the height to which a *legalist* can attain. He was at once the very *worst* and the very *best* of men, the chief of sinners and the chief of legalists. He travelled down to the lowest point of human wickedness, and climbed to the loftiest summit of human righteousness. He was a sinner of the sinners, and a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Let us, then, contemplate him as

THE CHIEF OF SINNERS.

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

Now, let the reader note particularly that the Spirit of God declares concerning Saul of Tarsus that he was the chief of sinners. It is not the expression of Paul's humility, though no doubt he was humble under the sense of what he had been. We are not to be occupied with the feelings of an inspired writer, but with the statements of the Holy Ghost who inspired him. It is well to see this.

Very many persons speak of the feelings of the various inspired writers in a way calculated to weaken the sense of that precious truth, the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture. They may not mean to do so; but at a time like the present, when there is so much mental activity, so much of reason, so much of human speculation, we cannot be too guarded against aught that might even in appearance militate against the integrity of the Word of God. We are anxious that our readers should entertain the very highest thoughts respecting the Inspired Volume; that they should treasure it in their heart's affections, not as the expression of human feelings, however pious and praiseworthy, but as the depository of the thoughts of God. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 2).

Hence, therefore, in reading 1 Timothy i. 15 we are not to think of the feelings of man, but of the record of God, and this record declares that Paul was the chief of sinners. It is never once stated that anyone else was the chief of sinners. No doubt, in a secondary sense, each convicted heart will feel and own itself the vilest heart within its entire range of intelligence; but this is quite another matter. The Holy Ghost has declared of Paul, and of none other, that he was the chief of sinners; nor does the fact that He has told us this by the pen of Paul himself interfere with or weaken in the smallest degree, the truth and value of the statement. Paul was the chief of sinners.

No matter how bad any one else may be, Paul could say, "*I am chief.*" No matter how low any other man may feel himself to be; no matter how deeply sunk in the pit of ruin; a voice rises to his ear from a deeper point still, "*I am chief.*" There cannot be two chiefs, for if there were, it could only be said that Paul was one of them; whereas, it is most distinctly declared that he was "*chief.*"

But let us mark the object of all this dealing with the chief of sinners. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in *me first* Jesus Christ might show forth *all* long-suffering for a *pattern* to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

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The chief of sinners is in heaven. How did he get there? Simply by the blood of Jesus; and, moreover, he is Christ's "pattern" man. All may look at him, and see how they, too, are to be saved, for in such wise as the "chief" was saved, must all the subordinates be saved. The grace that reached the chief can reach all. The blood that cleansed the chief can cleanse all. The title by which the chief entered heaven is the title for all. The vilest sinner under the canopy of heaven may hearken to Paul saying, "I am chief, and yet I obtained mercy. Behold in me a pattern of Christ's long-suffering." There is not a sinner at this side the portal of hell, be he backslider or aught else, beyond the reach of the love of God, the blood of Christ, or the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

We shall now turn to the other side of Saul's character, and contemplate him as

THE CHIEF OF LEGALISTS.

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more*" (Phil. iii. 4).

Here we have a most valuable point. Saul of Tarsus stood, as it were, on the very loftiest crag of the hill of legal righteousness. He reached the topmost step of the ladder of human religion. He would suffer no man to

get above him. His religious attainments were of the very highest order. (See Gal. i. 14). No one ever got beyond him in the matter of working out a self-righteousness. "If *any* other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, *I more.*"

Is "any" man "trusting" in his temperance? Paul could say, "*I more.*"

Is "any" man "trusting" in his morality? Paul could say, "*I more.*"

Is "any" man "trusting" in ordinances, sacraments, religious services, or pious observances? Paul could say, "*I more.*"

Is "any" man proudly wrapping himself up in the pompous robes of orthodoxy, and "trusting" therein? Paul could say, "*I more.*"

In a word, let a man mount up the hill of legal righteousness as high as the most towering ambition or fervid zeal can carry him, and he will hear a voice falling upon his ear from a loftier height still, "*I more.*"

All this imparts a peculiar interest to the history of Saul of Tarsus. He lay at the very bottom of the pit of ruin, and he stood on the very summit of the hill of self-righteousness. Deep as any sinner may have sunk, Paul was deeper still. High as any legalist may have stood, Paul stood higher still. He combined in his own person the very worst and the very best of men. In him we see at one view the

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power of the blood of Christ and the utter worthlessness of the fairest robe of self-righteousness that ever decked the person of a legalist. Looking at him, no sinner need despair; looking at him no legalist can boast. If the chief of sinners is in heaven, I can get there too. If the greatest religionist, legalist and doer that ever lived had to come *down* from the ladder of self-righteousness, it is of no use for me to go *up*. Saul of Tarsus came up from the depths and down from the heights, and found his place at the pierced feet of Jesus of Nazareth. His guilt was no hindrance and his righteousness no use. The former was washed away by the blood of Christ, and the latter turned into dung and dross by the moral glory of Christ. It mattered not whether it was "*I chief*," or "*I more*." The cross was the only remedy. "God forbid," says this chief of sinners and prince of legalists, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

Paul had just as little idea of trusting in his righteousness as in his crimes. He was permitted to win the laurel of victory in the grand legal struggle with his "equals in his own nation," only that he might fling it, as a withered, worthless thing, at the foot of the cross. He was permitted to outstrip all in the

dark career of guilt, only that he might exemplify the power of the love of God and the efficacy of the blood of Christ.

The gospel has a double voice. It calls to the slave of vice who lies wallowing in the mire of moral pollution, and says, "*Come up.*" It calls to the busy, self-complacent religionist, who is vainly endeavouring to clamber up the steep sides of Mount Sinai, and says, "*Come down.*" Saul was no nearer to Christ as the chief of legalists than he was as the chief of sinners. There was no more justifying merit in his noblest efforts in the school of legalism than in his wildest acts of opposition to the name of Christ. He was saved by grace, saved by blood, saved by faith. There is no other way for sinner or legalist.

Thus much as to Saul of Tarsus in his two-fold character as chief of sinners and chief of legalists. There is one other point in his history at which we must briefly glance, in order to show the practical results of the grace of Christ wherever that grace is known. This will present him to our notice as

THE MOST LABORIOUS OF APOSTLES.

If Paul learnt to cease working for righteousness, he also learnt to begin working for Christ. When we behold, on the road leading to Damascus, the shattered fragments of

the worst and best of men; when we hear those pathetic accents emanating from the depths of a broken heart, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have *me* to do?"; when we see that man who had just left Jerusalem, in all the mad fury of a persecuting zealot, now stretching forth the hand of blind helplessness to be led like a little child into Damascus, we are disposed to form the very highest expectations as to his future career.

