

GOSPEL LIGHT.

A MESSAGE FOR THE NEW YEAR.

THUS saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." (Jer. ix. 23, 24.)

In a day like the present, when on all sides we find man boasting, either of his wisdom, his might, or his riches, it is well to hear these words of the LORD. He warns us not to glory or boast in that which can give no lasting happiness and joy, the wise man with all his knowledge, the mighty man with all his strength, and the rich man with all his wealth, will each own, if he is honest, that such things cannot give the satisfaction the heart craves for.

Solomon, the wisest king that ever lived, made this confession: "I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." (Eccles. i. 17, 18.)

Then again we find the Lord Jesus in the parable of the rich man in Luke xii. 16-21, telling us of one who, having amassed his riches, said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years;

take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God said unto him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" He could boast to himself of his riches, but what avail were they to him in the face of death?

Turning to the Old Testament we have a mighty man brought before us in Goliath, he who came against the children of Israel and defied them, saying, "I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man, that we may fight together." But of what avail were all the might, armour, and weapons in which he boasted? David approaches with a sling and stone, and says, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." We know the sequel; Goliath falls dead, smitten in the forehead with the stone, and is beheaded with his own sword. (See i. Sam. xvii.)

The tendency of the heart of man is to boast. He must glory in something, and he ever exalts himself. But we have seen that might fails, that riches cannot stay the hand of death, and that wisdom does not satisfy. We can, therefore, understand the words of the LORD, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches." But the scripture does not end there, that little word "*but*" introduces what the soul *can* boast in: "*But* let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth."

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Do you know the Lord? By nature we know not God. The word in Romans iii. 11 is true of us: "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." But God has come out, and revealed Himself in lovingkindness. "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.) We read again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) Now, in order that life and forgiveness of sins might be the portion of each believer in the Lord Jesus, God has let His judgment of sin and sins fall upon His beloved Son. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) And in 2 Corinthians v. 20, 21, we have these touching, gracious words: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Thus we see God, in the exercise of His love, giving up His beloved Son; and that He might in righteousness pardon the sinner, Christ Jesus underwent the judgment of God, enduring the wrath which we deserved.

Well may the soul that has thus been brought to God, and now stands before God justified and in righteousness, glory in the LORD, and boast in Him in the display of His lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness.

If we turn to God's dealings with Israel we get another example of these attributes of God's

character. It was God who in love saw the children of Israel in all their misery and affliction, and came down to deliver them, and who in judgment passed through the land of Egypt, slaying the firstborn of the Egyptians, but who in righteousness passed over the Israelites because of the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and the two side-posts of their doors. It was the blood which laid the righteous basis by which God could pass over His people.

Now, dear reader, if you thus know the Lord, you will boast in Him, glory in His love, in His judgment, and in His righteousness. Oh! how much better to make the Lord your boast, than to glory in our own accomplishments. May God grant that each of my readers may know the Lord. He is revealed in the Scriptures as a God of lovingkindness, a God of judgment, and a God of righteousness.

To-day we have the privilege of meeting God as a God of lovingkindness. If He is not met as such, He must be met in a coming day as a God of judgment. Which shall it be? If you meet God now, who commends His love towards you, it will be to your eternal blessing, and God will act in righteousness in pardoning your sins, and in giving you peace and joy, and then death will have no terror for you. (Rom. v. 8, 9.) But if you leave it too late, and the day of grace closes, you will have to meet God as your righteous Judge, and in righteousness He will condemn you.

Oh! listen to His loving entreaty, "Be ye reconciled to God"; and so be able to glory in the LORD.

W. E. S.

CHRIST THE DOOR.

5

Let not the wise his wisdom boast,
 The mighty glory in his might,
 The rich in flattering riches trust,
 Which take their everlasting flight;
 The rush of numerous years bears down
 The most gigantic strength of man;
 And where is all his wisdom gone,
 When, dust, he turns to dust again!

Let him that glories, though he be
 Like water spilt upon the ground,
 Glory in this—he knoweth Me,
 That I, THE LORD, to earth's far bound,
 My kindness to the contrite show;
 In judgment vindicate the meek;
 My righteousness on all bestow
 That Me as their salvation seek.

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“I am the Door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” (John x. 9.)

THE occasion on which the Lord Jesus brought out this wonderful truth was that of opening the eyes of one who had been born blind, as recorded in the preceding chapter, where we find that the man was cast out of the synagogue because of his confession. This confession was a great offence, and there is nothing more offensive to proud man still than a true and hearty confession of Christ.

The Lord Jesus had met the man who had been cast out, and blessedly revealed Himself to him as the Son of God. Then He turned the conversation to that of spiritual blindness, so that some of the Pharisees, deeply roused by what they had

heard, asked Him, "Are we blind also?" For Jesus had said, "For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." (John ix. 39.)

This was a very important testimony; for if a man takes the place of being blind, God is able to make him see; but if he says, "I see, and have always been able to discern the things of God," he will have to learn, sooner or later, that he *is*, and always *has been*, blind. "The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

The Saviour's searching testimony, as I have said, so stirred up the Pharisees, that they demanded, "Are we blind also?" They doubtless thought that they had all the learning of the day, and were consequently the most intelligent people as to scripture knowledge. Was it possible, then, that such as they could be blind?

What was our Lord's reply? "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

That is to say, if they had really known their dark condition, and taken the place of being spiritually blind before God, they might have known also God's grace and power to forgive their sins; but saying, "We see," implied self-complacency, and the absence of felt need. It is the sick who need the physician. There must be a sense of blindness for one to desire his eyes opened; a sense of guilt to lead one to desire forgiveness.

The Pharisees not only professed to see, but to guide and shepherd God's sheep. The question

was, How came they thus in the place of shepherds? Had they a divine or human qualification? Had they gone in by the door? For if they had climbed up some other way, they were only thieves and robbers.

The true Shepherd enters by the door; the porter opens to Him; the sheep hear His voice; they are His own sheep, and He "leadeth them out." Yes, He leads them out from former ways and associations; outside everything that dishonours God; outside the path of sight, because into the path of faith and love.

The Lord Jesus, the true and good Shepherd, declares that He is "THE DOOR," the only way of access to God, the ONLY Door for any who desire salvation. He said, "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Thus we see that Jesus not only sought to convict these Pharisees of their blindness and falseness, but threw wide open the door to any who had a desire to enter in. There was not a soul who heard Christ's ministry that could go away and say, "There is no salvation for me"; for Jesus said, "By Me if any man," no matter who he is, "if *any man* enter in, he shall be saved."

How simple this is! A door is not a long, dreary passage. A person only takes a single step to enter a door. My unconverted readers, you are outside the door. It is simply entering into God's presence by faith in Jesus Christ, His Son, who was crucified for sinners, but is now at God's right hand, and you are saved, and saved for ever. It is "by ME," said Jesus; not by feelings, nor by experiences, nor by good resolutions, nor even by good works, but by Christ. "By ME if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Oh! the

blessedness of having the Lord's authority for the assertion, that those of us who have entered into God's presence by Christ are saved! Can anything be more simple?

I remember hearing of a poor sick woman, who was told by some ladies who visited her, that Jesus was the door into God's presence, and there was no other way, and that all who entered in by Him were saved.

She replied, "May I enter in in that way?"

She was told, "Yes."

"Then why not now?" said she; and, turning on her side, she simply looked up toward heaven, and taking God at His word, entered in by Jesus, and was filled with joy and peace.

Mark again, I say, the simplicity and the preciousness of the words, "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." It is no use saying you are too great a sinner, too old, too young, or anything else; it is, "If *any* man." God is no respecter of persons. "All have sinned." Every man is guilty before God. "He that believeth not is condemn'd already." (John iii. 18.) It is true to-day that, "if *any man* enter in" by Christ, he will be saved; but in a little while it will be said, "If *any man* love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed when the Lord cometh." To-day, "WHOSOEVER believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life"; but by and by, WHOSOEVER is not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. (John iii. 16; Rev. xx. 15.)

Have you, dear reader, known what it is to receive this great salvation? Have you entered in by "the Door"? Do you know what it is to find yourself in God's presence, through faith in

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the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ? A believer is one who has trusted Christ as his Saviour, who has entered in through "the Door." A person may *know* that Christ is "the Door," and yet never have entered in.

This is the difference between *knowledge* and *faith*. Faith takes Christ simply at His word, and enters in. "By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." This is the testimony of Jesus. Is there any room for doubt or fear, when you know that you have entered in by Christ? Surely He delights to save. He casts out none that come to Him. Resting on His word, we have perfect peace; we find ourselves at rest in God's presence.

The attitude that Jesus now takes toward a guilty world is that of SAVIOUR, but in a little while it will be that of JUDGE. How, then, can any escape who neglect this great salvation? (Heb. ii. 3.) He will judge both the living and the dead; but now, in richest love and mercy, He is calling to sinners to enter in, and be saved. His arms are thrown wide open still. His almighty power continues to snatch brands from the burning. He yet calls in tenderest love, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) All He asks of you is to "come." He wants nothing more of you than to submit to be wholly saved by Him; to "enter in" on the ground of an already accomplished redemption; to "refuse not Him that speaketh," but to rest in His finished work. Can you, will you, any longer, then, be taken up with the unsatisfying pleasures of sin, and by your own hand of unbelief close this only door of escape from the wrath to come?

Thank God, "THE DOOR" is still wide open,

and Christ saves to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. But soon the door will be shut. Many will knock then, only to find the door closed upon them for ever. Many will be in earnest about their eternal welfare then, but it will be too late. In their anxiety for "a mess of pottage," their love for the "pleasures of sin," they counted eternal blessings unworthy of their interest; but now, that they feel themselves on the brink of outer darkness and despair, their distress is awakened, and never to be relieved; they knock, and call, and wail, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But the reply from within, "I know you not," will for ever plunge them into the horrors of an eternal gloom.

Oh! once more, think of those sweet words of Jesus, "I am the door: by Me if ANY MAN enter in, HE SHALL BE SAVED"! H. H. S.

"I HAVE AN OBJECT NOW."

ON a Lord's Day afternoon in a town hall in the country, not long ago, a person was introduced to me by a Christian friend, as anxious about her soul.

I found her case to be a chronic case of *feelings*, with very little intelligence about Christ, His work, or the word of God; but she was most sincere and earnest. My point was, that Christ could not be more willing to receive her to-morrow than to-day; His word could not be truer, or His work more complete; therefore, why not *come now*, believe, and rejoice?

The appeal in the afternoon for instant decision for Christ was founded on these two words, "COME

NOW”; which had greatly interested her, and presented a new line of truth to her mind.

Like most of this class, she would be ready to own that all she had heard was true, and that she did not doubt a word of it, but it was not true to her because she did not feel it. She was waiting to experience that change within which would be her warrant for believing that it was true to her. She acknowledged that she had been waiting for this inward change for years.

Hardly anything can be more discouraging or hopeless to an evangelist than this, for the lives of such are generally most blameless; there being conscience enough to make them religious.

After pointing out her mistake, and assuring her that all her darkness arose from looking to herself in place of looking to Christ, and from trusting to *feelings* in place of trusting His finished work, we parted.

She was at the hall again in the evening, but I did not see her.

The following day her Christian neighbour, who had induced her to come to the preaching, let me know that the woman I had spoken to had found peace with God, and that she would like to see me.

With the assistance of a friend I found her humble home. We had scarcely entered when she began to speak of the blessing she had received on Lord's Day; but all I will give in her own words is the following:

“When I awoke on Monday morning, at five o'clock, the thought came into my mind, ‘*I have an Object now; I have an Object now.*’ ”

And spreading her hand over her breast, she added, “I used to think I must feel it all in here first, but now it's all in Christ; and often to-day

when I was at my work it came into my mind."

From the simplicity of the woman, it was perfectly evident that she had no idea that she was saying anything particular; it was the truthful expression of her new experience. But nevertheless, these few simple words went straight home to my heart, clothed with light and power. They contain truths of the very deepest and highest practical instruction and value. There is not a troubled conscience in Christendom that would not find peace in looking to that same Blessed Object; not a doubting heart that would not be settled; not a weary soul that would not find rest; not a lost soul that would not find salvation. True, we read, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "Hear, and your soul shall live." "Only believe." But the power; the healing virtue, is not in the *looking*, the *coming*, the *hearing*, the *believing*; but all in the Object, the heavenly Christ, the Man in the glory.

And now the feelings, so long looked for and waited for, are come. But how? By making self the centre? By some felt change within? Ah! no; but by looking to JESUS, and believing the word of God. The only thing that can produce the feelings so much desired is the written word, "Thus it is written," but until the word is believed, the feelings can never be experienced. But when the eye rests on its new Object, the Holy Spirit is free to reveal the grace and truth of Christ to the soul, filling it with all joy and peace in believing. (Rom. xv. 13.)

"I HAVE NO DIFFICULTIES NOW."

DURING a walk one afternoon, a friend and myself got into conversation with a young man, to whom the inquiry was put, "Is your soul saved?"

"No, sir," said he, "I think not: I have been trying to get peace for the last twelve months, but I seem as far off as ever, and do what I will, I can get no rest to my heart."

"Nor will you," replied my friend, "so long as you are on that ground. You have been seeking Christ, you say, for twelve months, and have not found Him. Did it ever occur to you that He is the seeking One? Or did you ever ask yourself the question, 'How long has Christ been seeking for me, and has not yet found me?'"

"No; I cannot say I have; because it says, you know, in the Bible, 'Seek, and ye shall find,' and so I have gone on seeking and seeking, but certainly have not found Him."

"But if you were really *seeking* Christ with an honest heart, you would find Him, as your own words show, where it says, *Seek, and ye shall find*; but with you it has been all seeking and no finding; and so it is with thousands. Besides, you have not read your Bible correctly, you see. It also says, '*Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*' But this was said before Christ had through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, before the work which He undertook to do was finished. The trial of man was still going on. But when the Lord Jesus laid down His life as the unblemished Offering, which God could accept, the trial of man was over, his history was closed,

and the last chapter of that history, and the last line of it, too, was written in the blood of Jesus. All was over on man's side; and if any were to be saved, God Himself must be the Seeker, and He sought poor man when He sent His only begotten Son into the world that he might be saved. So the apostle Paul says in Rom. iii: 'There is none that seeketh after God; they are all gone out of the way.' What I want you to see is, that Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross, and that being justified by faith, we (we that believe) have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Col. i. 20; Rom. v. 1.)

Much more to the same effect was spoken to the young man, and with a sigh he bade us farewell. He was not one who opened the door quickly to let in the light, and the sweet atmosphere of liberty. Still, I thought the light penetrated a little chink in his heart, so that the darkness was manifest.

A few days afterwards, as we were sitting together, the same young man was at the door; and after a little talk, we found the light had indeed entered, but that Satan had been busy with his infidelity, trying to stop its further entrance. However, as the Psalmist says, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." (Ps. cxix. 130.) And there is divine power in the Word, more than any of us think. Well, perhaps we know how it has acted on our own hearts and consciences. With some a touch will do the work, with others there needs to be a "hewing to pieces."

I remember once, in preaching the gospel, quoting the apostle's words in Eph. v. 14: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and

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Christ shall give thee light.” Long afterwards I was speaking with a young man, who told me that that quotation was a life-giving word to his soul; he remembered nothing else. It may have been on my part a word spoken at random, or an “ arrow shot at a venture,” but the Lord directed it between the joints of the armour, and it did its work effectually. He did awake, and he did arise, and Christ gave him light.

A preacher was once helping home a poor old woman, who was very feeble he noticed. Giving her his arm, they talked together by the way. To his surprise and joy, he found she had been converted under his preaching.

“ What part of the sermon, or what point in it has been blessed to you? ” he asked.

“ It was no part of the sermon at all,” replied the old lady, bluntly; “ *it was the word of God you spoke that did it.* ”

To return to the young man I began to speak about. He had many difficulties he could not overcome, many obstacles he could not surmount, and after looking over parts of the Bible together, and showing him the clearest gospel statements we could but commend him to that God Who was doubtless leading him on in the way of truth. There is often something in people's history known only to themselves and God; things they cannot pour into any human ear, because not certain of that full and perfect sympathy they so much need in certain circumstances, which prevents their receiving the truth. Others you find as clear as glass. The whole thing is manifest in a moment. How there should be difficulties in the way of a sinner accepting the Saviour, and with Him salvation and life, seems amazing to

one whose eyes are open. But that makes all the difference.

It was so with the young man. I saw the chink was widening, and that he consequently was getting more light, and I felt sure he would soon not only open the door but the window as well, and every place that would admit the glorious light.

In the path of faith, all is clear; and people who are saved are resting on Christ's finished work. He who by faith has learned to rest *there* shall never be disturbed. God is not the author of confusion; and if He tells me that to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to have everlasting life, full salvation from sin, Satan, judgment, and the lake of fire; and that I ought not to be *quite* certain of it, ought not to be so presumptuous as to know my sins were forgiven; I say that would be confusion.

God does not trifle with sinners: He speaks plainly, yet how full of grace! He will bear with honest difficulties, and graciously lead on in all the gentleness of divine forbearance. Can words be plainer, or more to the purpose on both sides of the question: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him"? (John. iii. 36.) The cross showed what sin is, and what it has done for the sinner, ruined him in every shape and way; and to meet this miserable condition God brought in the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

It was not long before we met our young inquirer after truth again. This time he greeted us with a different aspect, and almost his first words were, "I've no difficulties *now*!"

He at last received the truth, believed the truth *as it is in Jesus*, with the faith of a little child, and all was peace.

THE GOSPEL IN LEVITICUS.

(READ LEV. iv.)

WHY was the mind of a Jew set at rest, for the time being, when he had offered his sin offering? How did he know that the special sin for which he had brought his sacrifice was forgiven?

Because God had said, "It shall be forgiven him." His peace of heart, in that particular sin, rested upon the testimony of the God of Israel, and the blood of the victim. So, now, the peace of the believer, in reference to "ALL SIN," rests upon the authority of God's word, and "the precious blood of Christ." If a Jew had sinned, and neglected to bring his sin offering, he would have been "cut off from among his people"; but when he took his place as a sinner, when he laid his hand upon the head of a sin offering, then the offering was "cut off" instead of him, and he was so far free. The offering was treated as the offerer deserved; and hence for him not to know that his sin was forgiven him would have been to make God a liar, and to treat the blood of the divinely appointed sin offering as nothing.

And if this were true in reference to one who had only the blood of a goat to rest upon, "how much more" powerfully does it apply to one who has the precious blood of Christ to rest upon? The believer sees in Christ One Who has been judged for all his sin, One Who, when He hung

upon the cross, sustained the entire burden of His sin; One Who, having made Himself responsible for that sin, could not be where He now is if the whole question of sin had not been settled, according to all the claims of infinite justice. So absolutely did Christ take the believer's place on the cross; so entirely was he identified with Him; so completely was all the believer's sin imputed to Him, there and then, that all question of the believer's liability, all thought of his guilt, all idea of his exposure to judgment and wrath, is eternally set aside. It was all settled on the cursed tree, between Divine Justice and the Spotless Victim.

And now the believer is as absolutely identified with Christ on the throne, as Christ was identified with him on the tree. Justice has no charge to bring against the believer, because it has no charge to bring against Christ. Thus it stands for ever. If a charge could be preferred against the believer, it would be calling in question the reality of Christ's identification with him on the cross, and the perfectness of Christ's work on his behalf. If any one, when the worshipper of old was on his way back, after having offered his sin offering, had charged him with that special sin for which his sacrifice had bled, what would have been his reply? Just this: "The sin has been rolled away by the blood of the victim, and Jehovah has pronounced the words, 'It shall be forgiven him.' " The victim had died instead of him; and he lived instead of the victim.

Such was the type. And as to the Antitype, when the eye of faith rests on Christ as the sin offering, it beholds Him as One Who, having assumed a perfect human life, gave up that life

on the cross, because sin was, there and then, attached to it by imputation. But it beholds Him also as One Who, having in Himself the power of divine and eternal life, rose from the tomb therein, and Who now imparts this, His risen, His divine, His eternal life, to all who believe in His name. The sin is gone, because the life to which it was attached is gone. And now, instead of the life to which sin was attached, all true believers possess the life to which righteousness attaches. The question of sin can never once be raised, in reference to the risen and victorious life of Christ; but this is the life which believers possess. There is no other life. All beside is death, because all beside is under the power of sin. "He that hath the Son hath life"; and he that has life, has righteousness also. The two things are inseparable, because Christ is both the one and the other.

If the judgment and death of Christ upon the cross were realities, then the life and righteousness of the believer are realities. If imputed sin was a reality to Christ, imputed righteousness is a reality to the believer. The one is as real as the other; for if not Christ would have died in vain. The true and irrefragable ground of peace is this, that the claims of God's nature have been perfectly met as to sin. The death of Jesus has satisfied them all, satisfied them for ever. What is it that proves this to be the satisfaction of the awakened conscience? The great fact of resurrection. A risen Christ declares the full deliverance of the believer, his perfect discharge from every possible demand. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.) For a Christian not to

know that his sin is gone, and gone for ever, is to cast a slight upon the blood of his divine sin offering. It is to deny that there has been the perfect presentation, the sevenfold sprinkling of the blood before the Lord.

Let me ask you, dear friend, have you been led to repose on this holy and happy foundation? Do you know that the question of your sin has been for ever disposed of? Have you laid your hand, by faith, on the head of the sin offering? Have you seen the atoning blood of Jesus rolling away all your guilt, and carrying it into the mighty waters of God's forgetfulness? Has Divine Justice anything against you? Are you free from the unutterable horrors of a guilty conscience?

Do not, I pray you, rest satisfied until you can give a joyous answer to these inquiries. Be assured of it, it is the happy privilege of the feeblest babe in Christ to rejoice in a full and everlasting remission of sins, on the ground of a finished atonement; and, hence, for any to teach otherwise, is to lower the sacrifice of Christ to the level of "goats and calves." If we cannot know that our sins are forgiven, then, where are the glad tidings of the gospel? Is a Christian in no wise better off, in the matter of sin offering, than a Jew? The latter was privileged to know that his matters were set straight for a year, by the blood of an annual sacrifice. Can the former not have any certainty at all? Unquestionably. Well, then, if there is any certainty it must be eternal, inasmuch as it rests on a sacrifice of eternal efficacy.

This, and this alone, is the basis of worship. The full assurance of sin put away ministers, not to a spirit of self-confidence, but to a spirit of

praise, thankfulness, and worship. It produces, not a spirit of self-complacency, but of Christ-complacency, which, blessed be God, is the spirit which shall characterise the redeemed throughout eternity. It does not lead one to think little of sin, but to think much of the grace which has perfectly pardoned it, and of the blood which has perfectly cancelled it.

It is impossible that anyone can gaze on the cross, can see the place which Christ took, can meditate upon the sufferings which He endured, can ponder on those three terrible hours of darkness, and, at the same time, think lightly of sin. When all these things are entered into, in the power of the Holy Ghost, there are two results which must follow, namely, an abhorrence of sin in all its forms, a genuine love to Christ, His people, and His cause.

C. H. M.

NEGLECTED OPPORTUNITIES.

“My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flower, the fruit of life is gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.”

THESE forcible but melancholy lines are from the pen of one of Britain's most gifted sons, but one who had lived as “having no hope, and without God in the world,” and who was cut off in the midst of his days, a neglecter of God's great salvation. (Eph. ii. 12; Heb. ii. 1.)