Nor are we disappointed. Mark the progress of that most remarkable man; behold his gigantic labours in the vineyard of Christ; see his tears, his toils, his travels, his perils, his struggles; see him as he bears his golden sheaves into the heavenly garner, and lays them down at the Master's feet; see him wearing the noble bonds of the gospel, and finally laying his head on a martyr's block, and say if the gospel of God's free grace, the gospel of Christ's free salvation, does away with good works. Nay, my reader, that precious gospel is the only true basis on which the superstructure of good works can ever be erected.

Morality, without Christ, is an icy morality. Benevolence, without Christ, is a worthless benevolence. Ordinances, without Christ, are powerless and valueless. Orthodoxy, without Christ, is heartless and fruitless. We must get to the end of *self*, whether it be a guilty

self or a religious self, and find Christ as the satisfying portion of our hearts, now and for ever. Then we shall be able to say, with truth,

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
More than all in Thee I find.”

Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus. He got rid of himself, and found his all in Christ; and hence, as we hang over the impressive page of his history, we hear, from the most profound depths of moral ruin, the words, “I am *chief*”; from the most elevated point in the legal system, the words, “I *more*”; and from amid the golden fields of apostolic labour, the words, “I laboured *more abundantly* than they all.”

C.H.M.

You may know the forgiveness of your sins, and yet your heart may not be bound to Christ, and you may never have stepped out of your way for a moment to declare that He is the Object of your heart, One so worthy in your eyes that the very thing that would distinguish you is the very thing you would give to distinguish Him.

“HE THAT BELIEVETH . . . HATH.”

A SHORT time ago the writer was a passenger in one of the carriages on the London and North Western Railway. At one of the stations, while the train was stopping, he saw a man walking up and down the platform as though undecided which carriage to enter. At length, seeing that no one beside the writer was in the compartment, he entered, and occupied the seat immediately facing him.

There was a frankness in the man's countenance and general appearance which seemed to draw one towards him. In order to open the conversation, a remark was made upon the severity of the weather.

He replied, that “all these things were designed for some wise and good end; but,” said he, “we are never satisfied. Depend upon it, everything is for our good, sir.”

Judging from these, and a few other remarks, that he was a true Christian, the writer handed him a little tract, entitled, “Working for Jesus”; at the same time asking the question, “Do you understand that?”

“Yes, sir, I do; and it is a blessed thing to work for Jesus. I mean, to teach in Sunday Schools, and that sort of thing, sir; because I've seen the good of it. In my own village, where years ago there was no school, we have a Sunday School, where some two hundred

children are taught, and I have witnessed the improvement ever since.”

“ Oh, yes! undoubtedly the Sunday School has been a blessing to many. But how sad it is that so many of the teachers so engaged are themselves unconverted, and some are perfectly ignorant and careless as to the way of salvation. How can such teaching be blessed to the good of souls? ”

“ No, sir, it can't; yet much good has been done in the Sunday School, and the work is increasing, which proves to me that there is blessing.”

The conversation upon this subject was continued for a little while, when, as we neared the junction where we must separate, the writer, in order to know what was his condition of soul, said, “ Well, now, can you say positively that you are a believer in Jesus, and are saved everlastingly? ”

“ I trust so, I hope so, sir; for we live by hopes, you know; and I read my Bible, and find it most precious. Indeed, I don't know what I should have done without it in all the troubles which I have had in my lifetime.”

“ Yes, but the word declares, ‘ He that *hath the Son hath life* ’ (John iii. 36). There is no doubt about it, but everlasting life is the *present possession* of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, in John iii. 16, we have, ‘ God so loved the world, that He gave

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His only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in Him should not *perish*, but have *everlasting life*.’ And if you turn to Romans viii. 1 you may read, ‘There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’

“ That is, Christ having ‘borne our sins in His own body on the tree,’ the dreadful debt, as we may call it, was then paid. ‘He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’ Man is now simply called upon to ‘believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,’ who gives, in unmistakable language, the blessed certainty, ‘He that believeth on *Me* hath everlasting life.’ ”

While the conversation lasted, the dear man repeated the portions of Scripture quoted; and at length the writer again asked him, “Can you say now that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have everlasting life?”

“ Yes,” said he, taking the writer’s hand; “I have no other foundation. Ah! what a blessed thing to have Christ only for a foundation, since everything else avails nought. And I have *proved Him*, sir, in many ways, during *sickness and poverty*, to be my support; and when penniless He has sustained me: but had it not been for Him and my Bible I could not have got through as I did.”

“ Then, dear friend, let me advise you, by

reading the Word of God, and pondering over it, still to keep close to the Lord, bearing in mind what He has said, 'For without *Me* ye can do nothing'; and be assured that in Him alone is found that which we so much need as we journey onward through the world."

We had now arrived at the junction, and as we parted he said, "Thank you, sir, for what you have said to me; I hope we may meet again some day."

"*We shall meet* in heaven," was the reply.

The scriptures quoted prove how contrary to the mind of God is that miserable teaching by which many of His people are kept in a state of uncertainty as regards a question which He has for ever settled in giving His beloved Son to die upon the cross. R.

We have something like an explanation or definition of faith in John iii. 33. "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." The testimony, or word of God, is the ground of faith. When the sinner receives God's word with the heart, as sure and certain truth, just because it is His word, he honours God with the confidence of his heart. He takes God at His word, and honours Him as the God of Truth. "He sets to his seal that God is true." He has faith.

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEPER.

LEVITICUS xiv. 1-8.

THE ordinance in Israel of the cleansing of the leper gives us a touching picture of God's way of cleansing a sinner, and bringing him back into His own blessed presence to worship and serve before Him.

Leprosy was a remarkable type of sin. It entirely unfitted a man for the presence of God. His place was "outside the camp." Whether he had few spots or many, he was pronounced "utterly unclean." All he could therefore truthfully say of himself was, "Unclean, unclean." The disease was most defiling. God alone could make a leper clean, and fit him to come into the camp again.

The true place, therefore, for a leper was outside the camp of Israel, outside of every thing of God, His presence His service, His worship; with rent garments head uncovered, and upper lip tied up, calling out, "Unclean!" lest any coming near should contract defilement. It is well for those who can take this self-loathing place, as without God, unclean, and undone before Him, unfit for His presence. Surely it is so; for we are told, that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," that all are guilty before Him. (Romans viii. 8; iii. 19.)

God, however, could meet the leper in this foul and hopeless condition, and bring him

back into the camp cleansed, and fit for His presence. In this ordinance we see great principles shadowed forth as to the way in which God meets us in our sin and guilt, fits us for His own blessed presence, and makes us to find rest and peace before Him in love.

1st. THE LEPER WAS BROUGHT UNTO THE PRIEST. (v. 2.) Wherever else he might go, or to whatever person, it would have been wholly unavailing. Out of all the people in the world, this one, and he only, had the power from God to deal with the leprosy, and to pronounce the leper clean. So we know that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts iv. 12.) Jesus only is the "way, and the truth, and the life": no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. (John xiv. 6.) The sinner must have to do with the Lord Jesus about his sins, or be outside God's presence for ever. There is salvation in no other. Jesus says, "Come!" "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." (Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 37.) How clear and encouraging is this!

2ndly. HE WAS EXAMINED BY THE PRIEST: "The priest shall look and behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed." The leper stood with his leprous spots exposed to the scrutinizing eye of God's priest. Dealing

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with God, though Christ, about our sin is no light matter. It is a deeply solemn experience to fall under the searching eye of God in His infinitely holy presence. To feel one's self a sinner *before a sin-hating God* can only be endured by the knowledge of the fact that He is a *sinner-loving God*; for all things are naked and open before Him. There is not a secret thing which is not wholly uncovered before His eye.

3rd. CLEANSING ONLY BY THE DEATH OF ANOTHER. The leper had to learn at this solemn moment that he could be cleansed only by a sacrifice being offered. A live bird was therefore taken, and *killed* over running (or living) water; for the death of Christ is connected with the outflowing of eternal life. (John iii. 14.) And surely God teaches the soul that is exercised about his sins before Him, that it is only by the death of Christ that he can be brought to stand in acceptance with Him; for "without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) The leper saw, in the suffering and death of the bird, God's way of meeting him in order to cleanse him from his uncleanness. So it is only by the death of Jesus the Son of God that the sinner finds peace with God, and cleansing of sin: "for Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) Then he saw

the living bird, with cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop, dipped into the blood of the dead bird: thus in a figure the dead bird is identified with the living bird, in order to be a type of Him who was dead and is alive again, and that for evermore. (Rev. 1. 18.) The dignity or majesty, incorruptibility, perfect humility, and other characteristics of Christ, may be typified by the scarlet, and cedar wood, and hyssop, to shew us the infinite power and efficacy of His precious blood.

4th. THE SPRINKLING OF BLOOD. There the leper stood looking at God's work for him, and then receiving God's remedy, and hearing God's sentence. He did nothing to merit any good, but received all from the God of Israel. Feeling his utter uncleanness and unfitness for God's presence, his mouth was stopped, while the priest sprinkled the blood upon him seven times, and "pronounced him clean."

This is most blessed. It touchingly shews us that salvation of the Lord. It gave perfect assurance to the leper, and left no room for a question. Whatever he felt, or others suggested, he had the consciousness that he was under the power of the blood; and through that alone God's priest had "pronounced him clean." And so the believer now, who simply has to do with Christ, God's only appointed Saviour, about his sins, is

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entitled to perfect peace entirely on the ground that Christ died for our sins, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; for *God's word* declares we are *now* justified by His blood. (Rom. v. 9.) We are thus *pronounced clean*.

5th. THE LIVING BIRD IS THEN LET LOOSE, to prefigure a risen Saviour. After He had purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. (Heb. i. 3.) So that the resurrection and ascension of Christ give perfect assurance that God was fully satisfied with Christ's atoning work, and that He saw in His death upon the cross the complete blotting out of the sins of His people. It was not possible that He should be holden of death. His flesh saw no corruption; but He was counted worthy of all glory, because He had so fully glorified the Father on the earth, and finished the work that He gave Him to do. Until the leper was cleansed, the living bird was detained; but the efficacy of the dead one being fully attested by the leper being pronounced clean, it was "let loose into the open field." What peace and comfort this must have ministered to the poor leper! And what perfect rest of soul the knowledge of Christ risen from the dead and gone to heaven gives us! Surely we can sing—

"My comfort, my rejoicing, all shall be,

Christ died and rose, He died and rose for me.
 He lives for me; for me He lives above:
 I'm lost in wonder in Immanuel's love."

6th. THE LEPER CLEANSED HIMSELF. After he was himself pronounced clean, he cleansed himself, and came into the camp. He washed his clothes, shaved off all his hair, and washed himself, and in this way came into the camp. So the believer that has had to do with God about his sins, and has the enjoyment of present forgiveness and cleansing by the blood of Jesus, has no confidence in the flesh; he sees that he himself is thoroughly unclean and everything connected with him unclean also, and that all his natural comeliness, all that he formerly gloried in, cannot bear the light of God's presence. But he acknowledges it unclean and unfit for God's which testifies to the everlasting efficacy of the blood of Jesus. "Now," said Jesus, "*are ye clean*, through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) Made nigh in Christ Jesus, and through His blood, we can, by the Spirit, enjoy God's presence, worship the Father, and serve Him acceptably.

H. H. S.

THE PROSPECT OF GLORY IN THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

MY attention was drawn to a young girl of fifteen years of age, who was assisted into the room where the gospel was preached in the village of B.

A. was an orphan, but happy in being adopted by an uncle and aunt, with whom she resided. They had no children of their own. The husband gained his livelihood from employment in lead mines which were worked in the neighbourhood.

How wonderful are the affections and instincts of nature! This friendless little girl, for such she was when she first found a home with these relatives, had a warm place in their hearts. They certainly doted upon her. Her face was interesting, her disposition ingenuous and sanguine. Their care of this niece reflected credit on their character, and the poor child repaid them with grateful love.

But about this time she was affected with a swelling in the knee. Medical skill was unable to remove it, and she fell into a decline. It pleased God, however, to reveal His Son in her, and she looked with tranquillity of mind to her departure from this world. Poor girl! death, which pays no respect to persons, soon severed the knot which bound her to earth. The silver cord was being loosed; yet how sweet, whilst heart and flesh failed, to see

her daily growth in the apprehension of the grace of God to her in JESUS, the Strength of her heart, and her Portion for ever!

As long as she could bear the strain, she was carried to the meetings. Well do I recall the smile of satisfaction with which she welcomed a visit, while at her side lay her well-used Bible and hymn-book. The tenderness, too, of her relatives! The tears on the face of the strong miner! His heart prompted him to use every effort to restore her to health, and it was with reluctance that affection relinquished all hopes of recovery.

The love of JESUS, however, sustained her. Her future was bright. The present affliction was but for a moment. Unspeakable blessing! Survivors were well-nigh crushed with grief to think of youth and beauty so soon decayed. The sufferer alone was rejoicing in her prospects. Blessed Lord Jesus! when all else has failed to encourage, Thou dost gild the death-bed of faith with the prospect of glory. The bereaved draw their comfort from the assurance that Thou hast taken those they loved to Thine arms. The departed looked forward, and found Thee at hand to welcome!

Poor A. fell asleep in Jesus; and now she waits, with a throng of redeemed ones, until He comes to take His great power and reign.

J. W.

THE PASSING AWAY OF TWO FIJIAN CHRISTIANS.

I.

“**T**HERE was one man,” said Joeli Balu, “whom I loved greatly, and I was with him when he died. Often during his illness did I visit him. We read the Holy Book together, and prayed together. On the day of his death I said to him, ‘Nathaniel, tell me once again, for my own sake, and for the sake of these others; tell us, Nathaniel, whether you now trust in our Saviour, and whether He comforts you.’