Art thou, dear reader, like Lord Byron, tasting “the worm, the canker, and the grief,” as a result of indifference to the salvation which God

offers thee by His beloved Son? But why be indifferent another moment? There is eternal life for thee in Christ. Why not accept this choice Gift of God? Why delay this great business, which ought to be the chief concern of thy days on earth? Why not now accept from the hands of love this priceless treasure, the salvation of thy soul? Christ died for sinners, and His love is the same to-day as it was the day He bled at Calvary. Still He waits, and still He says, Come unto me, and I will give you rest. (Matt. xi. 28.) And still He affirms, "Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out." (John vi. 37.) Oh! that He may have thy immediate, deep, heartfelt response, "Lord Jesus, I come."

But the word of God decides the solemn question now as to every gospel-hearer. We have not to wait until we reach the judgment-seat. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18, 19.)

Here, then, we have this solemn truth in the words of Holy Scripture. Each one, after hearing the gospel, is seen by God either as a *receiver* or a *despiser* of Christ. There can only be two classes. Most solemn, searching thought! Would to God, cries my soul, that gospel-hearers would lay this to heart! To which class, let me ask, does my dear reader belong? Ask thyself, I pray thee, this plain question. All other questions, compared with this one, are to thee unimportant. Stay not till another opportunity of preaching comes round. That may never come to thee. Look to Jesus now; believe in Jesus now; flee to Jesus now; trust the blood of Jesus now; lean

“PONDER, O MAN, ETERNITY.”

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all thy weight on the Person of Jesus now; and a full Christ shall be thine, a whole Christ shall be thine; yes, dear reader, the Christ of God; the salvation of God; the righteousness of God; the peace of God; the glory of God; thine, thine now, thine through all thy pilgrim days, and thine to all eternity.

“PONDER, O MAN, ETERNITY.”

ETERNITY, eternity,
How long art thou, eternity!
And yet to thee Time hastes away,
Like as the war-horse to the fray;
Or swift as couriers homeward go,
Or ship to port, or shaft from bow.
Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
How long art thou, eternity!
For e'en as on a perfect sphere
End nor beginning can appear,
E'en so, eternity, on thee
Entrance nor exit can there be.
Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
How long art thou, eternity!
A circle infinite art thou,
Thy centre an eternal *now*:
Never, we name thy outer bound;
For never end therein is found.
Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
How long art thou, eternity!

How terrible art thou in woe !
 How fair where joys for ever glow !
 God's goodness sheddeth gladness *here*,
 His justice *there* wakes bitter fear.

Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
 How long art thou, eternity !
 They, who lived poor and faithful, rest
 With God, for ever rich and blest,
 And love and praise the Highest Good,
 In perfect bliss and gladsome mood.

Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
 How long art thou, eternity !
 Who ponders oft on thee is wise ;
 All fleshly lusts he will despise ;
 The world finds place with him no more ;
 The love of vain delights is o'er.

Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
 How long art thou, eternity !
 Who marks thee well would say to God,
Here judge, burn, smite me with the rod,
Here let me all thy chastening bear ;
 For who can stand thy judgment *there* ?

Ponder, O man, ETERNITY.

ETERNITY, eternity,
 How long art thou, eternity !
 Lo ! I, ETERNITY, warn thee,
 O man, that oft thou think on me,
 The sinner's punishment and pain,
 To them who love their God, rich gain.

PONDER, O MAN, ETERNITY.

TRUE HAPPINESS.

THE words at the heading of this paper almost suggest there is a happiness which is not true, otherwise why should the word be thus qualified? Well, my reader, I would ask you if this is not so? Have you never had a false happiness? How many people there are around us to-day who are seeking for happiness or satisfaction, and yet they are seeking it in a way in which they can never get it!

All do not seek it the same way. One seeks honour, another wisdom, another wealth, another sport, but with each there is the same result in the end, the heart is left still unsatisfied, and yet boasting of its accomplishments.

We read of one, the caliph Abdalrahman, of Spain, who appears to have had most things at his disposal, and one would naturally conclude they would have made him happy, yet in a manuscript found in his room at his death he says: "I have now reigned about fifty years in victory and peace, beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honour, power and pleasure, have waited at my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot. They amount to FOURTEEN! O MAN, PLACE NOT THY HAPPINESS IN THIS WORLD!"

But in striking contrast to the above are the words of Dr. Payson when dying. Although his body was racked by terrible suffering, and his cheeks were pale and sunken with disease, he exclaimed, like a warrior from the field of

triumph, "The battle's fought, the battle's fought! and the victory is won! The victory is won for ever! I am going to bathe in an ocean of purity and benevolence and happiness to all eternity! I lie here, and feel these convulsions extending higher and higher; but my soul is filled with joy unspeakable. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down upon me. And I know, I know that my happiness is but begun, I cannot doubt it will last for ever! Were I master of the whole world, what could it do for me like this? Nothing! Nothing! Now all this happiness I trace back to the religion I have preached, and to that time when that great change took place which I have often told you is necessary to salvation; and I now tell you again, that without this change you cannot, no, you cannot, see the kingdom of God."

And now, dear reader, have not these two testimonies a word for us? From one is indeed a sad confession. Oh! if only he had known the Lord Jesus, how different it would have been! But he has left on record a solemn word for all: "Place not thy happiness in this world." From the other is a bright triumphant testimony of joy and happiness, which he had been brought into by being born again through faith in the Lord Jesus. What he had preached was the necessity of a new life, as the Lord said in John iii., "Ye must be born again," and without this new life imparted through faith in the Lord Jesus, I am bold to say that happiness, true happiness, will not be your portion.

My reader, do not deceive yourself, but before it be too late examine what you are resting upon for your eternal welfare.

Now is God's day of grace. Life is offered now to you. Won't you have it? "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." God loved, He gave. You believe, and you have everlasting life. Could it be simpler? And yet procured for you at the highest cost, for the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, was lifted up upon the cross, and bare the penalty of sins there, as we read, "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

May God grant that any of my readers who are unsaved or unsatisfied may put their trust in the Lord Jesus, and thus know the blessedness of true happiness both now and for eternity.

W. E. S.

"Thy faith hath saved thee" is the plain word of God to every one who comes to Christ, who believes in Him. Having been brought to see our need as sinners, and to trust in Jesus, the full blessing of God is ours. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." Faith BELIEVES it just because GOD SAYS it, and the feelings follow. The good news fills the soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory. When self has been silenced, and the word of God allowed its right place in the heart, the believer enters in measure into the very joys of heaven. The precious word of God will not be truer there. Therefore we ought to know our blessing *now* as *surely*, though not so *fully*, as we shall do *when* we are enthroned and crowned in glory.

GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION.

IF God be righteous, and judges sin, can He exercise love to us in all its fulness, towards us who are sinners?

Now, here it is we see the value of the death and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. The blessed Lord willingly undertook this task, to glorify God perfectly, and prove infinite love to us, and yet maintain God's perfect righteousness. He bore our sins; He was made sin for us. He drank the bitter cup of death and judgment, which our sins had filled. He gave Himself for us; He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities.

Was not this love? Oh! reader, was it not? Yet there God's righteous judgment against sin was fully maintained, so that there was not the least allowance of sin. What could show it like the death of the Son of God, when He was made sin for us? Could *He* not be spared? How then can any be spared if they persevere in rejecting mercy through Him? Was it possible this cup could pass unless He drank it? It was not. For whom then shall it pass, if not drunk by Him?

And see how the notion of mere dying under the hands of wicked men destroys all the glory of the cross. I read that Christ gave Himself, offered up Himself. Here I find the holy perfectness of His own soul in a way that nothing else shows. What love! What devotedness! What giving Himself up to the Father's glory! "No man taketh it from Me," He says, "but I lay it down of Myself." (John x. 18.) "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the

Father gave Me commandment, even so I do." (John xiv. 30, 31.)

You will say, How could this glorify the Father, to give Himself up to a cruel death and wrath?

Because of *your sins*; *they* made it necessary. If love was to be shown to you, it must be in this way; God's holiness must be maintained, the impossibility of allowing sin. You (if indeed through grace you believe) are not to be taken away from before Him because of your sins and defilement. Instead of that, as they could not be allowed, they were taken away, that you might be in peace before Him, and know this God of love. "God commendeth *His* love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.)

And see how the cross glorifies God in everything, if I look at it as a sacrifice for sin, as Christ giving Himself up, that God may be fully glorified. And how glorious Christ Himself is there, by His doing it! For, remember, it was a bitter cup, and yet Christ never was so glorified as there. Never was His glorious perfection so shown out; so that, though it may seem a hard task to impose on Him, yet it really was, as to His work, His greatest glory: as He says, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." (John xiii. 31.) For it was a glorious thing to Him who accomplished it, that, so to speak, God should be debtor for His glory to Him who thus gave Himself. For, indeed, it was a common counsel between the Father and the Son. God's will was that He should come, and His will was to come. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." (Heb. x. 7, 9.)

But see how He was glorified in it. Is God righteous in judgment against sin? The cross has fully shown it forth.

Is God perfect love to the poor sinner? The cross has shown it forth.

Did the majesty of God require that that majesty should be vindicated against rebellious sin? The cross has done it; yet the sinner is spared.

Is God true, and has He said that death should follow sin, the devil saying, as he yet does, it should not? Where such a witness that it *must*, as when the blessed Son of God died as man on the cross? Yet by it He has obtained for us life, beyond all the power of death and judgment.

Were our sins pressing upon us, so that we did not dare to look up? They are gone. I can see God in the light without fear: He has nothing to impute to me; He has proved His love, and I can enjoy His love. And just when man showed his hatred to God in slaying His Son, God has shown His love to man in giving Him to put away the sin shown in slaying Him.

Where was obedience shown as on the cross? He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.) Where love to us? Where the desire to glorify His Father? Thus the Son of man was glorified, and God, in every part of His nature, glorified in Him: His love, His righteousness, His truth, His majesty, all displayed!

And what is the consequence? The power and fear of death are gone for the believer. It is for him but the entrance into paradise. (See Luke xxiii. 43; Hebrews ii. 14, 15.) The sins that he feared, as bringing judgment, are taken away and

blotted out. He knows God loves him, so loves him that He has not spared His own Son to save him; he knows that He has nothing to impute to him, for Christ has borne all. God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins. (1 John i. 9.)

And yet is sin a light thing to one who has this perfect peace with the God of love? IT HAS COST THE DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD. True, it is condemned; he is justified, and has perfect peace with God. But how? By that which makes sin to his soul the most frightful thing that could possibly be; and knits his heart to Jesus, who was willing to suffer thus to put it away.

Whether we think of God's glory, or Christ's glory, or the practical effect on our hearts, it is Christ's cross, as being a real sacrifice for sin, that is really efficacious. It glorifies God, infinitely honours Christ, and perfectly blesses man; telling him he is the object of God's infinite love, and yet maintaining righteousness in his heart.

Jesus was God manifest in the flesh; and, as to His person, supremely glorious in dignity. This indeed enabled Him to do such a work; but never, as to His work and service, was He so glorious as He was upon the cross. I speak to you feebly, dear reader; but is it not the truth, words, as Paul says, of truth and soberness? And this thing was not done in a corner.

And now mark, too, the blessed efficacy of it for me, a poor sinner. There stood sin, death, judgment, just wrath, in my way. My conscience told me it was so, and God's Word plainly declared it. Satan's power bound it down, so to speak, upon my soul; while his temptations encouraged me to go on in what led to it. God's law, even, only made the matter worse for me, if I

tried to put myself under it; for its holiness condemned my transgressions. But now, for him that believes, all is taken out of the way. Sin is gone; and death, the terrible thing which I awaited, is gone too; Christ has turned it into a gain; I shall be with Christ.

As to judgment, Christ has borne it. As to wrath, there is none for me; I am assured of perfect love. Christ, in making me partaker of the efficacy of His death, has set me beyond all these things; in the light, as God is in the light; having loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood, and made me a king and priest to God and His Father. (Rev. i. 5, 6.)

In rising from among the dead, He has shown me this new place into which He has brought me, though as yet, of course, I have it only by faith and by participation in that life, in the power of which He has risen.

Yes, dear reader, the believer is saved; he has eternal life; he is justified. He waits, no doubt, to be glorified, but he knows Him who has obtained it all for him, and that He is able to keep that which he has committed to Him until that day.

There is a judgment (terrible it will be to those who have *despised mercy* and have *rejected the Saviour*); but to those who, as poor sinners, have submitted to God's righteousness, believing in His love, Christ shall "appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. ix. 28.) That is, having quite put sin away for them the first time, He will come the second time, without having anything to say to it as to them, for their full possession of the glorious result. As He said Himself, "I go to prepare a place for you. And

if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.)

Weigh that passage I quoted just now from Hebrews. Christ has appeared "once in the end of the world . . . to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And *as* it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (there is the natural portion of the sinner) "*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 first time He came, He bore the sins; the second time, He comes apart from that for the full salvation of those who look for Him.

Reader, are you prepared to give up all this for the notion that He fell a victim to self-seeking men, who put Him to a violent death? Did He not offer Himself up as a sacrifice to put away sin? Did not the Lord bruise Him? Did He not say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46.) Does not your soul need to have sin put away? Is not the love of God shown in the way you need it, by Christ being thus given? Has He not glorified God in it? Has He not Himself been glorified in it and by it, bitter though it was? Is it not peace to know He has done it, and put away sin for us by it? Does not the Word so present it to us?

The Lord give you to believe it in truth. It has given me peace, perfect yet increasing peace, these five-and-twenty years, while He has all the glory; and I know God is love, who has purged my conscience from sins. May you, dear reader, be enabled so to know it, and with as much joy! If you do, you know what I say is true. May the

grace of God make Him, who has wrought it for us, more precious to us both! It is a blessing and a joy to think we shall have an eternity in which to praise Him for it.

Even if I think of the way good and evil were brought out by it, there is *nothing like the cross*. Everything moral is there brought to a glorious centre, from which it flows down on every poor believing heart, in the proof that evil has been met and put away, and that good has triumphed. Where has death been shown in its terrible power as in the cross? Where has sin been shown in all its terrible character and effects? Where do I see man's hatred against goodness itself, and the Son of God bearing sins before God? Yet where was eternal life obtained for us, such as death can never touch? Where were goodness and love displayed as there? Where were righteousness and obedience accomplished in spite of all? Where was sin brought so immediately under God's eye, and punished, as there? Yet where was it put away, and His perfect delight in absolute obedience at all cost so drawn out? Where was the bowing in weakness under death shown as in Him whose soul was melted like wax in the midst of His bowels? Yet where the divine strength which carried Him through all that weakness, death, man's hatred, Satan's power, and God's wrath, could accumulate on His head who drank that bitter cup? All this is told us in Scripture. "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. xiii. 4.) "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," said the Lord. (Luke xxii. 53.) "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. xxvi. 38.) "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46.)

In a word, would I know what sin is? I look there. Righteousness? I look there. Hatred without a cause? I look there. Love without bounds? I look there. Judgment and condemnation of sin? I look there. Deliverance and peace? I look there. Divine wrath against evil? I look there. Perfect divine favour and delight in what infinitely glorified God? I look there. Weakness and death, though willingly bowing under it? It is there. Strength, divine strength, which has met and removed evil? It is there. Peace and wrath? It is there also: the world under Satan's power rising up, to get finally rid of a God of love; and God, by this very act, delivering the world and making peace by the blood of His own Son. As it is said, "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) Good and evil in all their extent and forms met there for the triumph of love in once suffering the evil, that good might have its full force.

Do you ask, reader, Why then are we in such a world still?

Scripture gives the reason. It tells us that God in grace is still leading souls to profit by and enjoy this. It is a world of misery and sorrow and oppression. Did God interfere to change it, He must come in judgment, and close the time of mercy; and that He does not do, while yet any have ears to hear. Therefore He allows the evil (which He will judge) to go on meanwhile. And we, though we may thus have to suffer awhile in the world, ought in this sense to rejoice that it is yet allowed; because it is still *a time of mercy*

extended to others. The end will be everlasting joy in a much better world. Christ is gone to prepare a place for us, and He will come again, and take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also. Thus Peter says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter iii. 9.)

Finally, my reader, you may not have, in peace of soul, been able to contemplate all the glory of the cross. You have a blessed portion yet before you; but remember, it is presented to you *just as you are*, for your need in all the grace of it towards a poor sinner. It meets *you* in all your sins, while it infinitely glorifies God.

A Saviour dying on the cross for the vilest meets the wants and the burdens of the vilest, comes home through grace to his heart. If his sins are a burden to him, he may see Christ bearing them, that he may be free and have peace. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) "And by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isa. i. 18.) If you are heavy laden, come to Him who came in love to give you rest, and has died in love for you.

The Lord's peace be with you, dear reader, be with you, whoever you may be. May you be washed in that blood which cleanses from all sin, and the Lord will preserve you for His heavenly kingdom.

J. N. D.

ARE YOU WEAK IN FAITH?

I HAD heard that Miss B. was ill, so I went one day for the purpose of inquiring how she was, and found her with her sister and another young woman sitting together in their parlour.

They seemed glad to see me, and I was pleased to find that the illness was nothing more than a cold, and that she was nearly recovered. She then introduced me to her friend, of whom I had heard before as one who had attended some of our meetings for the preaching of the gospel.

After some preliminary conversation, I remarked that it was a happy thing to "have boldness in the day of judgment," to look forward to that day without a doubt or fear, in the consciousness that there was not a cloud between one's self and God.

Miss O. remarked that "very few Christians could say that."

"Well, one who cannot say so is, I fear, not a Christian; for a Christian ought to have neither doubts nor fears. Because, as 1 John iv. 17 says, 'Herein is love with us (*margin*) made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is so are we in this world.' We are as Christ is before God, and thus we can approach Him without a doubt and without a fear."

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

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

“ I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I *hope* I *shall* be saved.”

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

“ But does not the Word of God say that faith without works is dead, being alone.”

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

“ But must I not feel the witness within myself that I am saved? ”

“ It certainly is a blessed thing when ‘ the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.’ But we must not begin at the wrong end. *God’s order* is this. God sends us a message of peace; we hear it, we receive it, and then the Holy Ghost takes up His abode in us, witnessing with our spirit that we are the children of God. My joy and peace is the consequence or effect produced on me by the Holy Ghost, which I received on believing the message. Let me take a simple illustration. I receive a telegram that a near relative is dead. I read the telegram. I ascertain the sender’s name. I believe the news it contains, and unfeigned sorrow is the result. The feeling of sorrow does not precede my belief in the intelligence, but is the consequence of it. So with God’s message. We should look for no inward consciousness, unless we first have believed what it says.”

“ I do not yet see it, but if there is one thing that I earnestly desire, it is that I may become a Christian.”

“ I rejoice to hear you say so; but I must at the same time say that I fear it is your own fault that you are not happy in Christ. Cornelius was, like you, hoping and praying, and God sent him a message by Peter, to say that the Jews had slain Jesus, whom He had anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, but that He had raised Him up, and that now ‘ Whosoever believeth in Him should receive the remission of sins.’ Cornelius believed, obtained the remission of his sins on believing, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts x.) Why should not you believe, and know that your sins are remitted, and be sealed of the Holy Ghost? ”

"I do believe with my whole heart on Jesus."

"I am sure you do. Why not then, believe the simple Word of God, which says, 'Your sins are forgiven'?" (1 John i. 12.)

"I know my sins are *not* forgiven, and that I'm not saved."

"Why, I fear I must charge you with doubting the testimony of God in His Word."

"Oh, I dare not do that."

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

"Well, then, if I am saved I may go and do just what I like."

"No, God will not *let* you do that. The moment you believe, you have everlasting *life*, and have the gift of *the Holy Ghost*; and this life has new tastes and new desires, exactly the opposite of those you had when in your natural condition, because it is a new eternal life. And more than this, although the flesh will still lust, God gives you the Holy Ghost, so that you may not do the things you would; so that the apostle can say, 'Sin shall *not* have dominion over you.' " (Gal. v. 17; Rom. vi. 14.)

"Oh! but do we not see those who profess and call themselves Christians every day doing things that we know to be contrary to the Word of God?"

"I fear all are not Christians who profess to be such; and even amongst those who really are Christ's, failure oftentimes appears. Both Moses

and Paul spoke unadvisedly with their lips, and their failures should be a warning to all of us to walk humbly before God, and never to take the eye off Christ; only by continual occupation with whom can conformity to His likeness be attained." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

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

After a long pause, she replied, "I *do* think so."

And thus we parted.

JESUS SEEKING AND SAVING THE LOST.

WHEN the blessed Lord was charged by the Pharisees with receiving sinners, and eating with them, it served as the fitting opportunity for bringing out the deep thoughts and feelings which were in the heart of God toward sinful and lost men.

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was

lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Luke xv. 4-7.)

Our Lord's reply therefore opened out, not only the marvellous grace, but the intense joy of God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) in the salvation of "one sinner."

In the first part of this wonderful picture of precious realities we have the yearnings of divine love, the almightiness of divine power, and the manifestation of divine joy, all concerning the salvation, security, and eternal welfare of *one* lost sheep.

First, we have the Shepherd seeking the sheep. In it He is most diligent and persevering: "*He goeth after that which is lost, until He find it.*" There is earnestness and decision; for divine grace is in activity. The sheep's need is urgent; for it is "lost." The Shepherd seeks till He find it. His heart yearns over the object of His love, and the wanderer has no idea what is in the Shepherd's heart, knows nothing as yet of His yearnings and mercies; for the blessing is only tasted when the loving Shepherd and the poor lost one meet face to face.

The sinner must have to do with the Saviour. There must be this personal contact, this look of faith, before blessing can be known; for there is salvation in no other.

The Shepherd is a divine person. He is the Son of God. God thus makes Himself known to a sin-convicted soul in the person and work of Jesus, His beloved Son. The Shepherd died for the sheep. He gave His life a ransom for many. He shed His blood for the remission of sins.

He now, by His servants and the word of His gospel, goes after the lost. His love is divinely active. Though raised from the dead because He accomplished eternal redemption, and righteously exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, the activities of His loving heart still go after the lost; still by His servants He proclaims present peace and eternal salvation to every one that believeth. Thank God that His deep, unsearchable love is still in exercise toward the *lost*!

Secondly, when the Good Shepherd has found the lost one, what does He do? We are told that "He layeth it on His shoulders"; that is, He takes the entire responsibility of the security of the sheep thus found. He upholds and keeps. His almighty *power* is thus active. The sheep is on the Shepherd's shoulder, put there and kept there by Him.

How blessed! What perfect security! We know this is God's will; and it is well to be assured that what we hold is according to His will. Jesus said, "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 40). Nothing can be clearer. The will of God is that every one who now believes on the Son of God shall be in glory. Christ thus makes Himself responsible to raise up in the last day every one who has believed in Him. The believer's everlasting security then is based, not on his faithfulness, but on Christ's almighty power, unchanging love, and unfailing faithfulness. We *now* know, since Christ died, and rose, and ascended, and has sent down the Holy Ghost, that every believer is not only purged from sins, and has life in Christ, but is

united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, made a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

How blessed then to be borne up by the almighty power of the ascended Son of God, and to be in Him, thus having divine love and power in constant activity on our behalf, reserving heaven for us, and keeping us for it, through faith; Christ pledging Himself thus: "I will raise him up at the last day."

Thirdly, there is divine joy. "He layeth it on His shoulders *rejoicing*." Not only is this "one sinner" found, taken up, blessed, and kept, but there is joy in heaven on account of it, so great a matter to heaven is the salvation of *one* lost one.

But who rejoices? Was it the sheep? No doubt; for, in the third part of the parable, after the kiss, and the robe, and the ring, we find not only that the father rejoiced, but that he says to the returning one thus welcomed, "Let *us* eat, and *be merry*"; and we are told that "*they* began to *be merry*."

Surely the poor saved one who is brought to God in such marvellous grace cannot but rejoice; but that is not the joy referred to in the verses we are now considering. Here we are told it is the Shepherd who so rejoices, and not only so, but He calls others to share the joy with Him, saying, "Rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost" (v. 6); and it is plainly added, "Likewise joy shall be *in heaven over one sinner* that repenteth."

Whether the angels rejoice on the occasion we are not told, only that this outburst of joy is "in the presence of the angels of God." (v. 10). Clear it is that in heaven it is the Father who rejoices at receiving His lost one, saying, "It was meet

that we should make merry, and be glad : for this my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." (v. 32.) The Saviour, too, as we have seen, rejoices. Thus we see that divine joy is active, as well as almighty power and matchless love, in bringing "one sinner" to God.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR ALL.

WHAT does God require as an atonement for my sins?

Is it tears?

The tears of the Lord Jesus went up to His Father as "an offering of a sweet-smelling savour," as He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and over the beloved but apostate city of Jerusalem. The tears of the aged Paul, and youthful Timothy (Acts xx. 19, 31; 2 Cor. ii. 4; 2 Tim. i. 4), were well-pleasing to God, as they wept with anxiety over those whom the Lord had committed to their charge. But where, in the whole canon of Scripture, do we find that *tears* were ever an atonement for sins?

Will fastings avail?

The Lord Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights while He was tempted of the devil; and in this He, as ever, was doing what was well-pleasing to His Father. The prophets and teachers of Antioch likewise fasted, as they waited upon the commands of the Holy Ghost. (Acts xiii. 1, 2.) But where does God tell us that *fasting* will procure the pardon of sins? On the contrary, though the self-righteous Pharisee of Luke xviii. fasted "twice in the week," he went not down to his house justified.

Will prayers profit?

Jesus "continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke vi. 12.) Cornelius, "a just man, and one that feared God" (and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge"—Prov. i. 7), "prayed to God alway"; and his prayer came up for a memorial before God, and Peter was sent to deliver him by the word of salvation, and thus introduce him into the blessed liberty wherewith Christ doth make His people free. The poor publican, too, was heard acceptably in his groan of bondage, and he "went down justified rather than" the Pharisee. But where does God reveal that *prayers* can come up to God as an atonement for sins? On the contrary, "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." (Prov. xv. 8.) "God heareth not sinners." (John ix. 31.) When they make many prayers, He will not hear. (Isa. i. 15.)

Will sorrow for sins serve?

The soul of the blessed Saviour was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." (Matt. xxvi. 38.) The disciples of Matt. xvii. 23, and the elders of Acts xx. 38, were "exceeding sorry"; the former at hearing of the approaching trouble of their beloved Master, the latter because they should see the face of their instructor no more. The Corinthian assembly sorrowed after a godly sort, and "carefully" cleared themselves of the sin which was amongst them. But where does the Word of God teach that any amount of *sorrow for sins* will take away their smallest stain? Judas sorrowed in vain. Esau sorrowed in vain. Spiritual life alone can produce that "godly sorrow" that "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of"; and they were spiritually lifeless!

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR ALL.

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Will works do nothing?

Jesus worked the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, for the night was coming in which none could work; and of His great atoning work we will speak more again. Rahab, in the full persuasion that the God of Israel was "God in heaven above and in earth beneath," and knowing that He had "given them the land," "received the spies with peace," and perished not with them that believed not, thus proving her faith by her works. Abraham staggered not at the demand of God for his son Isaac, but endured the trial of his faith, by offering his only son on the altar. But where does Scripture ever tell of any amount of *works* serving as a recompense for sin? On the contrary, "by the works of law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal. ii. 16.) Righteousness is "to him that worketh not." (Rom. iv. 5.) By wicked works we are enemies to God. (Col. i. 21.)

Will ordinances be of use?

We read that those who gladly received the word under the preaching of Peter were baptized, and broke bread. (Acts ii. 41.) Paul himself was baptized, and ate the Lord's Supper with the disciples at Troas. (Acts xx. 7.) But where did God at any time provide, that either *baptism* or *the Lord's Supper* should be for a moment thought of as an escape from the righteous penalty due for sin?

Dear reader, if you are resting on your *tears* or your *fastings*, your *sorrow*, your *prayers*, your *works*, or your *ordinances*, as a means wherewith to get rid of your sins, or aid in doing so, I must solemnly warn you that you are building on a foundation of sand, that you are presenting to

God that which He will not accept from any unsaved sinner!

His requirements in respect of propitiation for sins is not any of the things I have named, which are right and good in their proper place, but a sacrifice in *death*.

And now let me assure you that Christ Jesus, on the cross, met the righteous judgment of a holy God for sin, gave up His precious life for sinners. His presence now at the right hand of God is a witness to all that God is eternally satisfied with the atonement He has made for the sins of the vilest sinner.

Do you believe this?

May I, then, entreat you to turn away from those things in which you have been vainly trusting hitherto, and rest your soul henceforward on CHRIST, as the all-sufficient ransom for your soul, the already accepted propitiation for your sins?

I assure you that, had He left one atom of His work unfinished, He could not be now where He is, namely, at the right hand of God. Oh! look at Him *there*, and be satisfied that He is the *same* Jesus that died for you. His wounds show it. His words tell it. Acknowledge Him, then, as your Saviour, and know that you are saved. Believe on Him in your heart, confess Him with your mouth, and righteousness and salvation are alike *yours* this moment. (Rom. x. 9; Acts iv. 12.)

Continue then to gaze on Him, and, as with Stephen, you will be inwardly and outwardly conformed to His image. (Compare Acts vii. 59, 60; Luke xxiii. 34, 46; Acts vi. 15; 2 Cor. iii. 18.)

“The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.)

A SAILOR'S DISASTROUS RESOLVE.

IT was a bright clear night in December, many years ago, and the good ship *Harriet*, under reefed topsails, was coming up the Channel before a stiff breeze. Every heart on board was glad, for after a long and perilous voyage she was now "homeward bound."

On the quarter-deck Capt. H., and Edward L., his first mate, were standing talking together.

"We shall be in dock before Christmas, if the wind holds," L. said. "It is not well for a sailor to set his mind too much on anything, but I have set mine on being in the dear old home at Christmas this year. It is four years since we all met at home; and father and mother say it hasn't been half Christmas without me."

Captain H. listened to the young sailor's eager words; then, laying his hand kindly on his shoulder, said gravely, "I do not wonder at your wish, Edward. It is a great pleasure to get home, especially to such a happy home as yours is at Christmas time. But there is something I should like you to wish for still more than that. I want you to be sure that when the voyage of life is passed, there remaineth for you a rest in the glorious home above—

'Where all the ship's company meet,
Who sailed with their Saviour below.' "

L. was silent for a moment, and grasped the captain's hand in his. "Captain, you have been a kind friend to me ever since I can remember. If all Christians were like you, I can only say I wish there were more of them. And more than that, what you have so often said to me about religion has made me think very seriously. I

really intend to serve Christ, too, but not just yet."

"And why not now, L.?" asked his friend.

"I am afraid you will think me cowardly, if I tell you, captain. The truth is that our people always give a ball at Christmas, and it would be a terrible disappointment to them if I were to hold aloof. They would say I had turned Puritan, and lost my spirits, and I don't know what else; and it would seem hard to give them pain just on first going home. So I have made up my mind to keep on as usual till after that. Besides," he added, with the frankness of a true English sailor, "I expect it will be a downright jolly time, and I'm not inclined to give it up on my own account. But after Christmas, captain, I will turn over a new leaf; see if I don't."

The captain felt that human pleading would have little power to overturn the young man's purpose. In his anxiety, he had recourse to prayer. Standing still, with uncovered head, on the heaving deck, he prayer earnestly, though silently, to his Father in heaven, who could convince his young friend that "now" was the only certain "day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

L. understood, and felt the unspoken prayer, the words of which he could not hear. His head was bowed, too, and his spirit deeply moved; but the tempter was at hand with the deadly suggestion that it was quite as safe, and far better, to wait awhile.

As the captain bade him "Good night," before turning in, he said gaily, "Now, don't be anxious about me, captain. Christmas will soon be here, and you have my promise after that."

The captain went below, and left the brave

young fellow on deck, bright and mirthful, and ready to quench, by lively anticipations of home, every feeling of misgiving that the captain's prayer had caused.

Not ten minutes had passed, when the captain heard hurried footsteps on the deck, then the sharp, clear cry, "Man overboard." In another instant he had dashed up the companion-ladder, and looked around.

He scarcely needed to ask, "Who is it?" for had it not been Edward L. he would have seen him at once among the gallant fellows who were lowering the boat, ready to peril their own lives to rescue the man in danger.

Yes, it was Edward L. Reaching over the quarter-deck to draw an entangled log-line he had lost his foothold, and fallen overboard, and the ship went on her rapid way without him.

Everything was done that stout arms and brave hearts could do; but all was in vain. The men strained at the oars, only to see him throw up his arms, and sink.

Christmas with its mirth and festivity came to others, but not to him; and as he went down in the cold waters, leaving hope and life behind him for ever, it would add a terrible keenness to his agony to remember that, not many minutes before, eternal life had been offered to him through Jesus, and that he had refused it.

Again, dear reader, we beseech you, in the name of the sinner-loving Jesus, to lay to heart this matter of eternal importance, namely, your own soul's salvation. God says "Now." What do you say? Do you at this moment bow before God to His judgment of your state, declaring you to be *guilty before Him?*

Edward L. did not believe that God meant what He said; but alas! alas! how soon, how very soon, he found himself in eternity! Oh! then, dear reader, accept God's truth now; bow before Him confessing yourself a guilty sinner now; flee to the outstretched arms of Jesus now; rely on His precious blood now, yes, "to-day," "now." To-morrow may be too late! "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. xxix. 1.)

CHRIST AND THE DOOR.

READ LUKE XIII. 23-30.

THE question here raised is one of deep, personal importance to the sinner, namely, that of salvation. "Lord, are there few that be *saved*?" The Lord Jesus had spoken of the certainty of coming judgment on impenitent sinners, and on mere professors in the kingdom, however flourishing in appearance: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 1-10, 18, 19.)

This was truly solemn as coming from the lips of their own Messiah. "Ye shall." If impenitency and mere formality be persisted in, there is no hope for the future: the soul must "perish." What a dreadful thought is conveyed by that dreadful word "perish." It means *all* is lost; for ever lost! The soul perished, hope perished, all for ever perished; body, soul, and spirit, in the place of woe. Oh! that careless sinners and mere professors would think on such things now,

before it is too late, before the Master be risen up, and the door be shut.

It is to such the gospel is preached, and preached by the same Jesus. "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.) Here the mere worldling is represented as *perishing*, but not yet *perished*. Glorious gospel! It perfectly meets the case; only listen to its voice, and believe its message of love, to thee, oh! perishing sinner. God loves the sinner; Christ died for the sinner. *Whosoever* believes it, shall not *perish*, but have everlasting *life*. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 8.) Thus saith the word of the Lord!

The question here put, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" seems to be a merely curious or idle question, on the part of the one that asked it; such as unconverted men will sometimes ask about the doctrine of election. But the Lord, in His usual way, so answered it as to turn it into a serious one. What a lesson for us! He replied so as to meet, not the question, but the real state of the man's soul. As if the Lord said, Few or many, do *you* "strive to enter in at the strait gate." That is your personal, all-important matter. "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy

presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Surely this is a solemn and searching reply, and well fitted to turn the *curious* into an *anxious* inquirer. The Lord, in His rich mercy, grant that it may do so in the case of many into whose hands this paper may fall. There are many who are still merely curious inquirers, whom we desire to see deeply anxious and earnest ones. Surely the salvation of the soul is of all others the most personal matter possible. The door is still open; the invitation is to all: "Come, for all things are now ready." Enter while there is room. The Master is patiently waiting; oh! delay not! "Strive to enter in at the strait gate."

The connection and strict interpretation of this passage refer to the Jews. Christ was speaking to Jews, of their then present privileges, and their future miseries because they were rejecting Him. He plainly showed them that although their privileges had been great, such as eating and drinking in His presence, and hearing Him preach the gospel in their streets, still there was no salvation for them, and no entering the kingdom, while they refused to own Himself, to receive Him as the true Messiah, and the only Saviour of sinners. He would at last say, "I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Observe, He does not deny that they enjoyed their privileges; but He repeats this awfully solemn truth, "I know you not whence ye are."

They had never made themselves known to Him. They had never come to Himself individually as sinners to a Saviour. They knew their

privileges, and boasted in them, but they refused Christ. Christ Himself was rejected. Israel would have none of Him. Therefore they were left desolate, like chickens without the sheltering wing, and the "fox" in the midst of them. Oh! what a picture of utter helplessness and certain destruction.

But although this portion of Scripture, strictly speaking, refers to the Jews, it has nevertheless a most solemn voice to us. And morally it strikingly illustrates our own present position, and the condition of things all around.

Let us now look at the subject in its application to our own time.

When Christ had finished the great work of redemption on the cross, He ascended up on high, and sat down at the right hand of God in heaven. His work being finished, He "sat down." "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) The sacrifice for sinners was offered and accepted, by which their need was fully met. God was glorified. The rights of His throne were vindicated, by the blood of the sacrifice sprinkled on the mercy-seat. All the perfections of His character were displayed in their full glory, and the principles of His moral government maintained. All being done, perfectly, and for ever done, the door of mercy is thrown wide open to the chief of sinners. The way into the holiest of all is made manifest. And the voice of gracious invitation goes forth into all the world, to every creature, Whosoever will, let him come, and drink at the fountain of the water of life freely, *gratis*. God is free to receive to Himself, and pardon with overflowing love, all who come

to Him by faith in the finished work of His dear Son. Thus, glory be to God! we have at this present moment,

A SEATED CHRIST, AND AN OPEN DOOR.

And "whosoever will" may come to Him, in the full confidence of the Father's perfect love, and the Son's finished work *for them*. All in heaven is favourable to the sinner who thus comes.

There need be no doubts, no fears, no trembling. To enter the open door in the faith of Christ, simply trusting to the work which He has accomplished for us, is to enter heaven. How? In what condition, think you? Oh! wondrous truth! It is to enter heaven in the full credit of Christ Himself. It is to cross the threshold, pass through the pearly gates, walk up the golden street, right to the throne of God; and stand in the pure light of that throne, in all the perfectness and acceptableness of Christ Himself. To find fault with the believing sinner there would be to find fault with Him who sits upon the throne. He stands there, not in his own right or title, but in the rights and titles of Christ. "To-day," said the dying Jesus to the believing thief, "shalt thou be *with Me* in paradise." Observe, not only in paradise, but "WITH ME." Oh! that precious, "with Me"! It defines so sweetly where the departed spirit is, where heaven is, and what heaven is. It is just to be *with Christ*.

As to the immediate results, the present condition of all who believe in Jesus, the following passage is clear and decided: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." (1 Peter iii. 18.) This is the gospel of the grace of God.

There is no missing link in this gospel. The believer, in virtue of the sufferings and death of Christ, is brought to God in Him. Not only to the cross, but to the throne. Not merely into a place, but unto a Person. He can never get better, he can never get higher, than this. Oh! wondrous truth! Brought to God! In the condition of Christ! In the condition of life, peace, preciousness, perfectness, and glory! "Because as He is, so are we in this world." (1 John iv. 17.) This passage clearly expresses the believer's vital union, real oneness, with Christ, and that he stands, even now, at this present time, in all His completeness, in the presence of God. And is it, my reader may ask, to all this blessedness, that the open door leads? Yes, dear reader, to all this wondrous, present blessedness! And while Christ is seated at God's right hand, the door stands wide open night and day. Entering in by the "strait gate" simply means coming in faith to Jesus, conversion, reconciliation to God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, then, enter now! To-morrow may be too late; the Master may be risen up, and the door be shut against you for ever.

Alas! that any should prefer present things to coming to Jesus; that any should need to be entreated to come to Him. What can be more encouraging, more inviting, than a seated Christ and an open door? The present *position* of Christ assures the sinner that the work is finished. There is no ground for perplexity. The work required by God, and needed by the sinner is done, perfectly done, and accepted by God *for the sinner*. The divine proof of this is a seated Christ and an open door. There the blessed Jesus waits in

patient love, to receive to Himself all who come by faith. And this glorious word, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," He has sent forth unto all the ends of the earth, that every doubt may be dispelled. Oh! then, tell me, ye trembling, troubled, doubting, unhappy ones, where is there the smallest ground for all your fears as to your acceptance? Certainly it is not in the love of God, the work of Christ, the witness of the Holy Ghost, the open door, or in the patient, waiting One. It can only be in the *unbelief* of your own hearts. For surely the work of Christ is finished, God is satisfied and well pleased in Him; sin has been put away, the power of Satan destroyed, death vanquished, the grave spoiled, and Christ, the mighty Victor, is seated in triumph on the right hand of heaven's Majesty, waiting for sinners to be gathered to Him, that they may shine in His presence and reflect His glory through eternity. "Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace IN BELIEVING, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 13.)

We will now glance, very briefly, at the second part of our subject, namely,

A RISEN CHRIST AND A SHUT DOOR.

The Lord Jesus solemnly assures us that the moment His position is changed, the door is shut; and that there would be no hope for those who were outside, who had refused to enter by the "strait gate." The position of the door depends entirely upon the position of the Master. While He is seated, the door is open; but when He is risen up, the door is shut. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to

the door, and ye begin to stand *without*, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are."

It was those who had enjoyed the greatest privileges, such as eating and drinking in the Lord's presence, and hearing Him teach, that were hopelessly shut out. They might *seek* to get in at the shut door, but there was no admittance for them. "For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." The seeking and the not being able to enter, do not refer to the *strait gate*, but entirely to the *shut door*. So it may have been in the days of Noah. Those who refused to enter the ark through the preaching of Noah, could not get in after the door was shut. They might seek, and seek earnestly, pleadingly, and touchingly, as they saw the waters rising on the earth, but it was too late, God had shut the door and none could open it. They had despised the day of His long-suffering grace, although He had waited a hundred and twenty years for them; but a day of solemn reckoning came at last, and there was no escaping. They might see the ark of God's salvation rising securely on the swelling deep, but there was no refuge for them. Some might flee from one summit to another, but the raging billows pursued after them, until the highest summit was reached, and every mountain swept by the black waters of judgment. (Gen. vii.)

Surely, dear reader, there is something peculiarly and especially solemn in the truth here stated by the Lord. Does it not plainly teach us that the doom would be sealed for ever of all who have refused to come to Him by the open door, were

He, at this moment, to change His position? Assuredly it does. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door," etc. All depends upon this. How solemn! Were He to rise to-day, where would you be? on which side of the door? The question is not, "I am young, in good health, and may live many years." Oh! no. But in a moment when we think not, the Master may rise up, shut the door, and what then? If outside the door amongst those who have deliberately refused to come in, all hope is lost. He is "the master of the house"; "He openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth." (Rev. iii. 7.)

And now, in conclusion, let me faithfully and affectionately warn my dear readers not to rest in privileges. Privileges, however great, are not Christ. *These* can never save the soul. *He* only can. Have you, oh! have you, come to Himself? Have you ever spoken to Himself about your condition as a sinner, and His grace and love as the Saviour in dying for you? Oh! let me again ask you, have you come to Himself? Have you had to do with Himself, in the secret of His own presence? Your precious opportunities may be near an end. Who can tell how soon the Master may rise up? Is He not now gathering souls in great numbers, and filling His house rapidly? May it not be nearly full? Oh, delay not! While the door is open, enter in, and be at rest. "The master calleth thee," and every poor, blinded sinner. Why refuse? "Come unto Me," are His own words of gracious invitation; and His sure promise is, "I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28.)

JESUS IN COMPANY WITH A RELIGIOUS MAN AND A SINNER.

READ LUKE VII. 36-50.

THIS brief narrative records the ways of Jesus when in company with a sinner, a religious man (Simon the Pharisee), and others who sat at meat with Him.

The circumstances were very simple. Simon, like religious people in our own day, had a certain respect for one who had the reputation of being a prophet, or a teacher sent from God. Jesus was therefore an object of interest to him, though he knew Him not as the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. It is lamentable how many seem to make the Lord, or even the Bible, a matter of *interest*, instead of being a matter of *salvation*.

Simon had invited the Lord to eat with him; and as Jesus came, not to judge the world, but to save, He accordingly went. While He was in the Pharisee's house a notoriously wicked woman came there, and, among all the guests, her heart singled out the Lord as the One who alone could meet her need. She cast herself down at His feet behind Him, and it was evident that her soul-distress was very considerable.

This fact was enough to appeal loudly to the *conscience* of the religious Pharisee. He was surprised at his guest allowing a woman of that character to *touch* Him; so that he really began to suspect whether he had not been estimating Him too highly in thinking Him to be a prophet. Thus was the way opened for the Lord of glory to set forth, in the presence of them all, the blessed testimony of divine *grace*, the grace of God which

bringeth salvation; and to manifest the fact that He came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Simon little thought that his guest was the Son of God. Little either did he suspect that his heart and conscience were laid bare to the eyes of Him whom he had desired to eat with him. The Pharisee feared to tell out his thoughts; but "*he spake within himself*, saying, This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him; for she is a sinner" (verse 39).

Yes, *he spake within himself*; but the Lord searches the heart. He can read the inmost thought. All is naked to His eye; and He declares that *every* imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is *only* evil, and that *continually* (Gen. vi. 5). Such is man before the eye of God: only and continually evil. But Simon, like many others, thought himself righteous, and therefore he despised this sinful woman; he was evidently grieved to see her in his house, and was astonished that his guest should have allowed such a person to *touch* Him. He marvelled how Jesus could welcome such a sinner; and it is a wonder to unbelieving hearts still, because they think that it is religious or good people that Christ embraces; and they do not believe the blessed fact, that Christ died for the ungodly, and that He saves sinners, guilty, hell-deserving sinners.

How does the Lord meet these unbelieving and self-righteous thoughts of the blind Pharisee? In perfect wisdom, gentleness, and kindness. He says, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on."

And then, if I mistake not, He draws a portrait

of both the sinner and the Pharisee as an appeal to this self-righteous conscience. "A certain creditor had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." As much as to say, Suppose, then, that it be true that this woman is an open transgressor of God's laws, and that her flagrant sins are manifest, so that she is considered ten times as great a violator of right principles as some others; and call her a five hundred pence debtor; and then suppose that little can be said of Simon as to outward misconduct; suppose even that his transgressions against outward morality are few, and seldom repeated, so that he is only a fifty pence debtor; still, the fact is, that whether the debt be little or much, both are so thoroughly bankrupt as to have nothing whatever to pay their creditor's demand.

This is most important; because it is not now a question of a person being a great sinner, or a little sinner; the question is, Are your sins forgiven? How can you meet God on the judgment of your sins? for you are in debt, and cannot pay. The answer is, that God is the God of all grace, and frankly, unasked, proclaims forgiveness in pity and mercy, because you cannot pay any portion of the debt yourself. This is grace; God in mercy forgiving sins, and justly so too, on the ground of the atoning death of His beloved Son. "Christ died for the ungodly." He "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (Rom. v. 6; 1 Pet. iii. 18).

Then the Lord appeals to Simon as to which would love the forgiving creditor most; for the prostrate woman was lavishing, as it were, the

love of her grateful heart over the sacred feet of her newly found Saviour.

To this question he answered, "I suppose he to whom he forgave most."

This is clear enough: hence the Saviour said, "Thou hast rightly judged."