“Then he smiled, and his face shone as he said: ‘Joeli, do you see that post?’, pointing to one of the supports of the house.

“‘Yes,’ said I, ‘I see it.’

“‘Do you see it plainly?’ he asked again.

“I answered, ‘I see it quite plainly,’ wondering that he should ask me such questions, and fearing that his mind was wandering.

“But then he looked at me earnestly, and said, ‘Joeli, as plainly as you see that post, so plainly do I now see the Lord.’

“He appeared to be realising one of those visions of the glorious Redeemer, such as dying believers are so frequently favoured with. We were dumb. Our hearts were hot within us.

“He gently patted his breast for a time,

and then lifted up his arm, pointing upwards, and smiling.

“We looked up, but could see nothing. When we looked down upon his face again, we saw that he was dead. But we could feel no sorrow for him. The house was like heaven to us. So we rejoiced, and praised the Lord.”

That convert knew by personal experience what it was to have “Christ in him, the hope of glory.” He could say: “For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.”

II.

“‘Of a truth,’ said Reuben, a dying Fijian, ‘God is with me. Great is my pain, but this pain of mine is not worthy to be compared with the good things which the Lord will give me on the right hand of His lordly throne. Near now is the time of my going.’”

“But he breathed gently. Then he opened his eyes, and, lifting up his hand, said: ‘Weep not, weep not! Why are you weeping?’”

“‘We are weeping,’ said one, because of your death.’”

“‘Weep not for me,’ he said, ‘weep for yourselves. As for me, I live. The Lord and His angels are hastening to take me with them. Yet once more will I speak. Be earnest in religion. While I was in health I believed that which is told us in the Bible, and

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III

thence came to me pardon for all my sins. I read of heaven in the Bible, and believed it; and now to-day shall I look with mine eyes upon the things that I believed, though I saw them not; those things that Paul speaks of, wherein he tells of heaven and my Saviour. Now I am going to possess them all. Do you not see the Lord? Look! This house is full of angels. My Saviour is hastening me away. Farewell. Great is my love to you.' "

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

(Numbers xxxv.)

AS the tribes of Israel lay encamped on the farther side of Jordan, in the plains of Moab by Jericho, with the land of their inheritance before their eyes, Moses, by the command of God, spoke to them of "cities of refuge" which should be provided for the manslayer who killed another unawares; and laid down regulations concerning them. This was God's merciful provision beforehand for all who should be in that land, for the people of Israel who inherited it, for the stranger who might inhabit it, and for the sojourner who might chance to be passing through it (v. 15).

Unlike the generality of human laws,

which are designed to meet cases similar to some which have arisen, but for which no provision had been made, the laws of God for the guidance of His people were all drawn up and made known *before* the people had crossed the Jordan, and entered on their inheritance. And so in this case; *before* the circumstances under which this law could take effect had arisen, Moses promulgated it, that the first manslayer after the tribes received their inheritance should find a "city of refuge" ready to receive him. And as long as they dwelt in their land, however many centuries might roll by, this law never grew obsolete or out of date. It needed not, like the laws of England, frequent amendments, for, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, it admitted of no change. It was as needed and as suitable in the days of David or Solomon as it was in the days of Joshua.

The "cities of refuge"—six in number—were so situated, three on the east and three on the west of Jordan that wherever the accident might happen, a refuge could be found within reasonable distance. Their names were made known and their locality described, that none should be in uncertainty about them or their position; for uncertainty at such a time might cost a man his life. To one of these cities must the manslayer flee. He could not choose for himself where he

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would go. They were chosen for him. He had to accept the choice, and make all the haste he could to the nearest at hand. For the avenger of blood might be on his track. If he loitered by the way, or hesitated about his road, the avenger of blood might come up to him. The city was his only sure refuge. The law did not admit of his contending with the avenger for his life. He was not to *fight* for his life, but to *escape* for it. Once within the city walls, he was safe; a few yards, or even a foot, would make all the difference. He must be *inside* to be safe. Then, if conscious he had killed his neighbour unawares, or when acquitted of murder by the verdict of the elders of the city, he could meet his pursuer without fear. There the pursuer dare not touch the manslayer, unless the elders of the city allowed it. Outside the city, if he met him, he could kill him, and none could interfere to prevent it. Inside the city, if he had attempted to take his life, he would have broken one of God's laws. Outside, if any had attempted to arrest the course of vengeance, they would have acted contrary to the will of God.

These regulations were for all in the land, whether inhabitants or foreigners. God thought of all. For anyone might kill his neighbour unawares. All therefore, without distinction of religion or descent, were to

share in the benefit of this humane enactment. Life was a sacred thing, not to be taken without due inquisition. An accident by which a man lost his life did not entail death on the one who had killed him. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe—such was the law. Perfect justice was to be administered, but not life for life unless *murder* had been committed.

But observe three things these cities were *not*.

First, they were not a shelter from judgment. The manslayer had to state his cause before the elders of the city, who must adjudicate on it (Josh. xx. 4.).

Secondly, they were not a refuge from condemnation. To one guilty of murder, they afforded no hiding-place. The murderer might fly to one of them, but the law relating to these cities afforded him no hope that he could live. Two witnesses were needful to establish his guilt; but that once established, the elders of the city could not screen him from his just doom. "Blood it defileth the land," was the word of God. "Guilty of death, he shall surely be put to death," was the plain announcement of the Lord by the hand of Moses. The man who deserved to die was beyond the reach of human protection.

Thirdly, they were not the manslayer's home, and never could be his place of inheritance. Chosen from the cities of the tribe of Levi, they were the inheritance of that tribe, and none of another tribe could share in it with them. The manslayer would feel this. His home, his inheritance, was elsewhere. All the days of his residence there he was but a sojourner, an exile, and a prisoner; such was his condition. If his heart yearned after the place of his birth, he could not re-visit it till the death of the high priest. The elders of the city could give him no safe conduct or pass to visit, even for a limited time, his kindred and his home. Once he overstepped the limits of the city, his life was in danger from the avenger of blood.

How sacred was life in God's eyes! If taken unawares, the man who took it must keenly feel what he had done by perhaps many years of absence from his home. Yet sacred was his life in God's eyes, for He had provided him a shelter till he could return to the land of his possession; a perfect shelter it was, but that was all. He was there preserved as one who deserved not to die, but as one who had lost for a time the enjoyment, the comfort, the freedom of his home.

For anyone then to find an asylum in these cities, he must have a title to life. If his title was forfeited, he must die. An indefeasible

title to life, and that alone, could give him peace in the prospect of the judicial inquiry to take place. With that he could fearlessly present himself before the tribunal, and look his accuser in the face. Conscious that there was no cause of death in him, he could rest assured of the result. But he must have that title to life before he stood at the bar of judgment, before he could hope for an acquittal. If he had lost it by the deed of murder, none could restore it to him. The elders of the city, however well disposed towards him, could here afford him no assistance. No intervention of his friends or relatives could provide that which he lacked, and which was needful for his continuance on earth. If his life was forfeited, he must die.