The principles of divine grace and truth being thus laid down, the application follows; and the Lord (having drawn a portrait, showing each person guilty and undone before God, alike in need, alike dependent on the free mercy of God) now brings out the difference between a soul that apprehends Him as the Saviour of sinners, and one who, however religious, knows Him not. How wonderfully skilful was this perfect Preacher in using the truth! Simon, indeed, needed to be awakened to a sense of his guilt, and the hollowness of his religious pretensions; the woman needed to be comforted, and filled with that joy and peace which the Saviour brought for broken-hearted, sin-convicted people.

He turns then to the woman, but still addresses the Pharisee. Directing Simon's attention to the woman, He says, "I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet"; that is, you have not even shown me a common mark of respect and attention: "but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss," did not salute me with an ordinary mark of affection: "but since I came in she hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My *head* with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my *feet* with ointment."

Thus the blessed Lord shows Simon how much there was in the ways of this despised, sinful

woman superior to himself, and, as He afterwards teaches, the spring of all is love, the fruit of a heart moved with gratitude to the Lord. Because of deep-felt need, she clung to Him as the only Saviour, and knew that none other could make her crimson sins white as wool.

She had found Him. Her soul had been longing after personal dealing with this Friend of sinners; and, now she had found Him, she counted Him worthy of the costliest service; bathed His feet with tears of grateful love; wiped them with the hairs of her head; and then anointed them with the precious ointment she had brought. Her love was the fruit of the forgiveness of her *many* sins. She therefore loved much. Hence Jesus added, "Wherefore I say unto *thee*, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for *she loved much*: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (verse 47).

But further. The Lord thus far has only addressed Himself to Simon. The woman seems to be all this time lying at His feet. She must be comforted, and learn from the Lord Himself that her filthiness is cleansed, her iniquity pardoned. For this reason Jesus said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven."

Nor is this all; for He again addresses Himself to her: "Thy faith hath *saved* thee; go in *peace*." So that we have here three present blessings of eternal importance: (1) Present forgiveness of sins; (2) present salvation; (3) present peace.

If we had met this woman the next day, and said to her, "Are your sins forgiven? are you saved?" what would have been her reply? "Yes, I have forgiveness; I am saved." And then, if

asked, "Are you quite sure that your sins are forgiven?" would she not have said, "Yes, quite sure, because the Saviour told me so; and *His word* can never fail!"

It is present peace, present forgiveness, present salvation, that so many are denying in our day. They say that we cannot know these things till we come to die. But we have seen what the Lord taught; and there are many more Scripture testimonies to the same effect; and the Scripture cannot be broken. The Lord certainly gave this woman the fullest warrant for taking her stand as a *saved* person, and that, too, in the way of *faith*. "Thy *faith* hath *saved* thee."

It was not her tears, the ointment, or anything else that saved, blessed fruits as they were; but Jesus alone is the Saviour, and those who accept Him are perfectly secure. It was not doctrines about Christ, or religious duties, or prayers, or anything else, but CHRIST HIMSELF to whom she had clung, and had known as her very own Saviour. It was Himself, the Son who came forth from the Father, whom she had made her refuge, and in whom alone her confidence rested.

Blessed sample of simple faith! Blessed testimony, too, of the reality of present forgiveness of sins, present salvation, and present peace; leaving no room for fear or doubt, or a moment's misgiving, as to the security of that soul whose simple trust is in the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of lost, guilty sinners.

But those who sat at meat with Him were extremely offended. Man hates grace. He cannot bear to hear of the free, unmerited love of God. "Who is this," they said within themselves, "that forgiveth sins also?"

Yes, who is this? That has always been the question, and so it is still. "Who is this?" Listen to the Baptist's witness: "Behold the Lamb of God"; to Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God"; to Paul's preaching, "The Son of God, Jesus Christ"; to John's record, "This is the true God"; to the Father's voice from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

He died upon the cross to save sinners, and having finished redemption's work, God raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand in heaven.

H.H.S.

MAN'S SIN AND GOD'S SALVATION.

THERE can be no question as to the application of the familiar type of the brazen serpent uplifted by Moses in the wilderness. The Lord Jesus Himself had explained its import in His memorable words to Nicodemus, and thus precluded all mere effort of imagination: "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" (John iii., 14).

Here lies our warrant for applying this striking ordinance to our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us make use of it, for a few moments, as we glance at the passage in chapter xxi. of the Book of Numbers.

"And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? for there is no

bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.”

Only think of this, reader. Here is a picture of the human heart, a picture of your heart and mine. “They spake against God.” This is what we always do, whenever we grumble and complain of our circumstances. It was all about “bread” and “water,” “eating and drinking.” They imagined that God had brought them out of Egypt to die; whereas, in point of fact, He had delivered them from the brick-kilns and taskmasters, in order that they might hold a feast to Him in the wilderness.

Thus it was the very reverse of what they said. And so it is ever with our unbelieving hearts, when we listen to them. They are sure to tell the most palpable lies; lies, too, of the gravest character; lies about God; about His character, His nature, His dealings, His ways. All complaints as to our circumstances are lies about God.

And whence do they come?

From the father of lies, the old serpent, the devil; from the same one who entered the garden of Eden, and made our first parents discontented with their circumstances; made them believe that God was not kind; that they were not as well off as they might be, and as they ought to be. The serpent “spake against God.” This is what he always has done; always does; always will do.

Let us remember this. Let us never forget that all murmuring and complaining is really speaking against God. It is the voice of the serpent through human lips. He first thrusts the sting of discontent into the heart; and then the accents of discontent are poured from the lips; we speak against God.

Mark the result in Israel's case.

“ And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.”

This was a practical lesson for their hearts. They had listened to the serpent's voice, and they must be allowed to feel the serpent's bite. It is a solemn thing to grumble about our circumstances. It is, in point of fact, accusing God. It is simply saying we are not happy in His hands; and if we are not happy there, where else can we be placed but in the power of the serpent? There is no neutral ground. If we are not satisfied with God's treatment, we must be left to taste the treatment of the serpent.

Let us deeply ponder this. It is a very serious thing to indulge in a spirit of fretfulness, murmuring, and discontent. It is really wounding the heart of God, and entering into league with the serpent. This is a terrible sin, and must assuredly lead to bitter consequences.

But to return to the camp of Israel:

“ Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.”

Here they take their right place, the place of confession, the place of self-judgment. This is the *only* true ground for a sinner. They had spoken against God; now they speak against themselves. This is right, right always; right for each, right for all. “ I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin ” (Ps. xxxii. 5). Precious, eternal, sovereign grace! All praise to God,

Who is at once the source, the channel, and the power of grace.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, *when he looketh upon it, shall live.* And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

Here the divine remedy is introduced, “A serpent of brass.” The very likeness of that which had done the mischief becomes, under the hand of God, the means of deliverance. The fiery serpents are not removed; nay they are still allowed to do their terrible work; but grace shines in the provision, and the bitten Israelite who looked thereon was better off by far than if he had never been bitten at all.

True, he had to taste the bitterness of sin; but he was also enabled to prove the sweetness of that grace which could bring life out of death, and give full victory over all the serpent's power. “Sin hath reigned unto death”; but, blessed be God, “grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. v. 21). And hence in a world of sin and a world of sinners, where the serpent's power is seen on every hand, and where death reigns, the poor bitten sinner may *look* to the Great Antitype of the brazen serpent, to that blessed Christ Who was lifted up upon the cross for us, made a curse, made sin, bruised and judged in our stead; and by a simple look, one look, a look of faith at Him, get eternal life. “There is life in a look at the crucified One.”

Yes, dear reader, here lies the deep and precious secret of life and salvation. It is all had by a simple look at the divine object. When the bitten Israelite beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. He looked, and lived. He looked, not at himself, not at his wound, but at the divine provision.

This was the grand point to get hold of. It was of no possible use to look at himself. He could see nothing there but a bitten, wounded, dying creature. He might try to heal his wound; he might fondly dream of getting better, and then and thus think of looking. He might reason as to the use of looking at yonder serpent of brass; he might wonder what good could be had by simply looking. But it was all vain; utterly vain. There was but the one way of life, and that was divine and perfect; it was one look of faith at God's remedy. Till that look was given, nothing was done. When it was given, nothing was wanting. The moment anyone looked, he lived; and then he could, without a shadow of fear, see the fiery serpents flying around him, and know their power to hurt him was gone. One believing look settled the whole question.

But each one had to look, and to look for himself. No one could look for another, none could look by proxy. It was an intensely individual thing. Every bitten one *might* look. His title to look was his being bitten. But he had to look in order to live. He was shut up to God's remedy, shut up to faith.

Thus it was with the dying Israelite in the camp of old; and thus it is with the dying sinner now. The Son of man has been lifted up on the cross. He is God's grand provision, His only remedy. Every soul who feels his need is welcome to look;

“whosoever will.” None is shut out; all are welcome. But each *must* look or perish. There is no middle ground. Look and live; look not and die. One look is enough; no need of a second. The moment a soul looks by faith to Jesus, he passes from death to life, life everlasting. “The Son of man must be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have eternal life.”

Glorious tidings! Heavenly news! Precious message! May many ears be opened to hear, many hearts to understand, many eyes to give that one life-look!

Reader, what say you to these things? Have you found out that you are a poor, bitten, wounded, dying, hell-deserving sinner? Has the Eternal Spirit opened your eyes to see your true condition? Have you been thoroughly roused to a sense of your guilt and danger?

If so, why not now, even this moment, look to Jesus? Perhaps you feel disposed to say, “How am I to look? I do not know what is meant by looking.”

It is to confide in Him, to rest in Him, to believe that He has met your case, that He has satisfied the claims of God on your behalf, put away your sins, cancelled your guilt, and brought you nigh to God in all His own infinite acceptance. There is eternal life and salvation, divine righteousness and everlasting glory in one believing look at the Christ who was nailed to the tree, and Who is now crowned on the throne of God. May the Spirit of God lead you now to give that one momentous, life-giving, peace-giving look.

C.H.M.

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

“In this¹ was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that² we might live through Him.”

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

THE SALVATION OF A SAILOR.

“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the waters near me roll,
While the tempest still is high.”

THE above words, so well known to us, rang out on the silence of the night in the ward of one of the workhouses in Hull.

They came from the lips of a man named Robert Scott, known to the police and public as the noted cycle thief.

This poor man, having passed through the hardships of a sailor's life in the great war, was admitted to the workhouse infirmary suffering from consumption, and as he told the writer of these lines, he was “just waiting for six-foot,” meaning the grave.

But how came he, a sinner (who, in addition to

the crime mentioned above, had left his wife and children to shift for themselves), to be singing "Jesus, lover of my soul"?

Oh! story of mercy and love, Jesus did love his soul, as He also loves the souls of all His poor creatures, which great fact God's servants have to "persuade men" to believe, as they themselves were persuaded.

Yes, and Robert Scott was no exception, for when the gospel was presented to him, he mocked, and said he wished to have nothing to do with "sky-pilots."

The writer, in great sorrow, after warning him of the result of refusing Jesus Christ as his Saviour, left him on his death-bed to await the "six-foot."

But God's word had had its blessed effect upon his fellow-sufferer in the next bed, who with his friends were deeply moved.

The next visiting day came, and the poor dying man was again approached in gentle persuasion. But he turned his back, and would not listen. But the visitor softly whispered, "Robert Scott, you have had a hard life, but God loves you."

Two days after this the writer received the following note, written with shaking hand: "Will you kindly come and see me? I should like to have a word with you before I pass away.—R. Scott."

You may be sure no time was lost in answering to this request; and on arriving I found a *new* R. Scott; not a scoffer now, but a pleader and weeper; one who said, "Oh! I am a sinner, but Jesus is my Saviour." And now, instead of waiting for "six-foot," he desired to live to tell others of his Saviour. He now hated sin, and appealed

to Jesus to keep him from it. And it was a joy to me to hear my friend and brother in Christ ask for the Bible, which lay upon the table in the ward, to which his and my gracious Saviour had led him, and which he said had not been opened by anyone in the ward. He wished me to see that he had marked Job xix. 25-26.

Oh! blessed assurance, he *knew* that his Redeemer lived, who had once died for him, and that "in his flesh he would see God," the God he now knew as the One who had so loved him as to give His only Son to die for him.

Well might he sing, "Jesus, lover of my soul," at a time when others wished to sleep. But he so desired them to know his Saviour, who had awakened him from that death-sleep in which are all who have not met his Saviour, all who are "dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. ii. 1.)

And so he passed away to meet Him, whom he had found before it was too late.

Is this the end of R. Scott? Oh! no; for while in this life he had expressed a wish for his visitor to bury his body; and so, in company with his fellow-sailors and officer, his body was borne to the grave to await "the first resurrection," for "in his flesh he would see God"; and as we sang, "Jesus, lover of my soul," many a tear was shed by these "men of war," the officer also breaking down; and during the preaching of the gospel words were heard on all sides, "I will believe."

Though R. Scott's body was laid in the grave, his spirit was with his Lord (2 Cor. v. 8), because he believed in Christ as his Saviour.

Someone remarked, "What a terrible career the man has had," and it was my privilege to say, "His sins, which were many, were gone."

'The Blood of Christ' had washed them away, to be remembered no more."

Reader, are your sins gone, to be remembered no more? Can you say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"? If not, let me persuade you to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts xvi. 31.) Give to me, a fellow-sinner, saved through sovereign grace, the joy of leading you to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of poor, vile sinners.

To those of my readers who are saved, I would affectionately say, "Oh! beloved, tell them, oh! tell poor sinners of Jesus and His love. Warn them of 'the wrath to come.'"

Now "to Him" who "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." (Heb. vii. 25; 2 Pet. iii. 18.)

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

NOTE.—I might add that R. Scott asked his wife's forgiveness, and gave her a copy of "The Travellers' Guide from Death to Life." E.C.T.

"THE NAME OF JESUS."

WHILE travelling on the railway the writer found himself in a compartment with an aged lady, and, after an introduction through the gift of a gospel book, was delighted to find a happy response when the name of Jesus was mentioned.

In the course of conversation, the lady related an incident which had occurred when she was

quite young, residing in her native village, near Loch Lomond.

She had been brought up where the Bible was known and read, and had often heard the gospel of God, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, but had never seriously taken the message as having any meaning or value for herself.

One bright morning, in obedience to her mother, but with reluctance on her own part, she went to a cottage in the neighbourhood to visit a young girl who was seriously ill, with no hope of recovery. She had not been intimately acquainted with the invalid, but specially remembered her uncomely appearance.

Ushered into the chamber of the sick girl, who was evidently drawing near to the end of her earthly course, the visitor noted with wonder that there was no shadow of anxiety or fear on the face, but a calm, happy spirit seemed to animate the frail body.

With a pleasant smile, the dying girl welcomed her young visitor, and quietly said, "Is this no a bonnie mornin', Miss M——, to go and see Jesus?"

Once a lost sinner, under the burden of her sins, she had found Jesus to be her Saviour, and since then she had grown into a deeper acquaintance with Him, tasting day by day of His grace and love. Now she knew that she was about to pass away from this world, and it was her joy that she was going to see and be with the One who had loved her while yet in her sins, and given Himself for her.

A few hours after this visit she departed to be with the Lord.

The secret of the manifest joy and happy words

of the dying girl was beyond the comprehension of the young visitor; but the Spirit of God used the testimony to bring to her soul the need for and the value of, Jesus, as Saviour and Friend, so that she too was led to confide her soul to His keeping.

The aged traveller remarked that those words of the dying girl had ever remained fresh in her memory, and she now rejoiced that, through that same precious Saviour, she too would be with the redeemed host above, when the days of her pilgrimage below were ended.

Reader, would there be any joy for you, were you expecting to leave the world in the next few hours; or would it be sorrow? Have you found out that you, too, need a Saviour?

You *must* meet God, either now in this the day of His grace, when salvation is brought to you in Jesus, or when the day of His grace is past, and you meet Him as the Righteous Judge. Then it will be, must be, *the day of judgment*, but not then the day of grace.

True happiness belongs to those who, confessing their need, have accepted God's grace now, and, believing the testimony of God's Word and Spirit to the finished work of Christ, the now exalted and glorified Saviour, have peace with God, and know their sins forgiven.

Does the Name of Jesus bring any comfort to your heart, bring any thought of peace and joy? Have you bowed to the authority of that Name? Every one must bow. If not now in grace, then the rebel knee must bow, and the tongue confess to Him, in the day of manifested power and glory.

Listen! "Christ Jesus; Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal

with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. ii. 5-11.)

R.B.

THE PERENNIAL POWER OF THE TRUTH.

JOHAN FLAVEL was a minister at Dartmouth, in England. One day he preached from these words: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) The discourse was unusually solemn, particularly the explanation of the curse. At the conclusion, when Mr. Flavel rose to pronounce the blessing, he paused, and said, "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loves not the Lord Jesus is Anathema Maran-atha?"

The solemnity of this address deeply affected the audience. In the congregation was a lad named Luke Shut, about fifteen years old, a native of Dartmouth. Shortly afterwards he went to sea, and sailed to America, where he passed the rest of his life.

His life was lengthened far beyond the usual

term. When a hundred years old, he was able to work on his farm, and his mind was not at all impaired. He lived all this time in carelessness and sin; he was a sinner a hundred years old, and ready to die accursed. (Isa. lxxv. 20.)

One day, as he sat in his field, he busied himself in reflecting on his past life. He thought of the days of his youth. His memory fixed on Flavel's sermon, a considerable part of which he remembered. The earnestness of the minister, the truths spoken, the effect on the people, all came fresh to his mind. He felt that he had not loved the Lord Jesus; he feared the dreadful anathema; he was deeply convinced of sin; he was brought to "the blood of sprinkling" (Heb. xii. 24). He lived to his one hundred and sixteenth year, giving every evidence of being "born again." (John iii. 3, 5, 7.)

INIQUITY TAKEN AWAY, AND SIN PURGED.

"**T**HEN said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me," (Isaiah vi. 5-8.)

The remarkable chapter before us begins very abruptly. It tells us that the prophet had this vision of glory "in the year that king Uzziah died."

But why is Uzziah thus introduced?

May it not be, among other things, to remind us that the very best man on earth, the potentate of Judah's kingdom, the most honoured man in the world, stands in widest contrast with THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS? For we learn in 2 Chron. xxvi., that "Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord."

Thus, on the very threshold of our subject, we find the humbling intimation of man's real character of uncleanness and distance from God. Though he stand in the highest position of society, and hold the most exalted office, and that even among the most highly favoured people on earth, man has no resources at all for cleansing the leprosy of sin, and except God undertake to meet him with healing mercy, he must still remain unclean, and unfit for association with the God of holiness.

In considering this very instructive portion of the Holy Scripture, we shall notice: 1. The prophet's vision of glory. 2. The effect of it upon himself. 3. The assurance of forgiveness he obtained 4. His willing obedience.

1. THE PROPHET'S VISION OF GLORY. "*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple.*" There, in spirit, before God, the prophet took his place. There he saw the seraphim, the servants of the most High God, His ministers that do His

pleasure. He beheld them taking the place of profoundest reverence, covering their faces with two of their wings. He saw also that each of them covered his feet, to show that, while they had always walked obediently, they did not glory in their service, but with greatest humility gloried only in the Lord. He saw them also with outstretched wings, to signify their delight in doing God's will, and that they held themselves in readiness to fly swiftly at His bidding. He heard also the words uttered before the throne; he listened to the converse of creatures there, and found it was "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts"; and "at the voice of him that cried, the posts of the door moved, and the house was filled with smoke."

These things the prophet saw and heard. It was indeed an infinitely holy place. No unclean word was heard there; nothing impure escaped the lips of any; no irreverent action was seen; no presumptuous ways, no angry passions, no foolish actions, no indolent habits, no self-willed manners, were found there; for God is holy, and nothing unclean can abide His presence. The prophet was in the light, for "God is light." He was beside the balance of the sanctuary, and all was love, and holiness, and truth.

2. THE EFFECT OF THE VISION. Deeply serious and personal reflections occupied the prophet's mind. Man never rightly learns what he is, except in God's presence. It is a well-known fact among men, that if we would understand the true qualities of anything, we must bring it to the light. So it is as regards things spiritual. We may compare ourselves with our fellow men, and

arrive at most erroneous conclusions. Thus, the temperate man, measuring himself with a drunkard, believes himself righteous: and the chaste flatter themselves with thoughts of superiority over the licentious; while all may be equally guilty of covetousness, and other uncleanness, in the sight of God. It is therefore not wise to compare ourselves with our neighbours, but, coming into the light of God's holy presence, we shall be truly made manifest.

When Isaiah considered the peace, love, humility, holiness, purity, and truth that characterised all those who dwelt in Jehovah's glorious presence, what could the prophet's reflections be? How could he fail to ask himself such questions as, "Am I truly humble before God? Do I serve Him with reverence? Do I delight to do the will of God? Has my conversation been holiness to the Lord?"

Surely the prophet felt the light of God's presence to be a heart-searching region. It was enough to show him that he was "unclean, unclean," and that he had come short of God's standard. It was enough to make him feel that he stood "justly condemned" before God, and righteously exposed to His judgment and wrath. Hence he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips."

Notice that the prophet's intense distress was concerning himself: "Woe is *ME!* for I am undone; because *I* am unclean." He did not say, Woe are *we!* for *we* are undone. No; true confession is a personal thing. Many a sentimental professor in our day may be found ready to say, We are all sinners; we are not what we should

be. Such talk about *our* Saviour, *our* religion, *our* society, etc., thus casting themselves in with others in a lump. But this will not do for God. This is not as the Spirit teaches. He convinces each one of his own sin. He so makes the conscience sensible of its guilt as to cause it to cry out, "What must *I* do to be saved?" "God be merciful to *ME* a sinner." "If *I* may but touch His garment, *I* shall be whole." "Woe is *ME*! for *I* am undone."

But more than this, he felt he was unclean before God, a man of unclean lips. Those lips which ought to be, like the seraphim's, consecrated to His praises, had given utterance to the unclean thoughts and feelings of the heart; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Like another Job, he could say, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor MYSELF, and repent in dust and ashes." The light of God's holy presence made his uncleanness manifest; he felt its depths so great, its blackness so foul, its wounds so incurable, that he condemned himself as undone, hopelessly and helplessly unclean before God; ungodly, unholy, without strength, without any hope of recovery in himself. Having thus learnt himself in God's presence, he was then able to discern that the people by whom he was surrounded were unclean also.

Such were the lessons that the prophet was effectually taught in God's presence. And so, in measure, all learn now who are under divine teaching; for though we may not be favoured with such a vision of glory as the prophet had, yet the Holy Spirit makes us feel that we have

to do with God, and that every creature is manifest in His sight. When men begin to fear God, they consider that it is to Him they are responsible, as His creatures; that to Him they must give account; that He is the Judge of all; and that the holiness of heaven is the only true standard. Then they feel that they are sinners, rebels, unworthy, and have justly merited banishment from His glorious presence. Then they are awakened to their real danger; they become deeply anxious about their eternal state; and feeling despair in self, they come to the throne of God, exclaiming, "Woe is me! for I am undone."

3. Now let us consider THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS THE PROPHET OBTAINED. God in Christ is a blessed refuge for a sin-troubled soul; for He will be merciful to our unrighteousness, as was beautifully expressed by Elihu to Job: "God looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right, and it profited me not, He will deliver his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light." He will say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom."

This seems to be the rule of the throne of grace, and was just what the prophet experienced; for while he stood thus consciously before the King, the Lord of Hosts, in a repentant mind, confessing his uncleanness, groaning over his sin, condemning himself, acknowledging his undone state, we are immediately told, "*Then [mark, then!]* flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips,

and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

This is very blessed. It shows us that God waits to be gracious. It is a striking instance of the mercy of God to sinful man, and manifests His readiness to pardon and accept those who take a right place before Him. The prophet had an unmistakable warrant for the fullest assurance of his sins being put away, and of standing in the favour and blessing of God.