Important as the possession of such a title was to the manslayer, is it not equally important to all? What then, we would ask, is the title to life of anyone who reads these lines? If we speak of the manslayer in Israel, we refer to a title to life on earth; if we speak of the readers of these lines, we refer to life for evermore. Have all our readers a title to live for ever? Does such a question seem strange to any? It can only be strange to such as know not what God's word has declared. There is a title to life everlasting; but that title is *bestowed*, not earned; *derived*, not inherent. The man-

slayer's title to life on earth was inherent. He had it as a creature of God, but he had to defend it in God's appointed way, that the avenger of blood should not deprive him of it. Our title to life everlasting is *bestowed*. We have not to defend it, but to see that we possess it; once possessed, none can take it away; it is everlasting. But there is great need to make sure that we have received it, for "God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." This is far more terrible than the wrath of the avenger of blood. He was a man; he might kill the body, and there his power ended. God's wrath can reach the soul. Through inadvertance or disinclination the avenger of blood might relax his pursuit. God's wrath will surely take effect on all who shall not have been sheltered from it.

What is needed, therefore, is a security from condemnation, and a shelter from judgment. This the sinner can find, for GOD has already provided it. As the manslayer had the city ready to receive him, so the sinner has this place of refuge open to run into. This refuge is in CHRIST. "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 1.) As the names and localities of the cities of refuge were published, that all might know which they were

and where they were, so the refuge that God has provided for the sinner has been in like manner announced. God's word told of the former; God's word tells us of the latter. The manslayer could reckon on what that word said, and the description of the cities it contained. Shall the sinner not equally reckon on what that word says to him now? "*In Christ Jesus there is now no condemnation.*" Then the guilty one, the sin-convinced soul, can find safety there. "*No condemnation!*" A sweeping statement, which should most effectually set the heart at rest, and that for ever.

Does conscience whisper of past sins? does the enemy recall many an act of disobedience, many a word unadvisedly spoken, many an unholy thought or angry feeling concealed perhaps from outward eyes? To all those the sinner can oppose this word of God. The manslayer had to await the verdict of the elders of the city after he entered it. The sinner can know *beforehand*, can know *now*, the full deliverance God will give him when *in Christ Jesus*.

Here, then, is the next question, Can the sinner avail himself of this refuge? The Lord Jesus, the refuge, has Himself given a reply in John v. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and

shall not come into condemnation [or judgment]; but is passed from death unto life.” (ver. 24.)

Clear and simple is the testimony conveyed in these words. There is an escape from judgment. “Shall not come into condemnation” [or, as in the original, judgment]. Then there can be “no condemnation,” for condemnation succeeds judgment. It is not the being *acquitted after* trial, but it is *not coming into* trial for life at all. The manslayer must be *tried*. The sinner is promised he *shall not be tried*, if he hears the word of Christ, and believes Him that sent Him, that is, the Father. And the sinner does show that he believes the Father when he hears and accepts the Son. For “he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record which God gave of His Son” (1 John v. 10). No judgment, no condemnation, to those in Christ Jesus. He shelters the sinner from both, not by the exercise of power, as of a strong man who refuses to let judgment have its course, but by having Himself undergone and borne the punishment which the sinner deserved. In Him who bore “our sins in His own body on the tree” the sinner can safely hide. In Him risen from the dead the believer finds everlasting shelter.

It is in a risen Christ, who has fully glori-

fied God, who lives to die no more, over whom death has no dominion, that this refuge is found. This is not the result of years of effort. It is not the happy experience which the "fathers" in Christ may hope some day to enjoy. It is not reached by experience. It is reached by FAITH, being the present position of all who BELIEVE IN HIM. "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ." (1 John v. 20.)

And now, what the manslayer *never could* feel, that the sinner saved by grace in Christ *can*. The manslayer could never feel at home in the city. He was only a sojourner till the death of the high priest. His inheritance was elsewhere. But in Christ we have obtained an inheritance, in Him we are blessed as we never were or could be before (Eph. 1). Where our refuge is, there is our inheritance, "an inheritance undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

How welcome to the manslayer must his city of refuge have been! How far more welcome should be the refuge provided for the sinner in Christ! Are you, dear reader, in that everlasting refuge?

“IT IS FINISHED.”

JOHN xix.

IN going about the villages in the smallest county of England, the writer was told of an aged woman who had for years been troubled about her soul. On calling to see her the following conversation took place :

“ Well, Mrs. H., I understand that you are anxious to know whether you are saved or not? Do you not believe that Christ died for sinners? ”

“ Yes, sir, I know He died for sinners, and I know I am a sinner, and a great one, but I want to know that He died for *me*. ”

“ ‘ Christ died for all,’ and ‘ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Now that word ‘ whosoever ’ means ‘ *every one*. ’ You are one, are you not? ”

“ Oh, if I could but feel happy I’d believe He died for me ! ”

“ You want to feel happy first, and believe afterwards? ”

“ Well, sir, if I felt happy like in my soul, I should *know* He had had mercy on me, a poor sinful crettur. I can’t *make* myself believe, sir. ”

“ You want to feel a work begun in your own soul first, and then you will believe that

you are an object of God's mercy, one for whom Christ died? "

" Yes, sir, that's it exactly."

" Well, now, suppose you were in debt for rent and expected your landlord to come in to-morrow at twelve o'clock to seize your goods? "

" I should be full of trouble, sir."

" But suppose a friend came in to-day, a gentleman whom you could trust, and said, ' Mrs. H., I've paid your rent; there's an end of your debt; it's finished,' would you turn round and tell him, ' If I could but feel happy I'd believe it ' ? "

" No, surely ! I wouldn't treat a kind gentleman like that."

" How would you feel? "

" Well, sir, I should feel very happy if I believed it."

" Then your happiness would entirely depend upon whether you believed it or not. You would have to believe *first*, and then be happy *because* you believed the debt was paid? "

" Yes, sir, in course I should. I couldn't feel happy unless I did believe it."

" Well, now, the Word of God, speaking to believers, says of the Lord Jesus, ' Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree ' ; and Jesus said, ' It is finished ! ' He was about to die when He said it. We

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usually think that the words of one who is dying are weighty and solemn; how much more the words of the Lord Jesus Christ! Yet you don't believe Him! ”

“ Oh, sir, indeed I do! Surely *He* never said anything as wasn't true. But He didn't say it was finished for *me*, sir. It's *that* I want to know.”

“ But the Word of God declares ‘ He died for ALL.’ Are you one of the ‘ ALL ’ ? ‘ The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.’ Are *you* a part of it? ‘ He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.’ If so, where is *your* sin? ”

“ Jesus says, ‘ It is finished.’ Oh, if I could but feel—— ”

“ Then you don't believe Him? ”

“ Oh, I must! I'll *try* to believe Him.”