This assurance was based on two things, namely, the application of the live coal from off the altar, and the word of the Lord. By the altar we are to understand a place where the sacrifice was burnt, and presented to God. The cross of Christ is the only altar of New Testament days, and the various altars of the Old Testament were only types of it; and the coals of fire which consumed the sacrifices, and caused their savour to ascend to God, were figurative of that condemnation of sin which fell on Jesus, when He was made sin and a curse for us upon the cross of Calvary.

The application, therefore, of the “live coal” to the prophet’s “unclean lips” teaches us that God has, in His grace, provided an all-cleansing remedy for sin; that that remedy is found only in the sufferings, blood-shedding, and death of the Son of God; and that the moment the sin-burdened conscience realises the virtue of that blood, the soul is at once at peace with God. It is the blood of Christ which maketh atonement. It is the blood of Christ which has made peace between the sinner and God. It is “in Christ Jesus” and “through His blood” that the far-off sinner is brought nigh to God. It is the blood of Christ alone which cleanseth from all sin. It is only by the blood of

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Christ that any person has peace and confidence in God's presence.

The prophet knew that his uncleanness was purged by the application of the live coal from off the altar ; and the sinner that believes in Christ Jesus for salvation knows also that he has peace through the blood of the cross. The prophet had also the word of the Lord to assure him of his pardon and acceptance ; and, blessed be God, so have we. Some will try to persuade us that no one can know his sins forgiven till after death, and therefore it is great presumption for any one to say so. I reply, Who says I am forgiven? God says so ; and if God says, " Thy sins are forgiven thee," why need I fear, even if the whole world says it is not so? He tells us that Christ hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and that my sins are forgiven if I believe on the Lord Jesus ; for " to Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts xiii. 38.)

Let God then be true ; for He who said to the prophet, " Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," says also now to me, and to all that believe on the Lord Jesus, " Be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven thee." We wait not for dreams, or visions, or some miraculous actings upon the senses ; but we rest on the precious blood of Christ, and are assured by the unalterable word of God that our sins are forgiven. (See Eph. i. 7 ; 1 John ii. 12, iii. 5.)

H.H.S.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—As truly hoping in the mercy of God, and desiring in all things to please Him, but finding daily failure in myself, how may I obtain the help of His Spirit? L.D.N.

ANSWER.—Judging from the earnest tone of your letter we cannot doubt the reality of the Spirit's work in your precious soul. What you want now is settled rest of conscience in the finished work of Christ, and rest of heart in Himself as an object to fill and satisfy you for ever. We judge you are quickened, but not yet sealed. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"; but you do not seem to be at liberty. Further, where the Spirit of God is there is power; but you do not seem to have power. We trust you may soon be led into the full blessedness which is treasured up for the believer in Christ. You must be led to the end of self in every shape and form, to give up your own righteousness, your own doings, your own feelings, in short, everything of yourself, and accept a full Christ. Then you will be "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Eph. i. 13, 14.) All true believers are thus sealed. The Holy Ghost is the seal which God puts upon all those who truly believe in His Son. (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) We must distinguish between the work of the Holy Ghost, and His indwelling. The former is seen in the very first dawn of true conviction or repentance. The latter is connected with simple faith in a risen and glorified Saviour, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed." The former is called in 1 Peter i. 2, "sanctification of the Spirit." The latter is His personal indwelling in the believer. (Acts xix. 1-6.) C.H.M.

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GOSPEL LIGHT.

GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

WERE THEY RIGHT IN SINGING IT?

THE writer and a friend were walking quietly home one evening from a preaching service in the open air, when our attention was drawn to two young men coming in an opposite direction, and who were singing, loudly enough to be heard some distance off, the well-known verse,

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

We stood still, and when they were close to us my friend put out his hands, and asked them to stop.

You can easily suppose how surprised they were to be thus stopped by a stranger, and at first

they seemed disposed to pass on and take no notice.

“Stay one moment,” said my friend, “if you are ‘*safe in the arms of Jesus*,’ I may not be, for aught you know, and surely you will not mind spending a minute or two in speaking to me of Him ”?

“But you look as if you were,” said the foremost of the two.

“Ah,” was the reply, “it does not do to judge by a person’s looks. A Christian on the way to glory *ought* to have a happy face, for no one has a right to be so happy as he. But it is not always so. Tell me, however, are *you* ‘safe in the arms of Jesus’ ? ”

They seemed to feel a little awkward, as perhaps *you* would have done at a question of this kind. It was plain they were not prepared for it, but at length they said, with some hesitation, “We hope so, and are doing our best to be.”

“You *hope* so, and are doing your best to be,” replied my friend, with some surprise. “But did I not hear you sing just now, ‘*Safe in the arms of Jesus*’? So, after all, you do not know whether you are safe or not; and, if I were to ask you when you were born again, you probably could not tell me? ”

“No,” was the answer; “and, besides, the new birth is a gradual thing; so it would not be possible for anyone to tell when that great change had actually taken place.”

“I cannot agree with you in that,” said my friend, “although I know that every Christian could not remember the exact moment when he was born again. God might work for some time in the souls of both young and old, to break down

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everything that keeps them from realizing their lost condition; but there must have been a point in the history of all who are saved when their eyes were first opened, when they were 'turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God'; when they received forgiveness of sins, and a hope of glory through faith in Christ. (Col. i. 5; 1 Peter i. 3.) Paul, when standing before Agrippa, declared that the gospel did all this, as you may see for yourselves by looking at Acts xxvi. 18; and it takes place when we believe in Christ."

The two young men could not but own the truth of this, but still they were not quite satisfied; so, wishing to maintain their ground, they said, "But we do not always feel alike; sometimes we feel safe, and at other times we do not."

"I know full well that our feelings often change," replied my friend, "but, then, remember that our salvation depends on Christ, and the knowledge of it can only be had from God's Word. Now, you can clearly see that no change of feelings could change the work which Jesus did more than eighteen hundred years ago. The blood of Jesus is equally precious in God's sight, whether we feel happy or miserable. If you are sincerely trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, then you may indeed believe, without presumption, that you are forgiven and saved. The death of Jesus has cleared away all your sins. God says, in Hebrews x. 17, that your sins and iniquities He will remember no more. Is not the written Word of God always the same, and will your changeful feelings make it one thing to-day and another to-morrow? Oh, no, it is like 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'"

(Heb. xiii. 8.) God says He will remember your sins no more. He remembered them once, and laid them *all* on Jesus; and to have peace you must believe what He says. Do not trust your feelings, but believe God's Word. And do not forget that, if you are '*safe in the arms of Jesus*,' His words in the tenth chapter of John apply to you: 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.' "

All these things seemed new to those young men who had been singing "Safe in the arms of Jesus." So you see that they had been singing what they could not have known to be true. They did not *mean* to sing untruths to God, and perhaps really thought it was very nice to be religious; but a Christless religion is worse than no religion at all, because it is so deceiving. Satan often uses it to keep the conscience quiet, and to hide from the sinner's eyes that he is *LOST*. It is better to have one's eyes opened to one's real condition; is it not?

It may be that you have often sung this song of which we have been speaking. If so, do not forget that *only* a Christian is "safe in the arms of Jesus." He indeed is safe, but no other. And by "a Christian" we mean a person who is saved, whose sins have been atoned for by the blood of the Lamb, who has everlasting life, whose Father is God, whose Saviour is Christ, whose Guide and Comforter is the Holy Spirit, and whose home is in heaven.

Ah! is there a voice within which tells you that, if a Christian is such a person, then you are not

one? If so, be entreated to come to Christ at once. Do not rest satisfied until you know Him as your own Saviour, who loved you, and died for you, and who soon will come for you to receive you to Himself. Then you may truly, loudly, joyfully sing—

“ Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There, by His love o’ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.”

Will you learn from this simple incident to ask yourself these three questions whenever you are singing :—Do I understand what I sing? Do I believe what I sing? And is it true of me?

W B.

ONE who had been a preacher for many years was summoned to the death-bed of a brother.

Entering the room, his brother extended his hand, and with some emotion said, “ I am dying; and you never warned me of the state in which I was, and of the great danger I was in by neglecting the salvation of my soul.”

“ Nay, my brother,” said the preacher, “ but I took every opportunity of bringing the subject of religion before you, and frequently alluded to it in my letters.”

“ Yes,” said the dying man, “ but you never came to me, closed the door, and told me I was unconverted, and that if I died in that state, I should be lost; and now I am dying, and but for God’s grace, I might have been for ever undone.”

“WATER OF LIFE”; OR, THE FREE GRACE OF GOD.

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Rev. xxii. 1.)

THERE is peculiar solemnity in the closing chapters of the Revelation. Salvation and damnation, life and death, grace and judgment, glory and eternal torment, are the subjects of it; and whether the scene is heavenly glory, or the throne of eternal judgment, the LAMB stands most conspicuous and exalted.

Few people read the Revelation. The excuse of many is that it is so difficult to understand; whereas its title expresses its simplicity. Revelation does not mean that which is difficult, but something *revealed*, or made plain; but the truth is, that however simple God's word is, “the natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God.” (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

The neglect of this book, even by professing Christians, is very sad, notwithstanding it is our Lord's last letter to His beloved servants, God's last written communication to man; and that it is prefaced with, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (i. 3.)

It is wonderful how God blesses the reading of this book. Many a soul has been awakened through reading or hearing the things that are therein written; many a troubled conscience has been quieted and comforted by seeing, in the visions of glory there presented to us, that redeemed sinners are around the throne of God

solely on the ground of the blood of the Lamb; while others have been preserved from ten thousand snares of the devil, by keeping the things that are written therein.

Nothing shows more plainly the real importance of this book than the command in the last chapter, “*Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand*”; and also, “*Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.*” (vv. 7, 10.)

What are we to understand by keeping the sayings of the prophecy of this book? Surely this book does not present to us a list of absolute commands to be obeyed, like the law of Moses did. No. It does, however, present to us the working out in result of the great principles seen around us, and so shows us the difference between truth and error, the bride and the harlot, Christ and Satan, in such astonishing ways, that it greatly helps and guides us in our heavenward journey, when we *keep* those sayings in our minds, before our eyes, and in our hearts.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is divided into three parts.

1. The things which John saw.
2. The things which are.
3. The things which shall be after these.

The verse before us is among the things which are yet future. The apostle had been carried away into a great and exceeding high mountain, to behold the Bride, the Lamb's wife, and he saw her “*descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.*” (xxi. 10, 11.) We know, from other scriptures, that prior to this she will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess.

iv. 17.) Now John saw her coming forth in heavenly glory, manifested to the earthly nations. Having been made partaker of the *grace* of God, she now shares with Christ the *glory* of God. She is presented to us under the symbol of a city. But I do not now propose to enter into that, but immediately proceed to our verse: "And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This is still a part of the description of the heavenly Jerusalem; for the next verse speaks of "the street of it," evidently identifying it with what had gone before in the previous chapter.

But what, I ask, does "water of life" represent? Have we any Scripture proof as to what the water of life means? Let us see, and may the Lord graciously help us.

In turning to the Gospel by John, it is said of Christ, in the first chapter, "In Him was *life*," and that He was "full of grace and truth"; and in various other scriptures, *life* and *grace* are found together. For instance, in Rom. v. we read that "*grace* reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal *life*, by Jesus Christ our Lord." In 1 Pet. iii. 7, we read of "the *grace of life*." In Rom. viii. 2, of the "Spirit of *life* in Christ Jesus." My reader will remember how the Lord Himself spoke to the sinful Samaritan woman about the necessity of drinking "living water," in order to find peace and joy. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee *living water*." (John iv. 10.)

Here we see Him who was the life, the dispen-

ser of living water to a sinner dead in trespasses and sins; and He also speaks of the effects of this *living water* in the soul. Speaking of the water of Jacob's well, He said, “ He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into *everlasting life*.”

In the previous chapter our Lord had told Nicodemus the Pharisee, not only of the eternal importance of the new birth, but that it consisted of being born of *water* and of the Spirit, which was known only to those who believed in the Son of man lifted up; and the chapter concludes with the most positive declaration, that to be without Christ is to be without *life*.

In the fifth of John we have Christ presented to us as the quickener of whom He will, and He declares that he that heareth His word, and believes on Him that sent Him, *hath everlasting life*, and is passed from death unto *life*. The resurrection of believers is there called “ the resurrection of *life* ”; and the reproof of Christ is, that persons would not come unto Him, that they might have *life*.

In the next chapter we again see Christ as the dispenser of living water (eternal life) promising life for evermore to every one that comes to Him, and saying, “ The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are *life* ”; and when Peter was asked if he would go away, he exclaimed, “ Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

The seventh chapter shows us that Christ is the fountain to satisfy the thirsty soul, and also

that living water, taken in by faith, sinks deep into the feelings and affections, and is felt to be so precious and abundant, as to flow out copiously to those around. "If any man thirst," said Jesus, "let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

The tenth chapter of John shows us that the sheep have *life* only through the death of the Good Shepherd, teaching us that Jesus crucified is the only fountain of living water.

In the next chapter we see Jesus the life-giver, and raiser of the dead, eminently set forth; while the twelfth chapter still more plainly shows us that *life* and union with Christ could only have come to us through His death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

In the fourteenth chapter Christ is emphatically called "the Life"; and the next chapter shows us that fruit-bearing to the glory of the Father is only by living union with Christ *the Life*. And to pass on to the twentieth chapter, after the person, death, and resurrection of Christ have been set before us, the Holy Ghost, by John, says, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing* ye might have *life* through His name."

"Water of life," then, is God's blessed grace unto life eternal, flowing out through Christ to man as a sinner, whether a profligate Samaritan, or an outwardly decent Pharisee. Like the river in Eden was to water the garden, so living water is blessing, eternal blessing, to the poor and needy sons of men.

This seems to me proved from the many scrip-

tures already quoted; and perhaps the endless occupation and joy of the Church of God will be the drinking of this living water; ever having unfolded to us more and more of the love and grace of God, and our souls ever rejoicing before Him with fulness of joy, being abundantly satisfied with the fatness of His house, and made to drink of the river of His pleasure. (Eph. ii. 7.)

1. But let us look a little more carefully at our verse, and notice first the ORIGIN of this living water “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” God is the God of grace, and the Lord Jesus Christ is full of grace. Grace, like every other good gift, is from above, and it flows to us through Christ crucified, risen, and ascended.

Many confound grace *in* them with the grace brought *to* them, and they have not peace; they must look clean out of themselves, and receive righteousness and peace from God through the Lord Jesus Christ. They will find their conscience purged only by His blood. We must first drink living water, before it can spring up *in* us, or flow out *from* us. We must receive *grace for* us to have *peace in* us. The grace of God brings salvation; and when the apostles wrote to their fellow-Christians, they usually commenced with “Grace unto you, and peace, *from* God the Father, and *from* our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Yes, grace proceedeth “out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” It is eternal in its source, and carries our thoughts back to God’s “purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1. 9); and being eternal in its source, it is abundant, unchanging, and everlasting, in its operations; hence we read, “By one offering He hath perfected for ever them

that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) Yea, God Himself is "the God of all grace"; and this is the glory of the gospel; it is called "the glorious gospel [or, the gospel of the glory] of the blessed God."

Could we but look into the heart of the invisible God, we should see thoughts of grace and peace to men as sinners, counsels of eternal redemption between the Persons of the Godhead, pardon for the guilty, salvation for the lost. Christ Jesus came to manifest this, and His death upon the cross was the outflowing of divine grace; "a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Happy those who drink freely!

2. Observe that the water is *living*; it is called "water of life." Ah, dear reader, nothing less than life, life eternal, could meet the need of those who were dead in trespasses and sins. The law could not make us righteous, or give us life; it only made manifest our sin. But Jesus came to give *life*. He was the overflowing fountain of living water, and whosoever drank "passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) It is not life for a day or two, like the manna was to the hungry Israelites. No! it is everlasting life that Christ dispenses. He could say, "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever," "never see death," "never perish," "not come into condemnation," etc. In Ezekiel xlvii., where we find a counterpart of the heavenly Jerusalem, in the prophetic testimony concerning the earthly Jerusalem, we read that "every thing shall *live* whithersoever the river cometh."

And so as to the Lord Jesus who was crucified. You cannot come to Him, dear reader, for salva-

tion without living for ever. “ He that cometh to Me,” saith He, “ shall *never* hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall *never* thirst.” (John vi. 35.)

This is a deep reality. Receiving Christ into the heart as a Saviour is always connected with present comfort, and eternal blessing. A sense of peace, the new birth, present possession of life eternal, are connected with drinking this living water. “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” (2 Cor. v. 17.) “ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” (1 John iii. 14.) Oh! ye feeble-minded, halting, fainting, doubting, fearing children of God, be comforted, be happy, be assured *by the word of the living God*, that you live for ever, because you believe on the Lord Jesus. You have tasted the grace of God in Christ, you have drunk the living water, and your heart goes *upward* to the blood-stained mercy-seat, *outward* in love to God’s people, and *onward* to the coming glory, waiting for God’s Son from heaven. Fear not; Jesus now intercedes for you in heaven.

3. This water is also *abundant*; not a pool, but a “ river,” as Ezekiel’s river, “ a river to swim in,” “ a river that cannot be passed over.” Oh, the depths of the riches of the grace of God! There is not only mercy with God, but with Him is “ *plenteous* redemption.” The figure of a river is very beautiful. Its origin is hidden, but the further you trace it from its source, the wider and deeper it becomes. So is the grace of God in Christ; yea, Jesus is full of grace. We none of us know much of its depth, and length, and breadth; but this we know, that the longer we live, the more we feel that we need the glorious truths of the

sovereign and unchanging grace of God to sustain us, and the more we enter into its vastness.

And so we believe it will be; for yesterday the Holy Spirit said, "He giveth *more* grace"; to-day He says, "He giveth *more* grace"; to-morrow it will be, "He giveth *more* grace"; and the next day still it will be "He giveth *more* grace"; and so on, until we see Jesus face to face, and find ourselves eternally happy in the glory of God.

4. But notice further, that this water is also *pure*. There is sometimes mercy among men when guilt is proved, and the stain not cleansed. A prisoner is proved guilty of a capital offence, and condemned to die; but just before the expected execution a reprieve is sent, and though the prisoner's life is spared, the stain of guilt remains: there is pardon, but not purity. But the grace of God is pure; it is clean, and makes clean. Grace reigns through righteousness. God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth. God is pure, Christ is pure, the believer is pure; his heart is purified by faith; he is cleansed from all sin, justified from all things.

Again, God's grace is *pure*, because of its perfection. It is not a mixture of man's doings and God's work, not a compound of law and grace, but *pure* grace, the simple outflowing of the heart of the pure and holy God, freely giving remission of sins to every one that believeth, because Christ has died upon the cross under the judgment of our sins. Oh! dear children of God, do not try to join together *law* and *gospel*. There is an amazing distinction between them. No two things can more differ. "The *law* was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ."

(John i. 17.) The deadliest cup of poison that Satan can present to a sinner is a mixture of law and gospel. The mixture sets aside both law and gospel. Blessed be God, the "water of life" is pure; let us beware of any corruption of the pure doctrine of the unmerited love of God.

5. Lastly, the "water of life" is presented to us as "clear as crystal"; which, I apprehend, teaches us not only that it is pure and transparent, but also that it is glorious. When John saw the holy city, it was "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Ah! dear reader, the grace of God is truly glorious; hence we read of the "glory of His grace." There is majesty in grace; for heaven's throne is called "the throne of grace." (Heb. iv. 16.) Yes, it flows from the eternal counsels of God, and redounds to His eternal glory; and in ages yet to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 7.)

A student of divinity met at a meeting held in a private house the author of a well-known exposition of the Epistle to the Romans. He says, "I . . . heard him read a chapter from Romans about the natural corruption of man, a doctrine of which I had never heard before; in fact, I was quite astonished to hear of men being corrupt by nature. I remember saying to Mr. H., 'Now I see that doctrine in the Bible.' 'Yes,' he replied; 'but do you see it in your heart?' That was a simple question; but it came home to my conscience. It was the sword of the Spirit; and from that time I saw that my heart was corrupt, and knew from the Word of God that I could be saved by grace alone."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—What should be the conduct and general bearing of Christian servants toward their employers and toward one another? c.

ANSWER.—The word of God sets forth, in the fullest and plainest manner, “what should be the conduct and general bearing of Christian servants toward their employers.” Thus, for example, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” (Eph. vi. 5-8.) Similar is the teaching of Colossians iii. 22-25. So also in Titus ii. 9, 10 we read, “Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” We are not aware of any specific direction in Scripture as to the conduct of servants toward one another; but surely the general teaching as to Christian walk and character would bear upon that relationship as upon every other. If Christian servants will only study their model, and seek to be formed thereon, it will regulate their conduct both toward their employers, and toward one another. We may further add, that Christian employers have to look well to the manner in which they acquit themselves in their relationship; for we may rest assured that to this question, as to all others, there are two sides. C.H.M.

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

**"I HAVE NEGLECTED GOD ALL MY
LIFETIME."**

A POOR woman was dangerously ill. She had been attended for some time by a doctor who was a friend of the writer's, and a Christian also, who, for love of Christ, gave a large portion of his time, medicine, and skill, to relieving the diseases of the poor.

He had attended this woman at the writer's request, and one day, on meeting me in the street, remarked, "That woman cannot possibly live."

"Does she know it?" inquired I.

"No," said the doctor; "we do not like to alarm our patients by telling them their danger, except under special circumstances."

"Well," I replied, "that woman, when I last

saw her, was quite unconcerned about her soul. Perhaps if she knew that she *must die*, she might be awakened to a sense of her need of Christ."

"I will go and tell her at once," said the good doctor; and away he went forthwith.

A few hours afterwards I was sent for by the dying woman, to whom I was well known as a servant of Christ.

On my entering her chamber, she thus addressed me: "The doctor tells me I must die! I have been a good mother and a virtuous wife. I have done my duty by my husband and children. I have never willingly wronged man or woman. But there is *one thing* I have done: I HAVE NEGLECTED GOD ALL MY LIFE-TIME, and I am now going to stand before God's judgment; and how shall I account to Him for having done my duty by all, and *despised Him*? It seems so dreadful *now* to think of *facing God with such a sin upon my head!*"

I pointed her to Christ, whose precious blood cleanseth from *all* sin.

She exclaimed, in tones of terrible anxiety, "I *want* to believe, but I can't. I have attended to everything else but Him, and now that I am dying how can I expect Him to listen to me? I fear it is *too late!*"

I strove to persuade her that Christ would even yet receive her, and read to her the short but significant history of the dying thief, commenting too on those gracious words in John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to me I will in *no wise* cast out."

For some time my words were in vain. Her constant cry was, "I want to believe, I want to repent; but I cannot. Oh! what shall I do?"

Quoting from Romans x., I replied, "It is

written, ‘ Whosoever shall *call upon the name of the Lord* shall be saved? Ask Him to give you power to believe.’

Her reply was, “ I don’t know how to ask. I have lived all these years in the world, and have never learned to pray ! ”

“ Shall I pray for you? ”

“ Oh do ! ” she exclaimed; and most attentively did she listen as I besought a gracious God, for His dear Son’s sake, to give her grace to believe His blessed word, and look to Jesus.

Once more bidding her ask the Lord to enable her to believe in the all-sufficient blood of Christ, I departed as she exclaimed, “ Lord, help me to believe.”

This interview took place on a Monday morning. From that time till Friday, I visited her every day. Each time I went I found her anxiety had deepened, and I ascertained that she had continued *day and night* to call upon the Lord.