“ That won't do. Would you tell the kind friend who said your rent was paid, your debt finished, ‘ I'll *try* to believe you ’? ”

“ Well, I *will* believe it ” (meaning at some future time).

“ That won't do, either. Look at His words, His dying words, ‘ It is finished.’ Where is all your debt to God? ”

“ I *do* believe it; it is finished; thank the Lord, my debt is paid! He said so; bless His name, and I *do* believe it. ‘ It is finished! ’ ” And the poor old creature's joy was affecting to witness.

The writer went from time to time to see her after this, and always found her rejoicing in the Lord. After a time she was taken ill with a very painful disease, and the hour came for her to die. A Christian daughter attended her on her deathbed, and, some months after her mother's departure, gave the following account of her last moments: "When mother was dying, her leg was in a fearful state, but when I spoke to her about the pain her answer was, 'I am so happy, that I don't know whether I'm in heaven or on earth!' 'Why, mother,' I said, 'what makes you so happy?' 'Because my sins are gone, and I am saved! Bless the Lord! He said, "It is finished,"' and with those words she died."

The above is written for any anxious soul who may be seeking, longing, for "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." You know yourself to be a sinner *before God*; you can say, "Woe is me, for I am undone." If so, Christ died for *you*; yes, for you, your own self; for does not God declare "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"? Then you are one whom He came to save? Did He accomplish the work He came to do? Hear, and believe with all your heart His dying words, "IT IS FINISHED."

J. L. K.

THE PALSIED MAN.

(Read MARK ii. 1-12.)

IT is a fact no less sorrowful than true, that man by nature knows not his utter helplessness in the sight of God, and consequently fails to appreciate God's unbounded love in giving His only begotten Son to die for the ungodly, even while they were "without strength." (Rom. v. 6.)

When one is in any measure conscious of the necessity of righteousness in order to appear before God, the first thought almost invariably is, that such righteousness must be wrought out by doing good works, keeping the commandments of the law, or obeying the precepts of the gospel; not understanding that fallen human nature is incapable of doing anything which can be acceptable to God, nor knowing the force of that scripture, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans viii. 8.)

The case of the man who was sick of the palsy, as recorded in the Gospels, beautifully illustrates this truth, and also exemplifies the way in which the Lord meets the necessity of the helpless sinner.

A palsied man, who is so prostrate that he is "borne of four," is brought unto Jesus, and let down on a bed or couch before Him. It is just a picture of man as a sinner, altogether incapable of moving hand or foot to-

wards God. There he is, completely powerless, lying before Jesus, who, though "found in fashion as a man," is in truth "the mighty God." And what is the first act of this great and gracious One? Does He comply with the desire of those who bring the man to Him, by communicating strength to his paralysed limbs? He does indeed, in due time; but He *first* surprises all who hear Him by saying to the sick of the palsy, "*Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*"

The man is brought for help and healing, but Jesus speaks of "forgiveness of sins." He knows what is IN man, and what man IS. He penetrates beneath the surface to the source. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we *have* to do." (Heb. iv. 13.) He knows that the cause of man's helplessness and misery is SIN, that root of all bitterness. To put away sin He came into the world, He shed His precious blood, He died upon the cross. He put it away, root and branch, "by the sacrifice of HIMSELF." (Heb. ix. 26); and having finished the work which God gave Him to do, He is now seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) For that reason, in the case of the poor paralytic, the Lord goes at once to the root of the disease, and pronounces with divine authority the forgiveness of his sins; and then, *and not*

till then, does He give strength to his fixed and helpless limbs to rise up, and walk.

Do you, dear reader, know the forgiveness of *your* sins through the precious blood of Christ? Or are you seeking to be justified before God by works? The word of God, which is truth, declares that we cannot be justified before God by works; but that we are helpless sinners, incapable of doing anything towards saving ourselves. A sinner has neither the strength nor the will to walk in the ways of God, and to serve Him, while he remains unreconciled to God through not believing the record concerning His Son. But when, through grace, he believes in Christ as the One who, “when we were yet *without strength*, in due time died for the ungodly,” he is saved with a present and an everlasting salvation.

With this salvation is given power, through the Holy Spirit leading the soul to abide in Christ, power to walk in the ways of the Lord “unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.” (Cor. i. 10.) So that good works are the fruits of faith in Christ; but until God’s record concerning His Son is believed, there can be no fruit borne to God; for “without *faith* it is impossible to please Him.” (Heb. xi. 6.)

Accordingly, in the instance before us, the Lord having made known to the poor man

the forgiveness of his sins, *adds* the gift of strength, to enable him to rise, take up his bed, and walk; and so he goes forth before them all, insomuch that they are all amazed, and glorify God. Yes! God *is* glorified in the holy, upright, intelligent and devoted walk of His saints, in newness of life; having created them in Christ Jesus unto good works, which He hath before ordained that they should walk in them. (Eph. ii. 10.)

But the first point for the sinner to have settled in his conscience before God is the forgiveness of his sins, through the knowledge of Him who “came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark ii. 17); who “once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust” (1 Peter iii. 18); who “is the propitiation for the whole world” (1 John ii. 2); and who, as “the Lamb of God,” takes away “the sin of the world.” (John i. 29.)

WHAT IS BELIEVING? 'Tis submission
 To the God of love and grace;
 'Tis to own one's true condition,
 And to take the sinner's place;
 'Tis to bow the soul before Him,
 And to look to Christ, His Son;
 'Tis to worship and adore Him,
 Owning thus what grace has done.
 (See Rom. x. 8—17.)

“NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD.”

IT is often difficult to speak with certainty about death-bed conversions. Real they may be, as we know from the fact of the conversion of the thief on the cross; and in the near approach of death there is everything to create concern about the soul and its salvation, and nothing from the outer world to attract or draw it aside. Willingly or unwillingly it has done with the things of this life, and unless there be great hardness of heart, or great delusion, there is generally a readiness to listen to the story of the Saviour's love.

Most of the conversions that we hear of amongst the aged seem to take place in the sick chamber; comparatively few are met with under the public preaching of the gospel. In the ordinary work of the evangelist, the majority of his converts will be found between the ages of twelve and twenty-five.

This is a deeply solemn thought, but the remark has been made by many of great experience in gospel work. Still, in the judgment of charity, probably many above that age, in times of affliction and trial, and in the prospect of death, are brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To His name be the praise and glory!

The excuses which the Lord refers to in His

Parable of the Great Supper, seem to strengthen this impression. "Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (Luke xiv. 15-20.).

As it seems always easy to find a good reason for a bad thing, so here lawful duties are urged as the most unanswerable excuse. But the truth is, the mind in each case was pre-occupied with the cares of this life. The people were now on their own responsibility, and there was no room for Christ. Time and thought were entirely absorbed with present things, to the utter neglect of spiritual things.