She never slept. Her disease was of such a nature that to lie down would have been suffocation. Propped up with pillows, she sat awake, too anxious about her soul, too much in earnest after salvation to close her eyes, or cease to “ call upon the Lord ” until the answer came.

“ The gospel of the grace of God ” was daily set before her; but it was not till Friday morning, five days after the first mentioned conversation, that she got peace.

On entering her room that morning, the first words that fell upon my ears were, “ I know that I am saved, for God Himself has said so.”

She lived but three days longer.

During this short interval, she who had (as she said) never learned to pray, poured forth such

supplications on behalf of her husband, children, and friends, as astonished all who heard her. Many of her friends and neighbours gathered round her dying bed from time to time, and often expressed to me their wonder and surprise at what they heard from her lips.

It is to be hoped that, short as was the space which elapsed between the moment she got peace and that of her departure, her testimony to the grace and power of the Saviour of sinners was blessed to some.

She fell asleep in Jesus on the following Monday night, testifying to the last, "I know that I am saved, for God Himself has said so."

Can you say so, too, my reader? If not, consider the peril you are in. Your last hour *may* be near; it *must* come at last. And when it comes how will you account to God for the contempt you have shown for His Christ? Have you done your duty by all, and is He *alone* neglected and despised? What utter contempt for the Lord is couched in the moralist's plea: "I have done my duty by my family and my neighbour; I have never injured any man." God and His Christ set last of all! nay, set *nowhere*! Oh! that we could arouse you to a sense of your danger before it is too late!

The subject of this narrative was aroused at last when *death* and *judgment* stared her in the face. She did not pray for forgiveness; *that* was offered her, assured to her by the blood of Christ. But she had heard and *neglected* the truth so often and so long, that when she wanted (oh! how earnestly!) to believe it, she could not. She sought *power* to believe. She strove, she agonized, she never slept, she never ceased to

cry till she could say, " I know that I am saved, for God himself has said so."

" Go thou, and do likewise."

It is no marvellous thing for a soul to be deeply agitated when first it sees its condition under sin, in the light of God's presence; nor that it should be easily disturbed, until it be more deeply rooted in the truth of God, although it has got a glimpse of the ground of peace. The main source, we believe, of all such distress and changeableness, is the soul looking from a wrong point of view at things which concern its peace. The constant tendency of an anxious soul is to judge of God, and what He is to it, from its own feelings. Hence, its conclusions are entirely wrong. In place of thinking of God according to the revelation which He has given us of Himself in Christ, it reasons about Him from what it feels within.

This wrong way of looking at divine things must necessarily lead to great misapprehension, confusion, and perplexity. And while the soul continues so to look at things, its distress must remain. No relief can be found until it looks outside of itself. God in Christ, the Saviour-God, is the true object of faith. (Isaiah xlv.; John iv.) In place of reasoning from its own feelings up to God, it must learn to reason from God down to its feelings. This is the only right point of view for a soul at all times, whether it be in the condition of a babe, a young man, or a father in Christ.

THE BLOOD FOR A TOKEN.

“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

(Exodus xii. 13.)

AFTER many judgments sent upon Egypt, which left Pharaoh and the Egyptians as hard as ever, God determined to execute judgment still further by slaying the first-born, or eldest child, in every family in Egypt.

On the night this was to happen, God appointed the Israelites to take a lamb, to kill it, and with its blood to sprinkle the posts of their doors, and the lintels over their doors: “And when,” said He, “I see the blood, I will pass over you.” That is, He would not destroy them, nor any in the house, where the blood was seen.

In 1 Cor. v. 7, it is written, “Christ, our Pass-over, is sacrificed for us.”

John said of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John i. 29.)

Believers are said to be redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Pet. i 19.)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world to save sinners, and gave His life a ransom for many. (1 Tim. i. 15.)

No house in Egypt was free from judgment, but the house that had the blood for a token. An Egyptian's house might have been a lofty house, a beautiful house, a strong house; this made no difference: when God saw no blood on it, His judgment entered there.

How many think they shall escape coming judgment, because they are moral, or have done their best. But this can never keep away the

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wrath of God. Where He sees no blood, His judgment must come. God hath concluded all under sin; and "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) All, all must perish, save those under the blood. God will look only at this, regard only this.

It is not, When I see you sober, or moral, I will pass over you. No; it is, "When I see the blood."

Nothing under heaven can protect a sinner from coming wrath, but the shed blood of God's dear Son. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22.) Jesus has shed His blood for the remission of the sins of many.

Who are they that have this remission? God has told us, "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things." (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

All who are made sensible of being what God says they are, namely, altogether guilty and filthy before Him, and who receive Jesus Christ, God's great gift for poor sinners, have this forgiveness. As it is written, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John i. 12.)

Israel was not saved from judgment because they were more righteous than the Egyptians. God speaks of nothing but this, "When I see the blood." God looked at that. Their trust for protection was in the blood of the Lamb they were feeding on.

So with a believer in Christ; it is not his own works which make him happy; but this: "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7.) That which gives him boldness in coming to God is the blood. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The believer enters by faith where Jesus is, worships in the courts of heaven, feels at home even in the presence of God, because He who "was wounded for our transgressions" is there for him. This makes him bold; not because he is anything, but because the great High Priest is everything; his righteousness being the righteousness of God, and his blood being the precious blood of Christ.

Many a child of God is in bondage from seeking, though he is not aware of it, to add something to the finished work of Jesus. Just as if this were not enough; and yet God, by raising up Jesus, and setting Him at His right hand, has shown Himself fully satisfied with the work of Jesus: and for the sake of Jesus, and the life He laid down on the cross, He now passes over every sinner who trusts only in Him.

Millions of sinners have been sheltered under that blood. God has set Him forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. (Rom. iii. 25.) All who are quickened by the Father, and drawn to Jesus as lost sinners, and made to trust only in the blood of Christ, are safe. God

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has given His word that they are safe; for "When I see the blood," He says, "I will pass over you." "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." The condemnation fell on Jesus.

"He suffered in their stead;
He saved His people thus;
The curse that fell upon His head,
Was due by right to us."

God looked not at the Israelite in the house to see if He could discern anything in him as a reason for passing him over. He looked only at the blood. That blood spoke of judgment passed, judgment already executed; and no second stroke was to fall.

It is true that those who receive forgiveness are called to holiness to bring forth fruit unto God. (Rom. vi. 22; 1 Pet. ii. 15, 16.)

We can only get peace by looking off to the peace made through the blood of His cross. (Col. i. 20.) The heart wants a perfect thing to give it rest, and that perfect thing is the offering of Jesus Christ once. (Heb. x. 10-14.)

As the eye of God is on the blood, so He would have us look at the same thing. The offering and sacrifice of Jesus was a sweet-smelling savour unto God. (Eph. v. 2.) Jesus came and offered Himself; the smell of that offering was sweet to God, and the Holy Ghost makes it sweet to us. He delights to spread out Jesus, in His love, compassion, and blood, before the believer as all his joy. As it is written, "He shall glorify me: He shall take of mine, and show it unto you." (John xvi. 15.)

It is not opinions that are our boast, but the One living Person of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit produces His own fruit in each believer. (Gal. v.

22, 23.) Yet He does not speak of Himself, nor turn the believer's eye to that as a ground of confidence. He holds forth Christ Jesus the Lord; fixes the believer's heart on Him; so that if we rejoice, it is in Christ Jesus; if we are glad, it is in the Lord; if we have boldness and access with confidence, it is by the faith of Him. (Phil. iii. 3; John xx. 20; Eph. iii. 12.) All is by Jesus. "Christ is all, and in all." "He is our peace." It is not the believer's own joy that is the ground of his rejoicing, but Jesus. It is not his joy yesterday that makes him glad to-day; but what made him glad yesterday makes him glad to-day, namely, Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. We are ever in danger, like the Galatians, of turning aside from Christ, to get something else to rest upon. But it can only bring us into bondage, and dishonour Him. "God forbid," said Paul (and it was a solemn word), "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," save in Him who hung upon it, and offered one perfect sacrifice for sins.

The self-righteousness of our nature is ever ready to turn us away from the grace of Christ, to take us from the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. The Holy Ghost leads to Him; testifies of Him; makes Him precious.

"He never moves a man to say,
 'Thank God, I'm made so good';
 But turns his eye another way,
 To Jesus and His blood."

Jesus "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him"; not some of them, but all that come unto God by Him. (Heb. vii. 25.) Now, the unbelief of man's heart often says, "If I had not sinned in this or that particu-

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lar way, I might have hope"; or, "If I had this or that qualification, then I might come."

But all this is excluded. It is those who come unto God BY HIM; nothing but Him; who have nothing whatever to mention; who feel themselves helpless sinners, without one thing to rest on but Christ Jesus; who trust their souls on Him, believing that Christ is enough, and that what He has done shall stand for all who believe in Him; for when God looks at the blood, He passes over those who trust in the blood of the slain Lamb. (Heb. x. 17.)

The truth as to pardon, peace, and acceptance must be received in faith before it can be enjoyed, or its power felt. The same moment that the sinner is brought to Jesus in faith, the whole need of the soul is met; fully, perfectly, and for ever met. When this is believed, the soul has rest; not, observe, in its own feelings, but in the word of Christ believed. He never says to one who comes to Him, "I will forgive." No, blessed be His name! but, in plainest terms He says, "Son, daughter, thy sins *are* forgiven, thy faith *hath* saved thee; *go in peace.*" (Mark ii. 5.)

The only question now is, Can the troubled one receive it as the truth of God? If so, the voice of Jesus has spoken peace to that soul. And if the ear be kept open only for Him, its peace will be as complete and settled as the word of Christ can make it. Did Jesus ever send away a seeking soul from His presence in a state of uncertainty? No! never! and He never will. His word is pledged. "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.)

PEACE AND PROGRESS.

THERE are two great practical questions which imperatively demand, as they most assuredly deserve, the attention of every serious, thoughtful person. The first question is, What is the basis of peace? The second, What is the secret of progress? We do not mean to enlarge, but merely offer a hint or two.

And, first, as to the true basis of peace. How very few, comparatively, know it and possess it for themselves! How few amid the millions who throng the so-called churches, chapels, preaching rooms, and lecture halls, throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, can truly say, "I am at peace with God"!

Everywhere one sees unrest, uncertainty, dimness and cloudiness. There are, on all hands, doubts, fears, misgivings, unsettled questions, unsolved difficulties. Rest of heart is not known. There are vague hopes, undefined desires and aspirations; but no rest, no settled assurance, no divine certainty. The basis of peace is unknown. There are, at this moment, hundreds of thousands who, in reference to the simple question of peace with God, are completely at sea. There are vast numbers of the professed teachers of religion who do not themselves enjoy that peace in their souls; cannot say, with sweet, cloudless, Christian confidence, "My sins are all forgiven. I have an unblotted title, an unclouded prospect, an unchanging Friend."

In many cases, alas! it is actually taught as orthodox doctrine, that no one can know, at this side of the grave, that his sins are forgiven; that it is presumption for any one to think so; and that the true and proper Christian state is a state

of wholesome uncertainty and doubt; that it keeps us humble and hopeful; that too much confidence would minister to a spirit of pride.

Now all this seems perfectly marvellous to any one accustomed to breathe the atmosphere of the New Testament. If we range through all the epistles, from beginning to end, we cannot find such a thing as a Christian not knowing that his sins are forgiven. It is assumed as the necessary consequence of being a Christian. Thus we read, "In whom *we have* redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14.)

Such is the uniform teaching of the epistles. A Christian not knowing the forgiveness of sins is something perfectly anomalous. We speak not now of quickened souls, whose cases are recorded in the Gospels, or of the case treated of in Romans vii. We refer to the condition of Christians as presented in the epistles, and we maintain that such a thing as a Christian doubting the forgiveness of his sins is wholly unknown. A state of doubt and uncertainty is not a Christian state at all. Many professing Christians are in this state; but it is not the proper state of a Christian. A soul in doubt does not know, does not possess and enjoy, the basis of peace.

It will be well for the reader, in view of the almost universal condition of things around him, to look this question straight in the face, and to see what answer he himself can return to it. Let him settle it in his mind, as a fact established in the clearest manner, in the word of God, that a state of doubt, uncertainty, or unbelief, is most assuredly not Christianity at all. That the proper Christian state is one of calm confidence, sweetest

peace, quiet assurance, and rest, "Not a cloud above, nor a spot within." And hence the sad condition of souls, the muddle and jumble in which they are involved is the result of Christendom's false teaching and profound ignorance of the simple gospel of the grace of God. God's gospel could never leave the soul in doubt or darkness; never, no, never. That most precious gospel, wherever received, gives THE KNOWLEDGE AND ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY OF SALVATION; and, therefore, wherever this knowledge, this certainty, is not possessed, God's gospel is not known.

We do not mean to say that there is not divine life. We believe there are thousands of the beloved children of God who do not possess the blessed certainty that their sins are forgiven; who do not know that they have eternal life; are not resting in calm assurance on the true, the divine, basis of peace.

And here we may be asked, "What is the true basis of peace?"

We reply, in one brief sentence: IT IS THE ACCEPTANCE OF A FULL CHRIST FOR THE HEART. It is utterly impossible for any one to enjoy settled peace until his heart has believingly accepted a full Christ; and it is equally impossible for any one thus to accept a full Christ, and not have settled peace.

Reader, see that you understand this. It is of far more importance than any words of ours can set forth. Do apply your heart to it now. Have you accepted a full Christ? Are you satisfied with Him? Yes, with Him, apart from all your doings, your thinkings, your feelings, your evidences? Are you satisfied with, and resting

in, Christ ALONE? If so, you know the basis of PEACE.

And now, one word as to the secret of PROGRESS. It is most certain that there can be no progress until the soul is at peace. So long as I am tossed about with all sorts of fears and doubts, questions and difficulties; so long as I am halting, wavering, and fluctuating, real progress is out of the question. There may be progress *towards* the Christian starting-post, but there can be no progress *from* it until I have found the basis of peace; for that basis is, beyond all question, the only true starting-post for the Christian.

What, then, is the true secret of progress? It is closely allied with the basis of peace. What is it? IT IS THE SURRENDER OF A WHOLE HEART TO CHRIST.

Yes, reader, thus it stands in this weighty matter. Wouldst thou know peace? Accept a full Christ for thy poor troubled heart. Wouldst thou make progress? Surrender thy whole heart to Christ. Give up the world; give up *your* position; *your* reputation; *your* field of usefulness; *your* religious character; everything, in short that has *your* attached to it; and make a full surrender of your heart to Christ.

Then you will understand both PEACE and PROGRESS.

“ Have I an object, Lord, below,
Which would divide my heart with Thee;
Which would divert its even flow
In answer to Thy constancy?
Oh ! teach me quickly to return,
And cause my heart afresh to burn.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—What is the explanation of the uncertainty and indecision of some souls that seem truly wishing to believe in Jesus, and to know the forgiveness of their sins? S.Q.

ANSWER.—A great and deplorable mistake into which so many fall, is that of confounding the enjoyment of truth, when believed, with the mere feelings or impressions of their own minds. When persons say, “I can’t feel that God loves me, that Christ died for me, that my sins are forgiven,” we believe that they simply mean, “I do not enjoy or feel the power of these blessed truths.”

But how can these or any other truths be enjoyed, or their power felt, until they are believed? Faith never refers to self, but always to the word of God. We meet with many who want to *feel* that they are believers, before they have believed the truth, and to *feel* that they are safe before they trust in Jesus.

Now, this is all confusion. The *truth* to be believed, mark, is *outside* of self; the *enjoyment* of it is *within*. “The Lord direct your hearts,” says the apostle, “into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” (2 Thess. iii. 5.) These blessed central truths are ever the same: unchangeable, outside and independent of the believer; nevertheless, they are to be enjoyed in the heart. But if we at times fail to realize their power, and to enjoy them in our hearts, they remain unchangeably the same. The object of faith is ever *outside* of self; the enjoyment of it *within*. Our failing to enjoy the object can never lessen its value, or change its character,

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

THE QUESTION OF PEACE WITH GOD.

"I AM expecting my sister and brother at the meeting to-night," said Miss H. to me.

"I have long been praying for her, and trust the Lord may have a word for her; will you join your prayers with mine, and if possible get an opportunity of speaking to her personally?"

"Most assuredly I will," I answered, and did not forget her both before and at the meeting.

The subject of the preaching was John xx.; a risen Christ Himself is seen announcing peace, and showing the tokens of its accomplishment in the wounded hands and side.

I kept my eye upon the person next Miss H., making sure it was her sister, and felt certain that there was a word for her; and as the company

dispersed, I went up to her quietly, and said, "Have you got peace with God?"

She coloured up, and, turning from me, hurried from the room as fast as possible. She evidently felt the power of the question; but could not conscientiously reply to it.

"I am so sorry my sister was unable to come," said Miss H., a few moments after; "I am sure that address would just have suited her!"

"What," I said, "you don't mean to say that the person sitting next you was not your sister? I made sure it was, and felt the Lord was speaking to her through His word, and actually went and addressed her personally ere she left the room."

"No, that was not my sister; that was a perfect stranger to me."

I own that I felt a little disappointed, but thought perhaps I had some lesson to learn, and had been more anxious about one than I should have been for all the rest.

However, I went home, and next day went out to visit; and at one house was glad to learn that a young person had been so arrested through the word at the meeting that she had passed a sleepless night, and was most anxious to see me. She presently came in, and to my joy I saw the very person I had seen and spoken to the night before.

"Oh!" she said, "I am so glad to see you. That question you put to me as I left the room last night has rested on my mind ever since. I felt so ashamed at not being able to answer it, and yet I knew I could not truthfully; for I have never had, and have not now, true 'peace with God.' I believe that Jesus died, and died for me, and that through Him alone I must be saved;

but to say that I *have* peace is quite impossible. I know I have not got it."

"Well," I said, "I am glad then, very glad, that I spoke to you; and now shall I tell you how you may have peace without a cloud, or doubt, or fear?"

"Do, please," she said, quite anxiously, "for I am miserable, and shall be till I get it."

"Well," I said, "the Christ I spoke of yesterday, as we read in Col. i. 20, has *made* peace by the blood of His cross; and now, just as in John xx. He announced peace *Himself* to His disciples, He now, *by the Holy Ghost*, proclaims it to you, to all; and the moment you believe in God as the One who raised Him from the dead, who was delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification, this peace is yours, you are justified by faith, and have peace with God (Rom. v. 1). God announces to you that He has raised, and glorified, and seated at His right hand, the One who made peace for sinners by the blood of His Cross, in token that He is glorified and satisfied with respect to the sinner's sins.

"You, by believing in God in this character, set to your seal to His acceptance of His Son's finished work, and thus the peace that He has made becomes your own, and you have peace with God.

"It is not, you will notice, peace *of mind*; this is quite another thing, and one which is the consequence of peace *with God*, and fluctuates continually as the soul walks with or apart from God; but 'peace with God' is a thing that never changes. It is what Christ has made, and, because He is changeless, is like Him unalterable; and though your appreciation or enjoyment of it

may rise or fall in proportion as you maintain your fellowship with God, nothing can touch your portion thus secured to you by God's own precious Word."

"Oh!" she said, "I think I see it; I have been trying to *feel* peace within, while I should have been in simple faith resting on God's acceptance of the finished work of Jesus. I see it now quite clearly. I believe in God, who raised up Jesus; and, through faith, the peace He made is mine. I have settled peace with God. Oh! how I thank and praise the God that has accepted Jesus, and the precious Saviour that died to make my peace with God! . . . "

Four years have passed since then, and still she stands a blessed monument of God's free grace, apart from the world while busily engaged in it, and rejoicing week after week to be amongst those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose privilege it is to show His death until He comes again.

Dear reader! as your eye rests on this page, can you from your inmost soul say, "My peace, too, is made; for Jesus is my peace, and He it was who made it on the cross of Calvary; and now His own peace ('my peace,' John xiv. 27) fills my soul, as I pass through a world of trouble to the rest that remaineth for the people of God"? (Heb. iv. 9.)

"Lord, while our souls in faith repose
 Upon Thy precious blood,
 Peace like an even river flows,
 And mercy like a flood."

WHO ARE CHRIST'S SHEEP?

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” (John xi. 27, 28.)

THERE were *religious* people all around, but were they Christ's sheep?

This was the all-important question.

There was “the hireling” too, and “the thief,” “the stranger” and “the wolf”; but oh! how different from the Good Shepherd!

We cannot forget that there are still many sheep round about us who are very dear to the heart of Jesus. He calls them “His own sheep.” (v. 3.) They belong to Him. He loved them, and gave Himself for them. He said, “The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” (v. 11.)

1. One characteristic of Christ's sheep is, that **THEY HEAR HIS VOICE**. No matter who may be the instrument, the question with them is, Is it *Christ's* voice? What is *He* saying? This is one mark of the sheep of Christ from first to last. “They know not the voice of strangers” (v. 5), but the Shepherd's voice they well know. It is Jesus they love to hear.

When the apostle Paul went to Thessalonica, they received his testimony because it was God's truth. They were not taken up with the servant, but with the message that he brought. They owned it to be God's testimony. In it they heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep. They did not receive the testimony as Paul's opinions; for it came to them, “not in word only, but also in power, and in the

Holy Ghost, and in much assurance"; they therefore "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thess. i.)

When Paul went to the polished citizens of Corinth, he purposely sought to preach in simple language; and though he was a learned man, he laid aside eloquent and enticing words of man's wisdom, lest the people should hear only Paul's voice, and not receive GOD's testimony, and thus their faith stand in the wisdom of men, instead of the power of God. Thus they heard and received God's truth about the Lord Jesus; they heard the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd through Paul.

The question is, What is the Lord Jesus, who is seated on the right hand of God in the heavens, saying now? If He were now to speak in an audible voice, would it not be, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *heareth My word*, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life"? (John v. 24.) Surely this is His testimony. See, then, that you refuse not His voice, who speaketh from heaven. The believer looks up to heaven, beholds the face of Jesus by faith, hearkens to His word, and receives His testimony. Christ's sheep hear His voice.

Many know the way of salvation, but have not received Christ as their Saviour. They do not hear His voice in the gospel. "Ye believe not," said Jesus, "because ye are not of my sheep." (v. 26.)

2. In the next place CHRIST KNOWS HIS SHEEP. True it is that He knows all things; but He

peculiarly knows His own. The acquaintance is mutual. They know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, and He knows them. (John xvii. 3.) "He knoweth them that trust in Him." (Nahum i. 7.)

Many a professor will come in that day, saying, "We have prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works"; but Jesus will say unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me."

They never had any acquaintance with Christ, had no *personal* dealing with Him. Have you, dear friends, known this personal intimacy with Jesus? Have you known what it is to be *reconciled* to God through the death of His Son? Those who know Christ, however feebly, do not hesitate to cast themselves into His open arms; and such always prove Him to be a Friend that loveth at all times, a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

3. Another feature in Christ's sheep is, that having heard His voice, and being assured that Christ knows them, it leads to practical action, **THEY FOLLOW CHRIST**. This is not following rules, creeds, ordinances, however true in themselves they may be, but Christ. It is not following men, however godly they may be, further than they are following Christ. This Satan hates, and tries to hinder. He would sometimes use even Christian people, who may be in a bad state of soul, to hinder others from *wholly* following the Lord. He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. We are kept here for no other object than to follow Christ; not to follow our own inclinations, nor to follow other saints, but to follow Christ. This marks Christ's sheep. Jesus said,

“They follow me.” Do we know what this is? Are we searching the Scriptures to find out His steps, that we may follow Him? Are we, through honour and dishonour, seeking only to please Him? Are we aiming to be “meek and lowly in heart” as He was? to take His yoke upon us, and learn of Him? We are told that Christ’s sheep are thus exercised; they follow Christ. It does not say they ought to do so, but that they do follow Christ. This shows them to be Christ’s sheep.

Now, mark the security of Christ’s sheep.

1. **THEY HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.** “I give unto them *eternal life*.” This is His gift. It is in no way earned or deserved. No. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Eternal life, then, comes to us in the way of gift. Christ does not give less. It is not life for a day or a year, but for ever—eternal life. Your life is hid with Christ in God. Christ is our life. Christ is the Giver, the sinner the receiver. My dear reader, have you really received this gift of God? Have you *eternal life*? I trust you will not rest for a moment, till you are certain that you have eternal life. Oh, you must have eternal life, or you will be in everlasting burnings! “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John iii. 36.)

2. **“THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH.”** What perfect rest and peace this gives the soul; for He is faithful that promised; He cannot deny Himself. David’s fear and distress were not a little that he would one day perish by the hand of Saul; but the true believer need have no misgiving as

to the eternal future. He who is almighty in power and perfect in love says, "They shall never perish." Observe, it is absolute and unconditional—"They shall never perish." Dear trembling believer, you cannot be lost. You are in Christ. You have eternal life, and Christ declares you "shall never perish." He died for you. His blood cleanseth from all sin. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." What more can you need to give you perfect rest of soul?

3. "NEITHER SHALL ANY *man* PLUCK THEM OUT OF MY HAND." The word "*man*" is in italics. It shows us that no power shall be able to separate us from Christ's keeping.

When He said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," it implied three things: (a) I will receive; (b) I will hold him fast; and (c) I will never give him up, "in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) So here He says, "None shall pluck them out of my hand." What perfect security this gives! Surely it is a threefold cord, that can never be broken. (i.) The present possession of "eternal life." (ii.) The promise of the faithful and Good Shepherd—"They shall never perish." (iii.) Christ's own almighty hand keeping firmly in its grasp: "None shall pluck them out of my hand."

Many dear children of God do not enter into the joy of these precious realities. They read men's books, and embrace men's opinions, instead of going only to the Scriptures for God's mind, and resting on His precious words about Jesus, which can never pass away.

"NEVER PERISH!" words of mercy,
Coming from the lips of One

Who, though here a homeless Stranger,
 Fills the high, eternal throne ;
 Brightness of the Father's glory,
 God and man in One combined ;
 Faithful Shepherd of the chosen,
 Safe are those to Him assigned.

" NEVER PERISH ! " words of sweetness,
 Dissipating every fear ;
 Filling all with joy and gladness,
 Who the Shepherd's voice can hear ;
 Bringing richest consolation
 To the soul fatigued, oppressed ;
 Sweet refreshment to the fainting,
 And to weary spirits rest.

" NEVER PERISH ! " words of power ;
 Satan now I can defy :
 Safe my soul beyond my keeping,
 Hid with Christ in God on high.
 Come what will, *I'm safe for ever* ;
 'Tis the promise of my God ;
 Written in His word unfailing,
 Sealed with Christ's own precious blood.

If the soul really desires the knowledge of Jesus, valuing Him above all beside, we may rest assured that He will reveal Himself to that soul. And, as a happy consequence, light, peace, joy, and stability would characterize its condition. Is not the Holy Spirit grieved because we value so little, and aspire so faintly after, the knowledge and fellowship of the Lord Jesus? The grand object of His mission is to reveal Christ to the soul. (John xvi. 14.)

WHERE TO LOOK IN SOUL-TROUBLE.

WE have frequently had submitted to us, in substance, the following questions and remarks, namely, "Why is it that so many sincere Christians never get rid of doubts, fears, and questionings, as to the full assurance of their salvation? Sometimes they seem sure, and are bright and happy, but in a little while they seem depressed, doubt their interest in Christ, and are most unhappy. We know of some who are every now and then on the borders of despair, and even when they do find something like peace, they are in constant terror that it will not last long; so that it can never be said of such that they have true peace or rest."

Such a state of things we know to be very common, and believe it proceeds from different causes in different persons, and in most cases the real cause seems hidden from the person's own mind. In many cases, perhaps, more than we suspect, a dark, fluctuating state of soul is the result of its faint and feeble desires after the knowledge of the Person of Christ.

How often, alas! are some almost entirely occupied with themselves, in one way or another, in place of Christ, occupied with their faith, their feelings, their clouds, or their gleams of sunshine. Still it is all and only self. The Person of the Lord Jesus and His wondrous love are but little dwelt upon, either in their thoughts or in conversation; and consequently He is but little known, loved, and valued. Thus the Spirit is grieved; Christ is not revealed to the soul, and darkness and feebleness necessarily follow. Could self only be set aside as good for nothing, and

Christ become all in all to the heart, the soul would rapidly grow in grace, and speedily manifest the features of the divine nature, and become more like Christ Himself.

Again, there are others who, though they may not be occupied with self in that particular way, and may even have an assurance that they are saved, still know but little of the true peace of the gospel, and less of communion with the Person of Christ. They are taken up with something *that is lower than Him*. Service pre-occupies the mind. What we may call the things of Christ, or rather the *things of Christianity*, occupy them; and though in themselves right and praiseworthy things, these are allowed to come between the heart and the Person of their Lord and Master. This will prove sad work for the soul, and must lead to dryness, leanness, and unfruitfulness in joy, and peace. Oh! for more of the spirit of him who said, "For me to live is Christ." (Phil. i. 21, 22.)

But there is another class, and one to which we would more especially direct our attention. We refer to those who may, or may not, have been recently awakened, but who are earnestly seeking peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is now a numerous class, blessed be the name of the Lord. May it be increased a hundred-fold. Many are brought into peace, it may be, the same evening that they are awakened, but their enjoyment of it, in some instances, is interrupted at a very early stage of their new course. Here the enemy of our souls will seek to persuade the young converts that what was called conversion is all a delusion, and that they have neither part nor lot in the matter. Such fiery

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darts can only be quenched by the shield of faith; not by reasoning, or even by referring to the date of conversion, but only by looking to Jesus, and trusting in Him. When the eye is kept fixed on Christ, Satan's darts fall quite harmless.

Others, again, in place of being brought into peace at once, continue for some time in distress, and pass through deep exercise of soul.

"But why is this?" our inquirer may ask. "Is this experience necessary to genuine conversion?"

Certainly not. Such an experience may accompany conversion, but the Scriptures teach us that a soul is converted when it is truly turned to God. The expression of the change may be very feeble, and connected with much that hinders it, but when it is real, conversion has taken place; the soul has a new life and new desires. (Acts xi. 21; xv. 19; 1 Thessalonians i. 9.)

The all-important questions for an anxious soul are not what it feels and what it thinks, but such as the following:

1. What is God to me, a *guilty* sinner?
2. What has God done to save me, a *lost* sinner?
3. What will God do for me, an *awakened, seeking* sinner?
4. What will God be to me, a *believing* sinner?

To some of our readers, and especially our youthful readers, these questions may be subjects of interesting scriptural inquiry. And when the first is understood, the doubts and fears will be all gone, and the second, third, and fourth will be quite plain. So we will leave them, and give, in illustration of our subject, the substance of a recent conversation with a young man in deep concern about his soul.

“Do you really believe that God regards you as a great sinner?”

“Oh! yes, indeed I do; I am sure of that.”

“But now, tell me, how are you sure of that?”

“Because I know it; I feel it. I have been a very great sinner.”

“But is there no other way that we may know it besides feeling it? Has not God told us in His word that we are all sinners?”

“Yes, I know He has, and I would give the world to know that I am pardoned.”

“Oh, you need not speak about giving; God is not asking anything; neither is He seeking to condemn you because of your sins, but to turn your heart to Jesus. But now, take the ground of faith as a sinner. You can only have to do with God now by faith. Know and believe that you are a sinner, not because you feel it, but because God says it. And then comes the important question, What is God to me, a sinner? Now don't look within, look to Himself, hear His word. What does it say? ‘But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’ (Rom. v. 8.) Can you receive the truth here so plainly stated, namely, that God is love to you a sinner?”

“The word says it, and we should believe it; I know that.”

“But should not *you* believe it now? Will it be truer to-morrow? Does not God say He loves the sinner? And you say that's what you are. Therefore He says plainly that He loves you.”

“That's what I want to believe, but I can't feel that He loves me; my sins seem so great.”

“Well, that's true, but in place of looking at your sins, as you know them in yourself, look at

them in the light of this verse, and you will see that it is by means of these that you know how much God loves you. It was your sins that drew forth this wondrous love, in the gift of Jesus. God loved us, Christ died for us, 'while we were yet sinners.' Righteousness judged the sins, and love saves the sinner, through the sufferings and death of the blessed Lord Jesus. But not only has God manifested His love in giving Jesus to die for you a sinner, but the same love has followed you in all your wanderings, and followed you to this room to-night, and now He has laid His hand of love upon you, and is drawing you to His beloved Son. Be done, then, with your feelings and reasonings about yourself. Dwell on the love of God as it has been manifested in the death of Christ for you, and let your whole soul rest on the truth of that word, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' The moment you take your place among the 'us' who believe, your sins are all cleansed away. The answer of Jesus to your very anxious look and earnest desire is, 'Thy sins which were many are forgiven. Go in peace.' " (1 John i. 7; Luke vii. 36, 50.)

"Well, I think I believe all that. I see it quite differently now. But I thought that I ought to feel it all in myself, before I could believe it was true to me. I now see I must not look to myself, but only to Jesus."

"Yes, my dear young man, the only sure way of keeping our eyes off ourselves, is to keep them fixed on Jesus."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—What is the real ground of assurance for one who is still in doubt and trouble about the forgiveness of his sins? L.U.M.

ANSWER.—The word of the Lord Jesus Christ. when He says, “Thy sins *are* forgiven,” should the soul have another doubt as to the blessed fact? When He says, “Thy faith *hath* saved thee,” should the slightest feeling of uncertainty remain? When He says, “Go in *peace*,” should the soul go in trouble?

Assuredly not! And assuredly it will not, if only it looks to Him, and not within; if only it hears His word, and does not listen to the voice of its own feelings. Oh! that anxious, troubled souls would only cease from looking within, and from judging of their state before God from their own feelings. The blessed consequences of faith in Christ are fully and plainly revealed in God’s word. Let the eye of faith rest on it, and let the heart of faith count on it most surely, and then peace, like a river, will flow into your soul.

The character of your own mind, the nature of your religious education, or your present opportunities, can in nowise affect the heart of God, or the word and work of Christ. Faith’s blessed, and never-ending consequences, the Spirit of truth declares to be, 1. *Being justified*. 2. *Having peace*. 3. *Standing in grace*. 4. *Waiting for glory*. “Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Romans v. 1, 2.)

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him”

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

HUMAN RELIGION, OR DIVINE; WHICH IS IT?

I WAS asked to go and see a dying woman who was concerned about her soul. On entering the cottage, I was struck with the neatness and orderly arrangement of everything. Nothing seemed out of its proper place.

A young woman showed us up a small narrow staircase to the attic, where the sick one lay. The same air of cleanliness and comfort was visible in the sick chamber as in the room below.

Immediately my eyes rested on the sick woman I felt convinced she was passing through deep exercise of mind, and also that her time here would be very short. There was much that was interesting in her countenance, but her face had already assumed that clay-like appearance which

takes place after life is gone. Her large eyes, black and piercing, were most expressive of great concern within. The paleness of death sat on the cheek, while something like the full energy of life sparkled in the eye. Such was the contrast.

On taking her hand, and saying that she seemed very weak, she replied, "Yes, sir; I am very weak; but I am very glad to see you. Miss —— has been speaking to me about you."

"Do you think that the Lord will soon remove you to another world?"

"Oh! yes, sir; I cannot long be here."

"Dying is always a solemn thing, is it not?"

"Oh! yes, very, very."

"Are you happy in the prospect of appearing before God after death?"

"Not always."

"Are you sometimes?"

"At times I am."

"Why are you not always happy?"

"Oh! I am far from being what I ought to be."

"Is not that changeableness, think you, owing rather to the foundation on which you are resting?"

"I suppose so; I am not sure. I am not sure I am saved."

"Will you tell me what is the ground of your hope before God?"

Now she seemed to summon up all her strength, and with an air of confidence and self-complacency, she repeated, without faltering, the following:—

" 'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
'Tis religion can supply
Solid comfort when we die."

" "Yes, indeed, dear woman," I replied, "that is quite true, provided your religion be divine; but there is such a thing as human religion, as well as divine."

She was evidently a little troubled at this saying, and looked at me very keenly.

"The Pharisees, you know, were very religious, and yet they rejected Christ. Their religion was not divine, surely. They despised the very One in whom God delighted."

"Yes, I know; that is quite true about them; but they were hypocrites."

"Well, I admit that; but who knew they were hypocrites? Jesus only could take off the mask, and show what they really were. The common people thought them very good. And no doubt many of them were sincere, though blinded. Paul himself was both sincere and zealous when he was a Pharisee, though he hated the very name of Christ. So that a person may be as religious as a Pharisee, and not be saved."

"Well, then," she exclaimed, "what is the difference?"

"Divine religion, the Bible says, 'is pure and undefiled'; so that it must come from heaven. To be religious, then, in God's sense, is to be like Christ, to be possessed of His life, filled with His Spirit, and walking in His steps. Human religion is attending to the forms of Christianity, without divine life in the soul; form without power; profession without reality. You know as well as I do, that a person may be very sincere, and attend church or chapel regularly; sing psalms and hymns; hear sermons; say prayers; and yet have no saving interest in Christ, no divine life in the soul. Human forms, however

sincerely attended to, will never meet God's righteous demands, or wash away our many sins. And these are the things which concern you most, are they not?"

"Oh! yes; oh! yes. What am I to do?"

"Well, there is one thing I want to ask you: Is the solemn question about sin settled between God and your own conscience?"

"Oh! tell me;" she cried, with the deepest earnestness, "am I saved? Am I saved?"

"If you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are."

"Oh! I believe; but are my sins washed away!"

"The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.' (1 John i. 7; Heb. ix. 22.) Can you depend entirely on the blood?"

By this time, the poor woman seemed to feel that her former foundation was crumbling beneath her feet, and that all her hopes were perishing. Rolling her head from one end of the pillow to the other, and her large, dark eyes gazing on me in the most pitiful manner, she cried most bitterly, "Oh; I am not saved; I am not fit to die. What am I to do?"

It was enough to rend one's heart. Many thoughts passed through my mind. I was silent for a little, and lifted up my heart for direction. I was afraid she would expire.

She became a little calmer. I felt encouraged to say a little more, and quietly repeated some passages of Scripture. But she very soon got excited again about her sins.

Nearly the whole of our conversation after this

was about the value of the blood of Jesus, as meeting the case of every sinner that believes in Him. She spoke a great deal about her many sins, and asked if the blood of Christ could put all these away. I showed her from the Scriptures that there were many in heaven now who had been guilty of far greater sins than hers.

This she was slow to believe, and still spoke about her sinfulness. Not a word now about

“ 'Tis religion that can give.”

She had lost all confidence in her former religiousness, but did not see how she could be saved by only believing in Jesus. Her sins were her great trouble, and how she was to be pardoned.

I assured her that the blood of Jesus was a perfect remedy for all sins, great sins and little sins; and that while it was needed for the very least sin, it was all-sufficient for the greatest. I tried to make this precious truth plain to her in the following way:—

“ Suppose,” I said, “ that you were guilty of every sin that you have known or heard of, and saw them all written against you there, on the wall before your eyes, the sins of swearing, lying, stealing, drunkenness, and murder: well, suppose you were really guilty of all these, and many more, the blood of Jesus Christ could wash them all away, just as easily as the sin of a little child in saying ‘No’ to her mother. The child that naughtily said ‘No’ to her mother needs the blood of Jesus to cleanse away her sin, as really as the person who is guilty of all these. Not a particle of sin can ever be put away from God’s sight but by the blood of His own Son.”

She was evidently greatly interested in all this, her eyes constantly turning to the wall, as if she

saw her sins written there. It seemed reality to her. But she could find no relief. The scene was most touching.

I again sought to direct her attention to the blessed Jesus. "The moment you believe in Him," I said, "and trust in His precious blood, you will be cleansed and saved from all your sins. Do think on what God's word says, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' Now, if you believe that word to be true, and place all your trust and confidence in the shed blood of His dear Son, you will not only be pardoned, cleansed, and saved, but you will be quite happy. Your peace will be made with God. The very instant you trust Jesus you are saved. 'Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.' " (Rom. v. 1; Ps. ii. 12.)

She began to be more calm, but was evidently under deep conviction, and asked a great many questions. After a little prayer, I proposed to leave, when she began again to speak about her sins, and about being saved, and got into such an agony of spirit that she cried, "You must let me know that I am saved; I must be saved"; looking as if she would catch hold of me.

It was difficult to answer her, yet most desirable to soothe her. "How sweet," I said, "are the words of the blessed Jesus to the weary and heavy laden: 'Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest.' 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' (Matt. xi. 28; John vi. 37). Here, and here alone, the burdened heart finds relief, and the weary soul quiet eternal rest. Only rest here, lay your weary soul on Jesus; leave it there, and be at rest. He will put your *sins* far away, but keep *you* near to Himself. Oh! do

cast all on Him, trust all to Him, confide only in Him. Do venture your all on Him. He will never fail you, nor forsake you. Only trust Him, and all shall be well, for ever well."

Seeing her tolerably quiet, I left. But I can never forget the speaking expression of her eye, as I withdrew from her bedside.

Oh ! what a solemn lesson to all who are either living carelessly or trusting to mere empty forms. They will be found worse than useless on a death-bed. Human religiousness and divine Christianity are very different things when we come to die. Nothing short of living connection with Christ, and resting on the sure foundation of His finished work, will save a soul. Dear reader, are you on this Rock? Has death no sting for you? Are you ready, waiting for the coming of the Lord? (1 Thess. iv. 16,17.).

The next day (Wednesday) I sent her some suitable tract of a large type; but my friend found her no better; she was still restless, and speaking about the two kinds of religion and the blood of Jesus.

On Thursday, when the same kind friend called, she found her even more unhappy, and still talking only of the same things.

Friday morning came, and the usual call was made; but, oh ! what a change had taken place ! The moment she saw her countenance, she felt sure there was a happy change. She looked so calm and peaceful. The fierce eye was softened, and every feature was at rest. When the question was asked how she felt this morning, she instantly replied, " Quite happy now."

" I am thankful to hear that. What is it makes you so happy now? "

“RESTING IN THE BLOOD. All that Mr. — said to me about the blood of Jesus came to me during the night so clear. It is all true; I am happy now, resting in the blood.”

At this moment she took from under her pillow the tracts I had sent her, and laid them down on a small table at the bedside, signifying by the act, as it was understood, “I am done with these now, I have found Jesus, I am at rest in Him.” She was evidently sinking fast, but all was peace.

On being asked, “Would you like to see Mr. — again?”

“Yes, very much,” she replied; “but tell him I shall soon be with Jesus. I will meet him in heaven.”

She fell asleep the same day about four in the afternoon.

A few days after this, I called to see the young woman already mentioned. I found she was sister to the departed, and had given up her place as a domestic servant to take care of her sister and the children. (The husband, being a labouring man, was out all day.) This accounted for the house being so orderly.

Although she was not a Christian, I was desirous to hear what she had to say of her sister, and, at the same time, to speak plainly to herself. One part of our conversation may be profitable to mention, as revealing the fearful ignorance which prevails in the minds of many as to the way of salvation.

“Ever after the Tuesday,” she said, “my sister was more restless, and more difficult to please; but on Thursday she was quite irritable. I was wishing you had never called. I could not

lay the pillow aright, or do anything to please her. 'Dear me,' I said, 'what is the matter?'

"'Oh, if I knew that my sins were pardoned,' she exclaimed.

"'Well,' I said to her, 'if you pray to God, I am sure He will forgive you your sins.'"

"'Are yours forgiven?' she sharply replied.

"'No; I know mine are not forgiven, because I have never asked.'

"'Oh, no! that is not the way. Mr. — says we can only be pardoned through faith in the blood of Jesus.'"

Night came on, and it was arranged that the young woman should go to bed, and the husband sit up. He stretched himself on two chairs by his wife's bedside, so that she could wake him if she wanted anything; but to the great surprise of both husband and sister, they were allowed to sleep undisturbed until the morning. The God of all grace had visited her during the lonely hours of midnight with the light, peace, and joy of His salvation.

When they looked at her in the morning, she was lying perfectly quiet, and told them she did not want anything. She was quite happy. She saw it all now. The Lord had done it by the teaching of His own blessed Spirit, and by means of His own written word.

This is conversion, true conversion. Many are religious, as this woman was, but are they converted? This is the solemn question. Without true conversion, being born again, no amount of religiousness, however sincere, however constant, can save the immortal soul. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.)

May the Lord bless the above narrative to the awakening of many souls from the fatal slumbers of a false profession, and to His name be all the praise and the glory. Amen. A.M.

“I HAVE HAD THE LIGHT FOR MANY YEARS.”

SIR DAVID BREWSTER was a distinguished scientist of the earlier part of the nineteenth century, receiving many honours and decorations from almost all parts of the world. He was remarkable, too, for his allegiance to revealed religion—that is to say, true Christianity—as the following brief account of his passing away, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, will attest.

His family had now been summoned around him, and, thenceforward, in the innermost circle of the objects of his love, his remaining hours were spent with unclouded intellect and in unclouded peace.

For the last day or two he was attended by his friend, Sir James Simpson, a man of kindred genius and of kindred Christian hopes. “The like of this I never saw,” he said, as we met him coming fresh from the dying chamber. “There is Sir David resting like a little child on Jesus, and speaking as if in a few hours he will get all his problems solved by Him.”

In the supreme hours of dawning immortality, the great man’s past studies were all associated with the Name and Person of the Redeemer.

“ I shall see Jesus,” he said, “ and that will be grand. I shall see Him who made the worlds,” with allusion to those wonderful verses at the commencement of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which had formed the subject of the last sermon he ever heard, a few weeks before.

Thus, tracing all to the exercise of the power and wisdom of the Creator-Redeemer, he felt that there was no unfitness, even in those hours, in describing to Sir James Simpson, in a “ fluent stream of well-chosen words,” some beautiful phenomena in his favourite science.

Reference was made to the privilege he had enjoyed of throwing light upon the “ great and marvellous ” works of God. (Rev. xv. 3.)

“ Yes,” he said, “ I found them to be great and marvellous, and I felt them to be His.”

He had little pain but such as came from intense weakness. The light was with him all through the valley. (Ps. xxiii. 4.)

“ I have had the light for many years,” he whispered, slowly and with emphasis, “ and, oh! how bright it is! I feel so safe, so satisfied.” (John viii. 12; Eph. v. 13, 14.)

And so in childlike reliance and adoring love he gently fell asleep in Jesus on the evening of Monday, the 10th February, 1868.

Dear reader, have you seen beauty in Jesus? Has the death of Christ a claim on your heart above everything else? Are you seeking wealth, pleasure, science, fame? Or are you so convinced of the unsatisfying character of all other things that you seek Jesus for present and eternal rest and peace?

A QUESTION FIT FOR ALL.

ABOUT a hundred and ten years ago a solitary horseman might often have been seen passing along the country roads in certain districts of Wales, and from time to time reining up his horse on meeting some poor man or woman, in order to put the unexpected question, "Can you read the Bible?"

The horseman referred to was a servant of Christ named Charles, and so much was he in the habit of doing this that he became generally known as "the gentleman who kindly asked the poor people about the Bible and their souls."

Meeting an old man one day on one of the mountains, Mr. Charles said to him, "You are an old man, and very near another world."

"Yes," he replied, "and I hope I am going to heaven."