Mr. W. was one of this class. Throughout a long career of commercial activity in London, he had lived entirely regardless of his soul's eternal interests. Well read up in politics, in all exciting cases in the law courts, and fond of discussing such subjects; but the Bible rarely read; seldom going to any place

of worship, and as for prayer, there could have been none. The daily paper, the fresh excitement, unfits the mind for the presence of the living God, the searcher of hearts. Such was the life of Mr. W. for about forty years, and such is the life of thousands and tens of thousands at the present time, and the whirl and the excitement are ever on the increase.

On hearing that one I had known for many years was seriously ill, I called to see him. The change in his appearance was great; he was so reduced and altered that I could scarcely have identified him. Death-stricken, as I saw, the end could not be far off.

He expressed the greatest pleasure in seeing the face of an old friend; at least one he could count upon as a friend in his lonely sick chamber. He knew what I had come for.

After a few words about his bodily state, he looked at me anxiously, and said, "I am done for now. . . . I am dying. . . . I can never be better."

A solemn conversation followed on the great realities of the soul and eternity. The following is substantially, almost exactly, what he said to my inquiry as to the state of his mind; and, being very able to express himself, he made rather a long speech. But as it expresses the state of most minds in Christendom, we give it a place in our magazine.

“ I know I am dying, and I have no hope but in the mercy of the Almighty; and I have been paying more attention to my religious duties lately. . . . I have neglected them too long. . . . I have been asking the Almighty in prayer to forgive my sins. I know I am a great sinner, but He is merciful, and I trust He will hear my prayers.

. . . I mean not to forget these things any longer. Last evening, after I had spent some time in prayer, I felt great consolation within me. . . .”

The words “ great consolation,” exhausted my patience. I felt it was time for me to speak; besides, he was greatly fatigued, being short of breath; but I felt that my work was not to soothe him in this delusion, but to disturb his false dreams of “ consolation.”

“ I am glad,” I said, “ that you are thinking so seriously about these things; but you will not think me unkind if I say that you have completely overlooked the only remedy for sin.”

“ What is that? ” he inquired.

“ The blood of Christ,” I replied.

(To be concluded, if the Lord will.)

“WHAT WILL BECOME OF US ?”

MANY years ago there lived in America a very talented preacher, who for some years preached with much seeming earnestness and success that men must be born again. Perhaps our readers are not ignorant of this truth ; but it does not follow that, because they know it to be a truth, they have received it as *the truth of God*. On this point too many, I fear, deceive their own souls.

Well, the preacher just mentioned was very much opposed for preaching this doctrine ; the pride of man's heart does not like it. People prefer to think that they can be “educated up to God,” as some impiously say. And so this preacher was disliked by many. One of these was a well-informed person, who for a long time had stopped away from the church where this minister preached. But one Sunday morning he thought he would go once more and hear him, just to see whether his preaching was more to his mind than it had formerly been.

Now, that morning the preacher's subject was “A New Creation in Christ Jesus, or Everlasting Condemnation” ; and he sought to show that one or the other must be to all. Either one must become a new creature in Christ Jesus, or else there is no escape from

the judgment that has been pronounced on the old Adam nature and standing to which all belong who are out of Christ.

The preacher's discourse seemed to be given with power, and not as a mere learned reasoning, and the question forced itself on his hearer's conscience in spite of his dislike : "How is it with myself ? Does this man declare the real truth ? If he does, what must be the certain consequence ?"

This thought took such hold upon him that he could not forget it even after he had left the church. It followed him from day to day, amidst all his occupations or amusements, and his conscience could not rest. Wherever he went, or whatever he was doing, that solemn question rose up before him : "If this is truth, what will be the certain consequence ?" and he became so unhappy at last that he resolved to go to the preacher himself, and ask him whether what he had preached was really the truth of God.

Calling on him one day, he told him, with much concern, that he had been one of his hearers on the occasion referred to ; and added, "I confess to you that you have disturbed my peace of mind, and I cannot refrain from asking you solemnly before God, and upon your conscience, whether you can prove what you asserted, or whether it was an unfounded alarm."

The preacher was not a little surprised, as might be supposed, at this style of address, and replied that what he had spoken was certainly the Word of God, and therefore infallible truth.

“What, then, is to become of *us* ?” exclaimed the visitor and his last word “*us*” grated strangely on the preacher’s ears ; but, rallying his thoughts, he began to explain the way of salvation to the inquirer, and exhorted him very solemnly to repent and believe.

But his visitor seemed as though he had not heard a word of what was said to him. In the midst of a very suitable exhortation he broke in with increasing emotion, exclaiming, “If it be truth, sir, I beseech you, what are *we* to do ?”

“*We*,” thought the minister to himself, “what means this *WE* ?” and for a moment he felt so confused and even alarmed that it cost him great effort to recover himself sufficiently to hide his feelings from his visitor, and to go on with his *professional* exhortations.

At last tears came into the eyes of the inquirer, and suddenly smiting his hands together, like one in despair, he exclaimed in accents which might have moved a heart of stone, “Sir, if it be truth, *we* are lost and undone.”

And now the conscience of the minister was roused. Conviction as to the truth of *his own* condition flashed across his mind. For years he had been preaching as a mere professional thing, a truth which he had never himself “believed with the heart” ; and while he had preached to others he himself was no better than a castaway.

Trembling and astonished, as this conviction forced itself upon him, he stood for a moment speechless and overwhelmed. Then, in a voice broken by sobs, he exclaimed, “ Friend, let us down on our knees, and cry to God.”

This they did at once, but I do not suppose they *asked* for that salvation which is so freely *offered* in the gospel of God’s dear Son. That blessed gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*,” not prayeth. (Rom. i. 16.) “Faith cometh by hearing” (or a report) not by prayer, “and hearing (or the report) by the *word of God*.” (Rom. x. 17.) And both these men, but especially the preacher, had heard and known this word by the intellect for years ; yet they had never received and believed it with the *heart* as they ought to have done ; for “if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.” (1 John v. 9.) How much more, then, ought they to have believed God !

But they had not done so ; and this it was that made their condition so dangerous, particularly the preacher's. He had mocked both God and man. For years he had exhorted others to do what he had never done himself ; that is, *believe God*. He had urged them to accept salvation by the blood of Christ fully and freely held out to them in God's message of grace to ruined man, yet he had not himself accepted it.

All this, of course, he knew, and therefore had no need to *pray* for salvation ; for if I were to offer you a little book or any other *gift*, you would hardly be so foolish as to beg and entreat me to give it to you. But when a man has been hearing or preaching the gospel over and over again till it has lost all meaning in his ears, he may well cry to God for power to believe what he has so long and so sinfully rejected.

Such a man has got himself into a state of soul which may be compared to a palsied limb. Now, you will understand that a man with a paralysed leg would not think of asking a doctor for a *leg* ; but he might ask him to try and do something that would give him power to move or make use of it.