"Do you know the road there?" asked Mr. Charles; "do you know the Word of God?"

"Pray, are you Mr. Charles?" said the old man.

This was a frequent inquiry, for he scarcely ever passed a poor man on the road without talking to him about his soul, and questioning him as to his knowledge of the Bible.

When he found any whom he thus met, ignorant of the Word of God, and not able to read it, he represented to them, in a kind and simple manner, the duty and necessity of becoming acquainted with it, and feelingly and compassionately set before them the fearful state of those who pass out of the world without the knowledge of God's Word and the salvation for the soul which it reveals. Sometimes his earnest benevolence was

crowned with success, and men hitherto wholly unlettered and indifferent as to "so great salvation," set about learning to read, with a view to entering into the enjoyment of the treasures of divine revelation which are contained in the Bible.

Of this Book of books, a great Oriental scholar (Sir William Jones) once wrote as follows: "Before I knew the Word of God in spirit and in truth, for its great antiquity, its interesting narratives, its impartial biography, its pure morality, its sublime poetry—in a word, for its beautiful and wonderful variety, I preferred it to all other books; but since I have entered into its spirit, like the psalmist, I love it before all other things for its purity; and desire, whatever else I read, it may lead to increase my knowledge of the Bible, and strengthen my affection for its divine and holy truths."

Another distinguished man, eminent through life as an orator and a statesman (Patrick Henry, once Governor of the State of Virginia), said a little before his death to a friend who found him reading the Bible: "Here is a book worth more than all other books which ever were printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have till lately found time to read it with proper attention and feeling."

In contrast with the long-delayed attention to the Word of God shown by Patrick Henry, we may cite an inspired testimony to the example of a young servant of God of the apostolic age: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

DO YOU READ THE BIBLE? Are you "wise unto salvation"? .

THE FIRST BUSINESS OF LOST MAN.

“ Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isaiah xlv. 22).

HERE the invitation approaches the character of a command, of a command to be saved.

“ LOOK unto me, and be ye **SAVED.**” It is not by *feeling, realizing, or appropriating*, that I am saved ; but simply in *looking* to Jesus as the One who died for me, who died for me just as I am. I am not called to be anything, or to bring anything, or to experience anything, but just what I am, as judged by God, sinful in my nature, and my sins actually committed, innumerable. But, oh ! glorious truth ! Christ died for such, “ the Just for the unjust.” For me ! faith exclaims ; and God has accepted the mighty sacrifice in my stead, and I stand complete in Him as risen and glorified. (Jonah ii. 9 ; John xix. 30.)

When a man discovers that he is a lost sinner ; that his sins bring burning wrath, and banishment from God’s presence, for ever and ever ; that by no supposed goodness, or good works, can he meet His righteous requirements, or satisfy the fair demands of His holy law ; he is sure to have hard thoughts of God, and to wish in his heart that there were no God to judge, and no hell to punish.

But when he is brought to listen to the gospel of peace, and hears that God so loved the world (a world of lost sinners) that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; he finds out two things, namely, that the very hope-

lessness of his condition establishes his title to the *love of God* and the *work of Christ*. And what more does he need, can he need, than the love of God and the work of Christ? God loves me; Christ died for me. God *so* loves me. What is the measure of His love? The gift, sufferings, death of Jesus, His Son. He died for me, in my stead; that I should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John iii. 16.)

Surely a man's first business is to be **SAVED**, saved according to the love of God, and the work of Christ. Has the reader thought of this, or has he neglected it? No question of equal importance can come before thee in this life; nothing can justify thy delay; nothing can be admitted as an excuse. All things are ready; all that is required for thy salvation is done; thou hast only to *rest* in that finished and accepted work. And this should be thy first business. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark viii. 36.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—Is it Scriptural to view the sanctification (or holiness) of the people of God as progressive?
N.O.L.

ANSWER.—It is well to see that the personal holiness of God's people, their entire separation from

all manner of uncleanness, flows out of their relationships to Him. It is in every way worthy of God that His people should be holy. The more we contemplate the divine character, and enter into the power of our relationship to God in Christ, by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the holier we must of necessity be. There can be no progress in the condition of holiness into which *the believer is introduced; but there is, and ought to be*, progress in the apprehension, experience, and practical exhibition of that holiness. These things should never be confounded. All believers are in the same condition of holiness or sanctification; but their practical measure may vary to any conceivable degree. This is easily understood. The condition arises out of our having been *brought nigh* to God by the blood of the cross; the practical measure will depend upon our *keeping nigh* by the power of the Spirit. It is not a man setting up for something superior in himself, for a greater degree of personal sanctity than is ordinarily possessed, for being in any wise better than his neighbours. All such pretensions are utterly contemptible in the judgment of every right-thinking person. But if God, in His exceeding grace, stoops down to our low estate, and lifts us into the holy elevation of His blessed presence in association with Christ, has He not a right to prescribe what our character is to be as thus brought nigh? Who would think of calling in question a truth so obvious? And are we not bound to aim at the *maintenance of the character* which He prescribes? Are we to be accused of presumption for so doing?

C.H.M.

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GOSPEL LIGHT.



GOD IS LIGHT. GOD IS LOVE.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

1 John i. 5. 1 John iv. 8, 16. 1 John iv. 9.

"I LIKE EVIDENCES."

"GOOD afternoon, Mr. ——. You have been very unwell, I hear."

"Yes, indeed, I am laid aside for the present."

"Well, these things do not happen to us by chance, do they?"

"Oh! no; there is an overruling Hand in all these things, I am sure."

"And He knows best when we need discipline. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.' But it is comforting to know that the stroke is measured by a Father's hand. No father likes his child to be chastised by a stranger. Hence we read, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. . . For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? ' " (Heb. xii.)

"Yes, I can understand all that. It is all very beautiful; but the great thing is to know that we are His children."

"Truly, Mr. —; but every believer in Jesus is a child of God. And you would not surely rob yourself of the consolation given to the children, by doubting that you are one of His?"

"Well, I must say that I am one of those who have never got above doubts and fears at times. I have had my seasons when I thought that I was a child of God; but at other times I have thought that I had no just ground to conclude that I really was one of His."

"Of course, if you go by your own *thought*, you can never be sure. So long as you keep looking at self you will believe the one day and doubt the next; we are so changeable; but if you go by the *word of God*, you will always *believe*, and *never doubt*. God's word never changes. And that is the only sure thing to go by. The word of the Lord is 'for ever settled' in heaven. (Ps. cxix. 89). If you trust to that word you will be as 'settled' as it is. But if you are guided by your own thoughts, you will be as changeable as they are."

"Yes, I can hear all that, but if I am a child of God I ought to have thoughts and feelings answering to that, and if I have not those experiences, what right have I to conclude that I am His child? There is a superficial way of speaking about these things by some now-a-days that I cannot go with at all; they talk about full assurance, and perfect peace, and yet I do not see that they are much better than their neighbours. I like evidences."

"So do I, Mr. —. I admit that nothing can be more flimsy, more detestable to an upright

mind than to hear high-sounding professions and to witness low practice. But for the present we will confine ourselves to the Word. It will never contradict itself. But do the Scriptures ever appeal to us by saying, ‘Art thou a child of God?’ Do they not rather put the question as to faith in Christ? Such as, ‘Dost thou believe on the Son of God?’ Now, if you can answer truly, ‘Lord, I believe,’ the question, ‘Are you a child of God?’ will never be asked. Simply because the Scriptures affirm that all who have faith are the children of God. ‘Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is *born of God*.’ ‘For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.’ (1 John v. 1; Gal. iii. 26.) Surely nothing can be plainer than these texts. If I am a believer in Christ, I am born of God. I am possessed of eternal life. I am a partaker of the divine nature. A child has the same nature as its father. The connection between parent and child is not one of mere opinions, or doctrines, or the like; but of life. And surely the connection between God and His children is a vital one. They are His children in the power of an endless life. Once a child, always a child. We may not always be as subject or as obedient as we ought to be, but we are children still. And having the two natures, being born again, you must expect a variety of experience. Sometimes the old is uppermost, and sometimes the new. We do not always mortify the old, and live in the power of the new nature as we ought. Still we must not judge of our state before God by the workings of our own old corrupt nature. Thousands have been brought into bondage by so doing. The flesh is always contrary to the spirit. (Gal. v. 17.)”

“But may not God hide His face from His children and leave them in clouds and darkness, to try them and prove them? We read of Abraham being under ‘a horror of great darkness.’ (Gen. xv.) How do you account for that?”

“That had nothing whatever to do with the question of Abraham’s own salvation. It was typical of the afflictions through which his descendants were to pass in Egypt, as the very next verse shows. And it is in that very chapter, the fifteenth of Genesis, where it is said, ‘And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness.’ You see how dangerous it is to be led away by the mere sound of words without examining their meaning and application. If you read the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters you will see how truly, at this very time, Abraham was walking in power with God. It is quite true that his posterity were to pass through Egypt’s furnace; but all God’s people have more or less of that. But you will see, in the same place, that along with the ‘smoking furnace’ there is the ‘burning lamp.’ The bright shining lamp of God’s salvation, to cheer, comfort, and sustain His dear people when in the furnace, that they may glorify Him even in the fire. How could we glorify Him in the day of affliction, and say, ‘Thy will be done,’ if we had not the joy of His salvation, and the full assurance of His unchanging love?”

“Well, what do you make of Job? I am sure he passed through great darkness and conflicts in his soul. At least, I have always understood so. Would you not allow that in his case?”

“Indeed I would not, in the sense you understand it. I admit that Job passed through deep

exercise of heart, when God was working in his soul, and teaching him what he really was in His holy presence. And that is what we all need so much, Mr. ——. But he was not exercised as to whether he was a child of God or not. The history of Job affords no sanction whatever to the doubting and fearing state that you are in. Indeed, the very opposite, for we see God's tender love and care for His dear child all through. And then there is that sweet word at the end, ‘ The Lord accepted the person of Job ’ (see margin). If He could not accept His works, He could and did accept his person, for ever blessed be His name ! Job abounded in good works, but his heart had never been thoroughly sifted in the presence of God. And there is nothing more common in the present day. There is a great deal more working than sifting going on. If you read the twenty-ninth and forty-second chapters, you will see what Job was before and after these exercises. In the former, he speaks about the ‘ candle of the Lord shining on his *head*. ’ In the latter, it shines into his *heart*; and that made all the difference. His failing was self-righteousness, and it appears to have been very deeply and firmly rooted in his heart, as it was very troublesome to get out. And so it is with us all, I am sure. But what a mercy to have it out. How gracious of the Lord to take the trouble. ”

“ Well, you and I do not agree on these matters at all. I cannot see them in that light. Of course, I know that all who really are God's people are safe, but the thing is to be sure that we are His. I have never myself got beyond a hope; you seem to be sure. I know that *I* do not always feel and act as I ought to do. Far from it. I have often

too good reasons to doubt that I am one of His. It has always been so with me. And my idea is that it has always been so with the best of men. I have known many myself; and look at David, and many others. Why, even our Lord Himself experienced the hiding of His Father's countenance . . ."

"Oh! come! Mr. ——. That is going a little too far, surely! I have never heard the Lord's cry of sorrow quoted in that way before. But so far you are right, in this instance: He *was* forsaken of God. But did His faith fail? Oh! no, blessed be His name. His faith, which was always perfect, never appeared more perfect than at this moment. He held fast His confidence in God, even when drinking the bitter cup, and when the ineffable beams of the divine complacency were for the time withdrawn. But *why* was the blessed Jesus forsaken? Just that we might never be forsaken. In the greatness of His love He took the place of the forsaken one, and consequently experienced that which was due to us. 'For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' (2 Cor. v. 21.) So that a true knowledge of the cross, in place of giving any countenance to such a system, would wither up, root and branch, all the doubts and fears in Christendom, excepting in cases where they proceed from natural infirmity. 'For by one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified.' (Heb. x.) If I believe that, how could I ever doubt? That is, if I have faith in Christ's work. But if your faith rests on your feelings, in place of Christ, no wonder that you doubt, and this is really the grand point after all. In place

of faith in Christ, who is always in the presence of God for us, as our righteousness, it is faith in your own state of mind. That is not Christ. *‘We are the righteousness of God in Him, and perfected for ever.’* And God Himself says, ‘Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.’ Is there a point, in the condition or history of the believer, which the sacrifice of Christ has not reached, and answered for to God? Not one ! ”

“ I know that I have nothing to trust in but Christ. I know that very well. Nothing but His precious blood puts away sin. And I do hope that my trust is in Him alone. I have reason to believe that the Lord called me many years ago. In this very neighbourhood, He met me in His grace, and, I trust, turned me to Himself. He wrought a great change in me then. I can remember it very well, and I have been trying to follow Him ever since. But . . . ”

“ Well, Mr. ——— you do surprise me ! Have you been doubting and fearing all that time ? ”

“ Yes, I have, all that time. Sometimes very happy, at other times just the opposite ; but I desire, through His help, to hold on to the end. ”

“ What a miserable system of theology yours must be ! Certainly, *your* religion has not done much for you. I certainly should not like to belong to your school. Why, it is not faith in Christ at all. It is faith in a certain state of mind. I do not say you have not faith in Christ. I believe you have. But what a state of things ! Many years a doubting Christian, and about the half of that time a preacher ! Oh ! if you were done with self, and occupied with Christ, you would find yourself in a new world altogether. Your system teaches faith in feeling, in place of Christ. Were

it *simply* faith in Christ, you would judge of your state by Him. Faith answers every question by referring to Christ. For example, if the question of righteousness is raised, faith answers, 'The Lord is my righteousness.' If of life, 'Christ is my life.' If of acceptance, 'I am accepted in the Beloved'; and so on. Christ is faith's standard, because He is God's. Faith knows that nothing short of Christ will meet the mind of God, therefore faith has done with self, and is occupied with Christ."

"Well, after all, the whole thing appears to be this, You are *certain* that you are saved, and I am *hoping* to be saved; and the Scriptures speak about being 'saved by hope.' Thank you for calling to see me."

"True, Mr. ——. But that does not mean, that we are saved by 'hoping to be saved'; but that 'WE ARE SAVED,' and hoping for glory, which is still future, as the whole context clearly shows. (Rom. viii. 16-25.) Good afternoon, I trust you will soon be better. The Lord give you peace. He will be better to you than all your fears."

"Faith is the soul's *outward*, not *inward* look. The object on which faith fixes its eye is not the heart's *ever-varying* frames, but the *never-varying* Christ."

Those who know heaven to be their home can look upon all things now as a stepping-stone helping them on up there.

It was the beautiful reply of a child when asked "What is faith?" and she answered, "Doing God's *will*, and *asking no questions*."

JESUS MAKING WHOLE; OR, THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD.

MARK V. 24-34.

“And Jesus went with him; and much people followed Him, and thronged Him. And a certain woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment. For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.”

THERE was remarkable simplicity in the ways of Jesus. His words, also, were full of deep doctrine; and the more we meditate on them, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the more we shall be convinced of the profound truth often embodied in them.

His heart was always as full of grace when He walked up and down this earth doing good, as when He died upon the cross; and oh! how

blessed it is to trace Him in the various incidents recorded in the gospels, and to contemplate the exceeding rich and abundant *grace* that He manifested! It is wonderful that Christ, "the only begotten of the Father," should ever have been seen in this world of sin, except in fiery judgment; but to find Him leaving the heights of glory and bliss, to come into this evil world to save sinners, is surpassingly wonderful.

In the narrative before us there are two points which I desire, as the Lord may graciously help, to make a few remarks upon. 1. The work of the Spirit in the soul of the woman; and 2. The way of Christ with this sinner.

1. THE SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE WOMAN. When the Holy Ghost takes a soul in hand, He teaches effectually. He uncovers the filthy rags of self-righteousness, exposes the rotten patches of self-reformation, and gives us a true knowledge of our state *before* God. He is "the Spirit of Truth" (John xvi. 13). He convinces of sin. He lays bare the heart by so applying the written Word as to show its desperate wickedness in the light of God's holy presence. He fastens upon the conscience the vile workings, unclean thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

This woman not only felt that she had a disease, but that it was incurable; that no earthly resource, no human means, could heal her. She had long tried various expedients, and knew what it was to "suffer many things," until she had "spent all her living"; but the end proved that "she was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse."

Thus *all help* failed, *all hope* was gone. She felt that her condition was hopeless, helpless, and incurably bad. It is a striking picture of the

Spirit's work in the soul, though a humbling and painful process for the proud heart of man to pass through.

It appears from the Scripture record, that this woman, in her sad condition, heard of One who could cure her. "She had heard of Jesus"; she had heard that He could do what men could not do.

What blessed intelligence for a poor disconsolate soul! How welcome were the tidings! She felt her plague; she had proved the failing of every human prescription; she had "spent all," and was worse than ever.

Now, how did she treat the report? Did she *hear*, and not *act*?

No. She *came* to Jesus.

Oh, yes; the Spirit of God leads the soul straight to Jesus. He reveals to the sin-stricken soul Jesus crucified as a present and an eternal salvation. The woman was thoroughly convinced that Jesus, and Jesus only, could heal her.

Her faith beheld Him in the midst of the vast crowd, like an overflowing fountain of living water, and she felt she must drink or die. She said within herself, "If I may *touch* but His clothes, I shall be whole."

She was sure there was virtue in Jesus, and that it flowed freely to the touch of faith, and have it she must. Her necessity was most urgent and imperative. Neither the press of people, nor anything else, could hinder her making her way through the crowd, till she touched His garment, and had the healing virtue. She knew Christ as the *giver*, and she came simply as a needy *receiver*; she *touched* His garment.

How blessed is this sample of faith! What discrimination was wrought in her soul, by the

Spirit of God, between crowding around Jesus, and the touch of faith! Now, mark the result. She *felt* that she was healed of that plague.

2. CONSIDER THE WAY OF JESUS WITH THIS SINNER. It was a serious moment with the woman, as well as precious occasion for outflowing of the love of Him who was "full of grace and truth." Jesus was on His way to the ruler's house, whose daughter was said to be "at the point of death." But the case of this *one* needy woman was such a weighty matter that Jesus called the attention of the whole multitude to it. She came *behind* Him to touch His clothes; but with what gracious majesty did the blessed Lord turn Himself about in the press, and say, "Who touched Me?"

It is blessed to contemplate these ways of the Lord. A sinner had proved the healing virtue of Jesus, and the attention of the whole crowd must be arrested, and the urgent journey must be interrupted for the moment, while the heart of this trembling one is established and comforted, and her Christ-glorifying testimony published. "Who touched My clothes?" said the tender-hearted Jesus.

Thus the believing sinner was singled out from among the thousands; for her soul must be farther taught the deep and everlasting intimacy with the Son of God which she had by faith been brought into. She must be made to feel that her place is not now to be *behind* the Lord, but to stand *before* Him in perfect confidence and unclouded affection.

Ah, my reader, when Jesus is made known, in the healing virtue of His blood, to any sin-sick soul, an eternal intimacy is begun; and Jesus will show, as did this woman, something of the

dignity and blessing that His own grace has brought us into. He will make us know the things that are freely given to us of God (1 Cor. ii. 12).

The needy woman had *secretly* come *behind* Jesus; but He will have her now stand *publicly before* Him. There must be dealing with Jesus, and learning the lessons of His healing grace in *secret*, before any can truly confess Him *before man*. Jesus *turned Himself about* in the press; His voice was heard by her; His loving eye singled her out among the crowd of thousands, and the woman fell down *before* Him, and with a grateful heart told Him all the truth "before all the people" (Luke viii. 47). With fear and trembling, I grant, as we all feel when we first leave the long-accustomed ranks of unbelief, and openly plant our feet beneath the earth-despised shelter of Immanuel's grace.

But notice another thing. Jesus holds up before the multitude the faith of this one woman *who had so honoured Him*. He receives her worship, confesses His acceptance of her and proclaims the new and everlasting relationship subsisting between them. Jesus calls her "Daughter."

This title showed her new relationship to God. "Ye are all the *children* of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). "Beloved, *now* are we the *sons* of God" (1 John iii. 2). It is this that the Spirit of God now bears witness to in the consciences of believers. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the *children of God*" (Rom. viii. 16).

Christian reader, do you know your sonship? It is not a mere honorary title, like many distinctions of this world, but a new and eternal relation-

ship into which God in Christ has brought us. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons of God!*" (1 John iii. 1). Yes; believers in Christ Jesus are sons by choice, by regeneration, and by adoption.

Jesus also told the woman that she was made whole, and that it was *by faith*: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." She had confessed the Lord "before all the people"; but that had not made her whole.

It is important to see that it is not our tears, our sorrows, our reformations, or efforts of any kind that make us whole. No; it is Christ, and Christ alone. Scripture always directs us to the blood of Christ for peace, and it also assures us that "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43).

Jesus had made this woman *whole*. Virtue had gone out of Him. Jesus assured her that the healing was perfect; she was *made whole*. Yes; Jesus is "the Rock," and "His work is perfect." He receives returning, sinful prodigals. He cleanses and justifies them by His blood, sends His Spirit into their hearts, and assures them they shall not come into condemnation, but that they *have passed* from death unto life (John v. 24).

The last words of Jesus to the woman are very emphatic: "Go in peace."

The first is a remarkable word "Go." I often think of it. Some persons never seem to learn its force in their experience. They may be sincere believers, but they are always hanging about Christ with doubts, not knowing forgiveness of sins and present peace; they are constantly asking to be made whole, hoping to be pardoned, etc.,

when Christ says to them, *You are forgiven* : “Go.” They do not credit the glorious truth of present forgiveness and liberty of sonship; they are, therefore, in bondage and fear.

Jesus would have it otherwise. He says, “Thy faith hath **SAVED** *thee* ; go in peace !” As much as to say, Have no more doubts, fears, or misgivings; you are made whole, pardoned, reconciled, a child of God, a sinner saved. “Go in peace.”

“ Lord, while our souls in faith repose
 Upon Thy precious blood,
 Peace, like an even river flows,
 And mercy like a flood.

“ But boundless joy shall fill our hearts,
 When, gazing on Thy face,
 We fully see what faith imparts,
 And glory crowns Thy grace.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION.—What inference are we to draw from such passages in the Bible as those which speak of its being God’s will that all men should be saved; that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all; that the grace of God brings salvation to all men; and that the Lord is not willing that any should perish? (1 Tim. ii. 1-6; Tit. ii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 9). A. I.

ANSWER.—There is no need whatever for seek-

ing to avoid the plain sense of the passages alluded to, and others like them. They bear a clear and definite testimony to divine grace toward all, without the slightest reference, on the one hand, to man's responsibility, or, on the other, to God's eternal counsels. These things are just as clearly, just as fully, just as definitely taught in the Word of God. Man is responsible, and God is sovereign. All who defer to Scripture admit these things. At the same time it is of the very last importance to recognise the wide aspect of the grace of God, and of the cross of Christ. This glorifies God, and leaves man wholly without excuse. Men argue about God's decrees, and about man's incompetency to believe without divine influence. Their arguments prove that they do not want God; for did they only want Him, He is near enough to be found of them. The grace of God, and the atonement of Christ are as wide as they could desire. "Any," "every," "whosoever," "all," are God's own words, and whom do they shut out? If God sends a message of salvation to a man, He surely intends it for him; and what can be more wicked and impious than for a man to reject God's grace, and make Him a liar, and then refer to His secret decrees as a reason for so doing? It would, in a certain sense, be honest for a man to say at once, "The fact is, I do not believe God's Word, and I do not want His grace or His salvation." One could understand this; but for men to cover their hatred of God and His truth with the drapery of a false, because one-sided, theology, is the very highest character of wickedness.

C.H.M.