Thus these two men fell upon their knees, and cried to God. Well they might ; and while God has nowhere promised to hear the prayer of the ungodly and sinners, yet in His

infinite grace He does, so to speak, go beyond even His own promises (which are only to those in Christ) to reach those who have put themselves, as these two men had done, in a place of peculiar peril.

The visitor then left the minister, and he shut himself up in his study alone with God. What he passed through when the enormity of his sin was pressed on his conscience by the Spirit of God, nobody will ever know. "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." (Heb. xii. 25.)

This the preacher had done, and that for years ; God declares, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) Thus, you see, his case was one of peculiar peril. And so is that of each one who hears the gospel and turns away from Him who speaketh from heaven by His Spirit through the word.

On the following Lord's day, this minister was too unwell to preach ; and I do not wonder at it. The same thing happened on the Sunday following ; but on the third Sunday he made his appearance before his congregation, weak and pale from inward conflict, but with a new-born joy manifested

in his countenance such as none had ever seen there before.

God had glorified Himself. The preacher who for years had been proclaiming his own condemnation, and daily turning “away from Him that speaketh from heaven,” believing NOT the Son, but abiding under the wrath of God, stood up before all, a living witness of God’s long-suffering and super-abounding grace, and began his discourse by telling his audience that henceforth he was a new creature in Christ Jesus.

His case was a solemn and affecting instance of that all-important truth, “Ye *must* be born again.” All his knowledge, his eloquence, his religiousness, his preaching, had but increased his danger and deepened the dye of his iniquity. Short of new creation in Christ Jesus, all else was vain, or worse, for it increased his condemnation. Outside “the door” (John x. 7) there is nothing but judgment ; but this preacher could now testify that for the first time in his life he had passed through it.

If *you* have not done so, may God’s grace lead you in.

J. L. K.

“NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD.”

(Concluded.)

He looked very anxiously at me.

“It is a right thing, of course,” I said, “to pray; but no amount of prayers or consolation within you, apart from the blood of Christ, will ever remove one single sin from your soul. Unless you are washed in that blood, be assured, you must go down to the place of torment under the guilt of all your sins.”

Knowing his circumstances and his past career, I spoke plainly and strongly. I pressed this one point: The blood of Christ, shed on the cross for the chief of sinners, is God’s only remedy for sin; that it was either implicit faith in that precious blood, or the flames of hell for ever; that the grand truth for him now to seize was this: There is no limit to the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, and that faith in the efficacy of that blood would bring down from heaven the immediate, full, and everlasting forgiveness of all his sins; and now to pray that he might have a deeper sense of his sin, and of the need of the precious blood of Christ.

After giving him some passages of Scripture to think over, and praying with him, I left. But I could not get him out of my mind. So I wrote to him the same evening, and embodied in a letter all I had said about his sins

and the blood of Christ; and sent him some tracts and books besides.

I allowed one week to pass before calling again, when I received a letter from his daughter, begging me to call, as her father wished to see me. I went the same day. As I entered the room, he raised his hand, with a glad welcome expressed on his countenance, and when I said, “How is it with you now?”

“Nothing but the blood!” was his only reply; “nothing but the blood.”

I could scarcely reply for a moment; my heart was so full. “Praise the Lord! praise the Lord!” was nearly all I could add for a little. The Lord had graciously opened his mind and bowed his heart to the great truth about the blood of Christ. I found he had read the tracts, and was diligently reading the Scriptures. He said that he was happily resting on the truth that Christ had died for him, and that he was saved through faith in Him.

He lived about three weeks after this, during which period I saw him repeatedly. We had free conversation together about the things of the Lord, and he always seemed happy as to his spiritual state.

I would only add that my last visit is one never to be forgotten. It was the closing scene. There is always a peculiar solemnity

and reality in seeing a man die. If he is not right before he dies, he cannot be put right after; the scene closes for ever. All my anxiety seemed to awaken as at first. He could hear, but not speak. I begged him to assure my heart if he were perfectly happy, resting on Jesus and His precious blood, by pressing my hand, which I placed in his.

He pressed it, moved it to and fro, with his eyes staring on me as if to say: "What more can I do? All is peace."

I prayed, as if to help him across the line. But, oh! the parting! His wife and daughter were convulsed in tears and sobs; *he* was far past such violent emotion.

As I had to attend a meeting, I was obliged to leave about an hour before he died. The farewell was almost too much. Pointing to heaven as the place of our next meeting, to which he assented with a slight movement of the head, and a bright, speaking expression of the eye, I rushed into the open air to dry my eyes and recover my usual self.

Since his departure I have learnt from those who called to see him that he said, speaking of himself as a sinner, "Yes, I have been a careless sinner, and there is nothing between me and the flames of hell but the blood of Christ; that is all I have to rest upon."

This has been a great comfort to me.

Perhaps my readers will think that I am not very easily satisfied; certainly not so with death-bed conversions. I would seek to be doubly sure with such, as there is no world then to attract or ensnare them. Besides, the subtlety of Satan, and the flatteries of friends with the view of soothing them, may be fatal to the immortal soul. The subject of this paper was no doubt well pleased with his religiousness when he felt “ great consolation ” within him on rising from his knees. This was the snare of Satan, intended for the eternal ruin of his soul. And had he passed away under this CONSOLATION, his conscience undisturbed, he would have had “ no bands ” in his death, and fond friends would have said that he died perfectly happy; that he passed away so peacefully; whereas, in plain truth, he was only soothed and flattered by the enemy of our souls. How many, alas! die under such a Satanic delusion!

Think not, my dear reader, that my anxiety to see reality in such cases leads me to be less hopeful or earnest for the conversion of the aged or dying. Most assuredly it does not. It is as easy for divine grace to save the old as the young; to save the drowning mariner when the waters of death are gurgling in his throat, as the man who lies peacefully on his bed, and surrounded with praying friends. If the heart cries to God for

mercy in the last moment He will never say, "I have no mercy for thee." He Himself has put the cry there; not to disappoint it, but fully and for ever to satisfy it.

But the uncertainty connected with death-bed conversions should make us a thousand-fold more anxious for the salvation of those who are in youth, health, and strength. Why delay till there is feebleness of body and mind; till there is distraction from pain and suffering? Why not come to Jesus in early life ?

Forget not, my youthful reader, His just claim upon the entire homage of thy heart. He went to Calvary for thee, worn and weary, and knowing all that was before Him. There He was bound to the altar of judgment for thee, wreathed with a crown of thorns. There He suffered, bled and died, that thou mightest be saved from the flames that will never be quenched, and from the worm that will never die (Mark ix. 44.). What hast thou done for Him? What hast thou suffered for Him? What has been thy gratitude to Him? Wouldst thou be happy to see His face to-day? Is He all thy salvation, all thy desire? Oh! think of His love, of His sufferings, of His fair claims; and ere thou cross the threshold of another day, be sure that thou commence it with a heart undivided for Him